



THE REPUBLICAN ALTERNATIVE

The Netherlands
and Switzerland compared

André Holenstein, Thomas Maissen,
Maarten Prak (eds.)

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Introduction: **The Dutch and Swiss Republics Compared**

André Holenstein, Thomas Maissen and Maarten Prak

History textbooks tell us that the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were the Age of Royal Absolutism. France under Louis XIV became the model for monarchies across Europe. Nations initially adopted this form of absolutism in a rather autocratic way, but later in a more enlightened sense, as in Frederick II's Prussia or Joseph II's Austria. Absolutism was, for example, sometimes even installed by official royal edict, as was the case with the Danish *kongelov*. Although recent scholarship has suggested that absolutism in general had more trouble unifying the political realm than has often been assumed, it was, nonetheless, a major step towards the formation of the 'modern state' in Europe.¹ However, the monarchical model did not prevail everywhere. The confrontation with absolutism and the recognition of its challenges led to an obvious clash between monarchies and republics in both political theory and political practice. The European free-states developed a decidedly antimonarchist sentiment, which was directed against the arrogance and expansionism of the monarchs. However, many republicans did admire the monarchies because as unified states they managed to monopolise political power, exploit the resources of the country, and achieve military efficiency more effectively.

Nonetheless, the republics of Europe went their own ways for a variety of reasons. Textbooks have long ignored these historical 'anomalies'. After the Italian Renaissance, republics make only brief appearances during the period of the English Civil War and Dutch Golden Age, with the latter usually considered an exception to the general European pattern.² In a nutshell, the problem was that, although most republics were successful in terms of political stability

and economic prosperity, their political systems and their societies did not conform to the dominant model of centralised monarchy.

But the republic has made a spectacular comeback, as the concept of ‘republicanism’ has been rediscovered by historians of political thought as a major aspect of Europe’s intellectual heritage.³ In general, comparative methodologies have forced historians to rethink their evaluations of various historical trajectories. More specifically, recent studies of European state formation have emphasised the diversity of this process and the variety of societal models, especially in the era preceding the French Revolution.⁴ This book is part of this republican revival, but seeks to explore beyond the mere notion of republic, by also investigating the practicalities of two early modern republics, as well as their (self-)images. When we start to consider the early modern republic as practice, and not just an idea, several contrasts with the monarchical system come to mind.⁵ These contrasts are more distinct in the case of large federal republics like the United Provinces [the Netherlands] and the Swiss Confederation. Many of the distinctions are also typical for the Italian city-states (Venice, Genoa, Lucca, San Marino). In general, these contrasts can be summarised in the following way:⁶

Social Sectors	Republics	Dynastic states
Government	Polyarchic via co-optation	Monarchic with hereditary succession
Commerce	International trade	Regional trade
Production	Manufacturing	Agriculture
Religion	Coexistence	Uniformity
Elites	Bourgeoisie	Aristocracy
Basis of social power	Economic enterprise	Warfare
Mode	Competitive exchange	Regulation and coercion
Theatre of operations	Networks	Territories
Army	Militia, mercenary	Standing professional
Spatial dimension	Discontinuous (poles)	Continuous
Interrelations	Collaboration	Domination
Political and legal consolidation	Local and urban	Central (court)

Broadly speaking, these pairs of characteristics suggest that dynastic states tended to have economies dominated by agriculture, the elites were rural (nobility) rather than urban (bourgeoisie) and they were better at waging war than doing business – an activity that they associated with social declassification. The list also suggests that dynas-

tic states did their business via regulation rather than competition, that they were more at home in their territories than in networks, hence in a continuous rather than fragmented geographical situation. That was one reason for religious unity, while federations of relatively small autonomous territories and urban centres of comparable size favoured religious variety and more generally political fragmentation and competition. Or, to look at it from the republican perspective, republics – especially if they were federate – were forced to find shared solutions for structural and political problems and were thus compelled to collaborate, whereas dynastic (and Absolutist) states could dominate. The republics used local and regional authorities as the foundation for their government, while the dynastic states were much more centralised.

All of this is, quite obviously, a gross simplification of the diversity that was so characteristic of early modern Europe. This becomes immediately clear when we take a closer look at republics, and especially the Swiss Confederation and the Dutch Republic. In actual fact, the Swiss were probably more rural (or less urban) than the ideal type would suggest, whilst the Dutch were more territorial than the model allows for. Nonetheless, an argument can be made for including the two as sub-types of the republican model. Moreover, that model combines two distinct types of polities. On the one hand, we have the city-state, of which Venice was probably the most prominent example, if only because it survived the post-Renaissance period more successfully than most other (Italian) city-states.⁷ On the other hand, we have the confederate republics, which were composed of more or less independent regions and towns. In Switzerland and the Netherlands, the problem was further complicated by the fact that many of the composite elements of these two republics were in a way autonomous republics in their own right. As John de Witt, the Grand Pensionary of Holland and the Dutch Republic's political leader during the 1650s and 1660s wrote in 1652:⁸

These provinces do not only constitute a *republic*, but each province *alone* is a *sovereign republic*, and as such, these United Provinces should not bear the name of *republic* (in the singular) but rather the name of *federated* or *united republics*, in the plural.

In the same vein, Franz Michael Büeler from Schwyz, the first Swiss to write something resembling a Swiss public law, maintained in 1689 that the thirteen cantons of the Confederation were all together *and* each in their own right a free, sovereign, independent state (*Stand*).⁹

This book then is concerned with a specific type of republic. The contributors investigate the similarities – often already recognised by contemporaries in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries – and the differences between the Swiss and Dutch confederations from a variety of angles, as well as their interactions during these centuries. The book is therefore also an exercise in comparative history, a type of historical analysis that is perhaps more popular among sociologists than among historians.¹⁰ Even though many historians subscribe to the necessity of comparison, they are sometimes put off by sociology's insistence on model-building and reductionism, which is necessary to fit the complexities of history into those models.¹¹ As it is, comparisons themselves come in different varieties.¹² The aim of the present book is to investigate the structural aspects of the two early modern republics: their constitution and political cohesion, their religions and forms of confessional coexistence, their political ideas and identities, their art and representation, their commerce and trade, and eventually their need to reform and improve in the later eighteenth century. Many of the contributions also refer directly to exchanges and inspirations between the Swiss and the Dutch. The purpose of this introduction is to outline the inquiries that are pursued in greater detail in the contributions that follow.

PART I As John Pocock indicated more than thirty years ago, the fundamental problem of the republican form of government, at least theoretically, was its instability. Whereas a monarchy was a universal principle, the republic was temporally defined and thus exposed to circumstance and fate (*fortuna*), which rendered it unstable.¹³ In a world governed by the God Almighty, dynastic succession by divine right was not only the rule, but also meant that it was *the* legitimate form of government. On a more practical level, constant warfare was the motor of early modern state building and depended on developing resources, which were best accumulated in a centralised 'coercion-extraction-cycle'; and as the king was the commander-in-chief during wartime, political and military structures were best suited to a monarchy. How could (town) councils with their inevitably long

and drawn-out procedures and dissenting opinions maintain an efficient army? The fact that the Swiss were not involved in any major war between 1515 and 1798 (two years that bookend two crushing defeats) goes a long way toward explaining why they never saw the need for a monocratic military leader like the Dutch stadholder. The Dutch urban elite managed to do without him only when there was no looming war on land (maritime wars depended on a naval fleet funded and led by wealthy merchants) and called upon him in times of external conflict as urgently as they tried to weaken his domestic position during times of peace.

Contemporary observers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries could be forgiven a degree of scepticism, when they judged the lack of political and military efficiency of the republics. Republics were considered slow and indecisive. But the Dutch Republic and the Swiss Confederation each experienced their own specific problems in trying to stabilise their political systems. Andreas Würgler, in his contribution to this book, deconstructs this problem into two separate challenges: complexity and diversity. Würgler defines 'complexity' as the variety of ways in which the component parts were intertwined into the Swiss Confederation, which consisted of the original eight fourteenth-century cantons, plus five cantons added in circa 1500, and the condominiums ruled by various combinations of cantons, and finally, there were the allied cantons. A similar complexity existed in the Dutch Republic, where sparsely populated Drenthe was acknowledged as a full province, for instance. But, nonetheless, it was denied a seat in the States General. The so-called 'generality lands' along the southern borders were ruled as condominiums by the States General in the name of the sovereign provinces, and a substantial number of sovereign pockets dotted the constitutional landscape. Amsterdam alone contributed about one quarter of all Dutch taxes, but in the States of Holland it had just one of 18 seats. In terms of complexity, the Swiss, however, faced greater challenges than the Dutch, because they had no central administrative institution whatsoever other than the fairly powerless Diet.

Besides this complexity, the two republics also had to deal with the problem of diversity. As Würgler points out, each member of the Confederation had its own privileges and customs, its own political structures and traditions, its own religious confession. The mere fact that they were united as one state did not help much to mitigate this diversity. The very first article in the Union of Utrecht in 1579, notes

that the Dutch ‘provinces will form an alliance, confederation, and union among themselves ... in order to remain joined together for all time, in every form and manner, as if they constituted only one province’, but at the same time, ‘each province and the individual cities, members and inhabitants thereof shall each retain undiminished its special and particular privileges, franchises, exemptions’.¹⁴ Although the Swiss had no equivalent written constitutional article, they adhered to the very same practice, i.e., diversity was permitted unopposed. One suspects that this was one of the major attractions of the Confederation. Würgler’s chapter one, as well as chapter two by Maarten Prak, discuss the various strategies employed by Swiss and Dutch authorities to cope with these challenges. They both point out a number of instruments employed by the two states, most notably the participation of representative institutions and citizens on various levels of the state. Scholars are becoming increasingly convinced that citizenship – which implies some kind of political participation – was an important prerequisite for stability in early modern Europe, and consequently, that republics were more successful at providing this stability.¹⁵ The chapters by Würgler and Prak are two more voices added to this chorus.

PART II A major threat to domestic stability in early modern European states was the issue of religious diversity. A long history of civil wars in which religion was usually the main cause, or at least one of the contributing factors, testifies to its role in undermining the stability of the political order. Given that republics were potentially unstable regimes and given the many citizens who had their say in (church) politics, it is easy to see that republics were potentially susceptible to the turbulence caused by religious diversity. Thus they had to think hard about how to resolve the issues surrounding religious pluriformity. The chapters three and four by Loetz and Frijhoff discuss two distinct solutions to this challenge. As Francisca Loetz describes it, the solution the Swiss elite became resigned to was to divide the religious communities into territories with their own state churches. Thus, some cantons remained Catholic, whilst others became Reformed. These territorial principles were laid down by the Peace of Kappel in 1531, the first pragmatic and diplomatic solution to confessional strife in Europe which could eventually serve as a model for the more famous German Peace of Augsburg in 1555. Mutual recognition and political collaboration on non-religious issues was thus

agreed upon on the ‘national’ level in the Confederation. But while the principle of ‘*cuius regio, eius religio*’ suited the autonomous cantons with their subject territories that totally subscribed to the pre-modern ideal of religious unity, it did not appeal to the joint dominions where Catholics and Protestants lived together and were governed by bailiffs of the various creeds. To maintain a religious coexistence, various kinds of intermediate solutions were sought, developed and then tolerated. The most spectacular example is the *simultaneum*, which was practised in several parishes, and meant that two opposing creeds ended up sharing the same church building.¹⁶ Loetz also points out that the two confessions copied certain outward aspects of one another and thus actually came to resemble each other more than the verbal conflicts might suggest.

Loetz proposes that we start thinking in terms of a ‘deconfessionalised confessionalisation’, a proposal which is further echoed, and indeed amplified, in Willem Frijhoff’s contribution. Frijhoff describes how Dutch revolutionaries, during the 1570s and 1580s, introduced Calvinism as the new official creed in the newly independent Dutch Republic. But while the Dutch Reformed Church received all kinds of privileges, its room for manoeuvre was also carefully circumscribed by those same revolutionary leaders. Private religious beliefs were permitted, non-Calvinists, albeit formally illegal, were allowed to continue their own forms of worship. The degree of toleration, of course, depended on local circumstances. Religious unity was promoted in the Dutch Republic via a civic form of religion that emphasised common Christian values and downplayed the differences between the churches. Both of these chapters demonstrate how, in their own unique ways, the Swiss and Dutch political elites steadfastly refused to allow religious conflicts to threaten the political unity and stability they considered the very foundation of the republican regime and hence their own legitimacy as the republic’s governing representatives.

PART III The legitimacy of these types of solutions was certainly a challenge in its own right. The republic was, in some sense, a form of anti-government, defined by what it was not – a monarchy – rather than by what it was and listing its own virtues. Political science lectures at the University of Leiden in the first half of the seventeenth century typically praised the monarchy as a superior form of government, without ever referring to the Dutch Republic’s own unique

form of government.¹⁷ At the only Swiss university, in Basel, the study of imperial law – i.e. the law of a (universal) monarchy – remained the basic course of study until the late seventeenth century, with academic discussion regarding Swiss public law only commencing in the eighteenth century.¹⁸ This meant that the Swiss Confederation and the Dutch Republic – both officially part of the Empire, at least until the Westphalian Peace settlement of 1648 – had to develop and adapt their own political theories and self-descriptions in response to the standard monarchical presuppositions of universal order and the more demanding exigencies of public law and international law as developed by Jean Bodin, Hugo Grotius, and their successors. Thomas Maissen and Martin van Gelderen discuss aspects of this process in their respective chapters, while Olaf Mörke compares the way the two republics represented themselves. Switzerland somehow managed to co-exist quite comfortably with the imperial structures until the seventeenth century – the idea of Empire and concrete imperial privileges provided legitimacy for the governments in the individual cantons. There was little internal necessity for them to refer to the concept of sovereignty. However, the French provided the Swiss with the ideas that alienated them from the concept of Empire. The new concept of a (sovereign) republic, based on Dutch models of representation, established the Confederation as a (minor) member of the European community of states, but it was also welcomed by the larger Swiss cantons because it introduced ‘republican absolutism’, which abolished the traditional privileges of the common citizens and helped consolidate a hereditary elite.

Religious unity within the cantons remained quintessential in this republican interpretation of absolutism. However, the Dutch did not follow this path, even though since the beginning of their revolt, the confederate constitution had stimulated discussions about possibly adopting the Swiss cantonal system, and although the Dutch seemed to lack some of the Swiss military virtues. Martin van Gelderen’s chapter points out that Justus Lipsius represents the same conventional (Swiss) notion of religious unity as indispensable for the avoidance of political discord. Meanwhile, Dirck Volckertsz Coornhert considered tolerance to be the foundation of concord. Here Coornhert followed Hugo Grotius’s Erasmianism and Irenicism. Grotius advocated state control over a public church thereby limiting its dogma to an absolute minimum, thus avoiding discord on religious grounds. Historiography would take the place of theology as the ide-

ological foundation of society. Grotius's *Liber de Antiquitate Reipublicae Batavorum*, provided an essential contribution to the Dutch republic's founding myths, which included the Humanist extrapolation of 'free' ancient ancestors. Swiss humanists had likewise discovered the origins of their nation in the Helvetians. These Batavians and Helvetians would, in the Revolutionary Era of the late eighteenth century, suggest the names of the new 'Batavian' and 'Helvetian' republics.

Medieval history played a more significant role than antiquity for the Swiss, however, and especially with regard to such concepts as *concordia*, *pax* and *libertas*. Olaf Mörke suggests that the more static Dutch myths tended to neglect the republic's – obvious – inner conflicts, while the Swiss remained conscious of the dangers and internal tensions by dynamically applying historical examples. The glorious past referred to the entire federation for both nations, but local historical references seemed to have been more common in the Dutch towns. Meanwhile, in sixteenth-century Switzerland references to the Confederation in town halls only began to give way in the late seventeenth century to an iconography that focussed on single cantons as sovereign republics.

PART IV Political theory and historiography were sources of inspiration for how artists represented the Swiss and Dutch republics that had to cope with the insecurity of theoretical legitimacy in an often unfriendly international environment. The importance of art during the Dutch Republic's Golden Age is so obvious that it raises questions about the possibility of 'republican art'. These issues are discussed by Michael North and William Eisler. North wonders whether there is any real difference between the production and consumption of the (visual) arts in a republic and in a monarchy. The production of crafts played a role in both countries, but was more decisive in the United Provinces because the quantity and quality of the demand was more dynamic there. As North demonstrates, landscape paintings became really popular in both countries, developing into an export product for painters in both the Dutch Republic and Switzerland. This pictorial celebration of the geography of one's country seems at first sight to be merely a realistic photographic rendering, but was actually imbued with moral suggestions about life and society.¹⁹ The motives and public use of art in the two republics is the source of more similarities, as William Eisler's chapter shows.

Interestingly, the Dassier medal workshop in Geneva offered its medals to the princes of Orange in the same way that they offered them to monarchs. The King of France would, however, have been uncomfortable with the history of the Roman republic, produced on a series of medals for the stadholder, with whose self-image it resonated much better. The Dassier medals often used motifs borrowed directly from Dutch political history, which expressed reconciliation and concord within the republic.

PART V The exchange of visual motifs was one of many political, cultural and economic interactions between the two republics. In the sixteenth century, many Dutchmen studied at the Calvinist academy in Geneva, while in the seventeenth century, the flow of students turned around, when approximately 700 reformed Swiss students came to the Netherlands – especially Leiden – to further their studies. Moreover, Swiss regiments had served in the Dutch army since the 1690s, first in a series of wars against France, and until the nineteenth century fairly often in the Dutch colonies. The relationship was one-sided because the Dutch Republic had evolved into one of the world's great powers during the course of the seventeenth century and therefore required lots of soldiers. This imbalance created some awkward exchanges, as is evident in the efforts of François Louis de Pesmes de Saint-Saphorin from Berne who participated in the negotiations for the Peace of Utrecht in 1713. Stefan Altorfer-Ong, in his chapter, notes that one of Saint-Saphorin's objectives was the defensive military alliance of 1712. Money also came into the equation when Holland received a considerable loan from the mythical Bernese treasury. Saint-Saphorin ultimately tried to throw into the bargain a group of Anabaptists that the Bernese authorities tried to get rid of, which became a delicate issue because the tolerant Dutch disagreed with the harsh treatment the Bernese meted out to dissenters. The Dutch eventually turned the issue into a universal argument for the freedom of conscience. The fate of the Mennonites suggests how the Dutch and the Swiss had quite different ideas when it came to republican virtues. While the commercial and peace-oriented Dutch were constantly threatened by wars, civic and military Berne could develop peacefully and at the same time export war through its mercenaries.

This problem of squaring a political regime with economic expediency was passionately discussed in the eighteenth century by numer-

ous contemporaries, like Walter Harte and Montesquieu, whose ideas are analysed in Ida Nijenhuis's chapter. What type of economy was best suited for a republic? Some insisted that it had to be one based on commerce, and pointed to notable examples like Venice and the Dutch Republic. Others insisted it was one based on agriculture because they looked at the Swiss, or Ancient Rome, for that matter. The argument for commerce seemed the most compelling, as the Dutch did so extremely well in the seventeenth century. The argument for agriculture made a comeback in the eighteenth century because Dutch trade had fallen on hard times, while the agricultural Swiss were suddenly doing well. But the economy was just one aspect of the debate. There was also the underlying issue of national autonomy: could a country afford to rely on substantial food imports? Suddenly the Swiss began to look more prudent, and the Dutch were portrayed as too dependent on the volatile forces of chance. New ideas about luxury further cast this debate into yet another light.

The Swiss reformers during the Enlightenment also participated in these international debates. They wavered between autonomy and autarky, and the necessity of integrating the Confederation into the emerging world economy. Béla Kapossy, in his chapter, demonstrates that the Dutch played an ambiguous role. On the one hand, their Golden Age conjured up a myriad of opportunities for prosperity and freedom. Swiss intellectuals found the notion that tolerance could produce civic peace among religiously different sectors of the population particularly attractive, and that this form of civic peace seemed to provide the ideal springboard for further economic growth. In other words, the Dutch demonstrated, that contrary to the received wisdom of the time, civic peace imposed by government coercion was not a prerequisite for social stability. Instead, the Swiss and Dutch social models of pluriformity were potentially as powerful and successful as any dynastic state. On the other hand, Holland's decline during the eighteenth century suggested that prosperity could also easily lead to corruption, and that corruption, in turn, could lead to economic decline and social disintegration. More alarmingly, Holland's problems in the eighteenth century were not the result of some freak accident of history, but the inevitable outcome of the volatile nature of commerce itself. Holland's dependence on trade had made the country wealthy, but also led to its decline. It is no wonder then that Swiss reformers sought a formula that would provide the benefits of the Dutch model, but spare them its disadvantages.

PART VI The more an idealised ‘republicanism’ became the model for other countries in Europe, the more the existing republics had to face the need for reform. Montesquieu belonged to a growing number of enlightened authors who were seeking constitutional solutions that would avoid both the risk of an absolutist king’s arbitrary rule, and the inefficiencies and irrationality that riddled the republics that were governed by increasingly small and selfish elites. The city-states that once played a crucial role in the development of the republican state, and in the emergence of the Dutch and Swiss federations, was not an apt model for larger nations like France. The English ‘mixed constitution’ was as much a challenge for monarchies as it was for the free states, where members of the few ruling families decided on legislation and jurisdiction without the aid of written laws and without any notion of the separation of powers. Venice, the Netherlands and eventually even Switzerland – though cherished by many German philo-helvetists – not only became less appealing as political models, but also had to develop new coping mechanisms for the increased demand for political participation.

Geneva in particular became a kind of laboratory for revolutionary movements in the eighteenth century. However ‘patriots’ appeared almost everywhere to insist on the structural changes necessary for the strengthening of the old republics against both foreign aggression and internal strife. As Marc Lerner’s chapter points out, these republican patriots were quite in the vanguard of European radicalism in the late eighteenth century. Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s ideas, heavily influenced by his experience as a citizen of Geneva with its long struggle against the town’s patriciate, speak volumes. The Dutch Patriots also made their impact well before 1789. Both Swiss and Dutch radicals could be – and in fact have been – mistaken for traditionalists, who couched their proposals in a discourse that hearkened back to earlier times. Lerner points out that in one sense, both republics had constitutions that offered their citizens much of what the French revolutionaries were clamouring for. It is probably no coincidence that the slogan ‘*liberté, fraternité, égalité*’ was a Dutch, rather than a French concept. However, while genuine democracy required a certain degree of centralisation, simply to destroy the numerous intervening institutions that prevented political equality, it proved extremely difficult to push through these democratic reforms precisely because of the embedded nature of citizenship in both the Swiss and the Dutch constitutions.²⁰

A comparison of the early modern Netherlands and Switzerland, as we have seen, does not produce a clear-cut opposition between the republican and monarchical models. The reality is much more ambiguous. The constitutional structures of the two countries both stemmed from the medieval Empire. The two treaties of Munster from 1648, which constituted the formalisation of their sovereignty according to international law, could even be interpreted as two exemptions within the Empire and the realm of imperial law at that time. Of course, the fact is that the princely power of the Habsburgs was either abolished (in Switzerland), or at least severely limited and eventually handed over to a 'native' dynasty, the house of Orange (in the Netherlands). But there were few new 'republican' institutions. Federal structures were essentially traditional solutions that allowed city-states and, in the Swiss case, even rural communities to maintain a high level of autonomy according to the rules of the Empire, but at its periphery, where the Emperors and princes could not actually impose their powers. The price for this autonomy (and later their sovereignty) was an inevitable loss in military and political efficiency. The Dutch solution of establishing the stadholder can be seen as semi-monarchic, leading to a strong patronage network and actually preparing for the formal enthronement of the House of Orange in the nineteenth century.²¹

The strategic position as a neutral buffer between Habsburg and Bourbon Empires allowed the Swiss to avoid having to install a stadholder-like commander-in-chief. This would probably have been inevitable in a case involving prolonged warfare with one of its neighbouring monarchies.

The Swiss and Dutch republics realised that the federal model was the only structure that was able to cope with the many internal diversities among the small autonomous units. But it was also an accomplishment of the republican model as such, to guarantee integration and the participation of great numbers of citizens in the public weal, and stabilise complex religious arrangements. By fostering internal competition and differentiation, the republics adapted quite well to changing economic and social environments. In the eighteenth century, the Dutch commercial republic and – despite its predominantly urban and proto-industrial wealth – the agrarian Swiss republic could emerge as models for economically successful and liberal con-

stitutions. However, as objects of a pan-European reform discourse, the two republics were also integral parts of an Ancien Régime dominated by monarchy and aristocracy, which was obvious even in areas such as art production and public and international law. The Dutch and the Swiss elites adapted to this framework, usually willingly. For the Swiss in particular, republicanism was not a reaction against the dynastic state, but a positive combination of their own particular history with available political theories and practices, all contributing to the Swiss' republican identity. When political reform became urgent in the eighteenth century, the two republics played a very important role in the discussion about alternatives to royal absolutism. Eventually, their model had to give way to the universal idea of the 'new' republic as it emerged in the USA and France. When the Ancien Régime came to an end in circa 1800, this also spelled an end to the Dutch and Swiss confederations. Nonetheless, their republican experience, especially in the Swiss Confederation, provided a framework of historical continuity which made it easier to cope with the new structures of the national state and a liberal society.

Notes

- 1 On the origins of the modern state, see the seven volume series published by Oxford University Press, *The origins of the modern state in Europe, 13th-18th centuries*, under the general editorial supervision of Wim Blockmans and Jean-Philip Genet (Oxford 1995-2001), and Wolfgang Reinhard, *Geschichte der Staatsgewalt in Europa: Eine vergleichende Verfassungsgeschichte Europas von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (Munich 1999).
- 2 Most famously perhaps in Ivo Schöffer, 'Did Holland's Golden Age coincide with an age of crisis?', in: Geoffrey Parker and Lesley M. Smith (eds), *The General Crisis of the Seventeenth Century* (London 1978), 83-109; for a similar argument of Swiss 'exceptionalism' in the long run, see Herbert Lüthy's essay from 1961: 'Die Schweiz als Antithese', in: ead., *Essays I: 1949-1963 (Gesammelte Werke, vol. 3)* (Zurich 2003), 410-430.
- 3 Martin van Gelderen and Quentin Skinner (eds), *Republicanism: A shared European heritage* 2 vols. (Cambridge 2002).
- 4 Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990-1990* (Oxford 1990).
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- 10 For the historian's endorsement, see Heinz-Gerhard Haupt and Jürgen Kocka (eds), *Geschichte und Vergleich. Ansätze und Ergebnisse international vergleichender Geschichtsschreibung* (Frankfurt am Main and New York 1996).
- 11 State-of-the-art surveys are provided in James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer (eds), *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge 2003); the most interesting methodological proposal is still Charles C. Ragin, *The Comparative Method: Moving beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies* (Berkeley, etc. 1987).
- 12 For a helpful introduction to those varieties: Charles Tilly, *Big Structures, Large Processes, Huge Comparisons* (New York 1984), chaps. 4-8.
- 13 J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton 1973), 75.
- 14 Quoted in translation from Herbert H. Rowen (ed.), *The Low Countries in Early Modern Times* (London 1972), 70.
- 15 General statements to this effect have been offered by Robert D. Putnam in two influential studies: *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton 1992); *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York 2000). See also Jan Luiten van Zanden and Maarten Prak, 'Towards an economic interpreta-

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- 18 Karl Mommsen, *Auf dem Wege zur Staatssouveränität. Staatliche Grundbegriffe in Basler juristischen Doktordisputationen des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts* (Berne 1970).
- 19 See also the recent work by Boudewijn Bakker, *Landschap en wereldbeeld van Van Eyck tot Rembrandt* (Bussum 2004).
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- 21 See also Olaf Mörke, 'Stadholder' oder 'Staetholder'? *Die Funktion des Hauses Oranien und seines Hofes in der politischen Kultur der Republik der Vereinigten Niederlande im 17. Jahrhundert* Niederlande-Studien, vol. 11 (Münster 1997).

PART I

Republican Structures

1 'The League of Discordant Members' or How the Old Swiss Confederation Operated and How it Managed to Survive for so Long

Andreas Würgler

In circa 1500, probably nobody would have dared to bet on the longevity of the Swiss Confederation, considering its location in the centre of Europe; its small size; its small population, which was estimated at circa 600,000 in 1500 and some 1.6 million in 1800, and its particularly weak political structure, which lacked any kind of strong dynastic centre. And yet it somehow ended up being one of the most durable confederations in the history of the world. This raises the question of how it survived for so long. This question can certainly serve as the subject for much discussion.

1 How the Old Swiss Confederation Functioned

In order to sketch how the early Swiss Confederation functioned in the period from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries, this chapter will highlight three major points: 1. the Confederation's complexity, 2. its diversity and 3. its flexible organisational structure.

Complexity

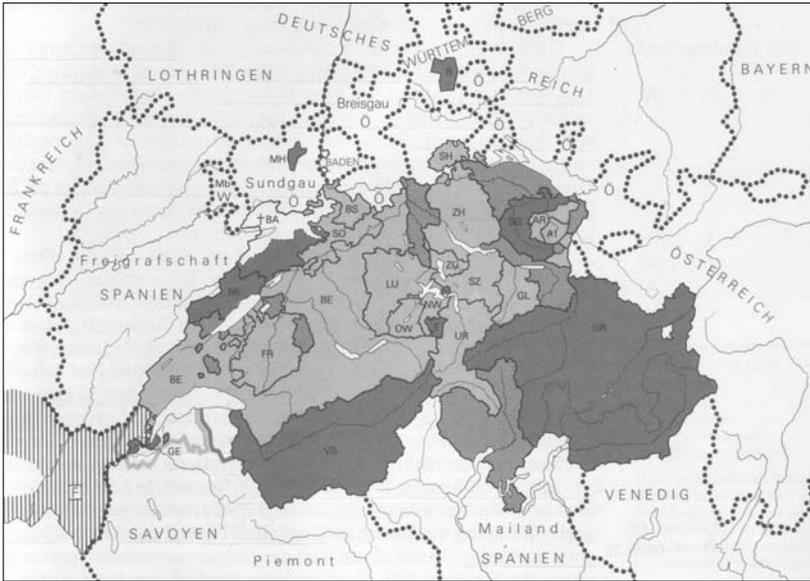
In contrast to other short-lived or less complicated early-modern confederations such as the Swabian League (1488-1534) or the Union of Utrecht in the Northern Netherlands (1579-1795), the Swiss Confederation was not united by one single confederation treaty. Instead, the *Corpus helveticum*, which consisted of thirteen cantons (grey areas on the map), was tied together by at least a dozen treaties among the participating cantons. These treaties were sealed between 1291 and 1513 and unlimited in time. But only the last one,

<i>Canton (year of the treaty)</i>	<i>Constitution</i>	<i>Confession</i>	<i>Share of population 1798 (%)</i>
<i>Uri</i> 1291	communal assembly („Landsgemeinde“)	Catholic	2
<i>Schwyz</i> 1291	communal assembly	Catholic	3
<i>Unterwalden</i> <i>Obwalden</i> 1315 <i>Nidwalden</i> 1291	communal assembly communal assembly communal assembly	Catholic Catholic Catholic	2
<i>Luzern</i> 1332	city (patrician)	Catholic	9
<i>Zürich</i> 1351	city (guilds)	Reformed 1524	18
<i>Zug</i> 1352	communal assembly (city + rural districts)	Catholic	1
<i>Glarus</i> 1352	communal assembly communal assembly communal assembly	bi-confessional 1529	2
		Catholic	
		Reformed	
<i>Bern</i> 1353	city (patrician)	Reformed 1528	41
<i>Freiburg</i> 1481	city (patrician)	Catholic	6
<i>Solothurn</i> 1481	city (patrician)	Catholic	5
<i>Basel</i> 1501	city (guilds)	Reformed 1529	4
<i>Schaffhausen</i> 1501	city (guilds)	Reformed 1529	2
<i>Appenzell</i> 1513 <i>Innerrhoden</i> <i>Ausserrhoden</i>	communal assembly communal assembly communal assembly	biconfessional 1524	5
		Catholic 1597	
		Reformed 1597	

Figure 1: Structure of the old Swiss Confederation (to 1798)

between the twelve cantons and Appenzell, the last to join the league, was signed by all thirteen cantons in 1513. This related to the relationship between the twelve former cantons and newcomer Appenzell, but not to the relations between the twelve ‘old’ cantons among each other.

Due to the great number of treaties it is not surprising that membership of the Confederation did not mean the same thing for each member. One of the major differences was between the so-called ‘Eight Old Cantons’ which joined the Confederation before 1353



Map 1: The Swiss Confederation and its Neighbours in 1601

Cantons (grey)
 Condominiums (hatched)
 Allied Cantons (dark)

Cantons

AI = Appenzell
 Innerrhoden
 AR = Appenzell
 Ausserrhoden
 BE = Bern
 BS = Basel
 FR = Freiburg
 GL = Glarus
 LU = Luzern
 NW = Nidwalden
 OW = Obwalden
 SH = Schaffhausen
 SO = Solothurn
 SZ = Schwyz
 UR = Uri
 ZG = Zug
 ZH = Zurich

Allied Cantons

BA = prince-bishopric of
 Basle
 BI = Biel
 GE = Geneva
 GR = Grisons
 MH = Mühlhausen
 NE = Neuenburg
 R = Rottweil
 SG = St Gallen (Abbot and
 City)
 VS = Valais

Neighbours

F = to France 1601
 Mb = Montbéliard (to
 Württemberg)
 Ö = to Österreich (Aus-
 tria)

Map taken from:
 Geschichte der Schweiz
 und der Schweizer, vol. 2,
 Basel / Frankfurt a. M.: Hel-
 bing & Lichtenhahn, 1983,
 pp. 36-37.

and the 'Five New Cantons' which were included only between 1481 and 1513 (fig. 1). The latter had a restricted autonomy in the realm of foreign politics and had to remain neutral to try to mediate conflicts between members – which they did, for example, in the religious civil wars of 1531, 1656 and 1712. But the new cantons had one vote each, just like the older cantons in the Swiss Diet (*Tagsatzung*¹) – the assembly of canton deputies and the only confederate institution. This underlines the fact that the political system was based on a voluntary horizontal oath (or *coniuratio*) that linked autonomous political units together as equal members and not, as was common in monarchic Europe, based on a feudal oath that created a hierarchical relationship between subjects and ruler.²

This complexity is also related to those territories that were bought, conquered or acquired in some other way, and were then jointly governed as condominiums (*Gemeine Herrschaften*) by the two, two-and-half, six, seven, eight or twelve cantons that had participated in the acquisition (hatched areas on the map). However, none of the condominiums were ruled by all of the thirteen cantons together. Nevertheless, these common territories forced the cantons to monitor the financial accounts every year, thus initiating the perpetuation of diets and conferences and thus the steady communication among the cantons.

Another important aspect of this complex situation is the fact that the Swiss cantons were entangled in various alliances with other European powers, such as the hereditary treaty between all of the cantons and Habsburg-Austria (1511). In 1521, most of the cantons, and by 1614, all of them, had entered into an alliance with France, which was renewed several times over the period 1549-1777 and lasted until the end of the old Swiss Confederation in 1798.³ Besides these long-lived, general treaties there were also several partial alliances, like the treaty between the Catholic cantons (excluding Fribourg) and the Duke of Savoy (1560), or between the Catholic cantons (now excluding Solothurn) and the Spanish Monarchy (1587), which was in some way the successor of the capitulation with Milan; the latest of these had been ratified by all thirteen cantons in 1552. Minor Protestant alliances also existed, like the one between Zurich and Berne with Strasbourg (1588), the Count (Markgraf) of Baden (1612) or the Republic of Venice (1615/1706).

Moreover, some neighbouring regions were tied to the Swiss Confederation as Allied Cantons (*Zugewandte Orte*, the dark areas on

the map). The Swiss Confederation maintained various close treaties with these allies, which usually (with the exception of the principality of the Bishop of Basle) were of unlimited duration. These Allied Cantons could be linked to one, two, three, four, six, seven or all thirteen cantons. But neither the number of partners involved in the treaties, nor the quality of the treaties could guarantee that the Allies would have the right to regularly attend the Swiss diets and conferences. For religious and other reasons, the thirteen cantons seldom agreed on who was an ally and who was not; especially controversial were the cases of Rottweil, Mülhausen, Geneva and Neuchâtel.⁴

Diversity

The inner workings of the various members was diverse. Even if the thirteen cantons together formed a unified territory, their geography, religious and political structures were a medley; very different and yet very intertwined at the same time (cf. Fig. 1). When we look at religion, we see that seven of the thirteen cantons were Catholic, four reformed and two either mixed or bi-confessional. Constitutionally, five of the cantons were rural and democratic (*Landsgemeindeverfassung*), seven were urban, four of which had a patrician-based constitution and three had a guild-based constitution, of which the last one, Zug, had both a rural democratic constitution and a city constitution. Furthermore, the cantons of Unterwalden and Appenzell were divided into two half-cantons – which, of course, happened at different times, for different reasons and in different ways.

The various types of constitutions implied various degrees of political participation by the (male) voting population. In the rural democratic cantons, the sovereign power was held by the popular assembly (*Landsgemeinde*) where all natives over 14 or 16 years of age and able to bear arms could vote in elections and on major political issues (i.e., war and peace, public accounts, mandating of envoys, etc.). In the urban cantons, however, political participation was mostly restricted to a tiny elite of the urban area's citizens. Nevertheless, until the early seventeenth century, some plebiscitary elements remained, which gave political decision-making powers to the capital's citizens, and the countryside's peasants.⁵

On the confederate level, the cantons were all equal in principle. Each canton had one vote in the federal assembly, the Swiss Diet, regardless of the number of deputies who actually attended the meetings. The size of a canton did not influence the number of votes. This

means that Berne, by far the largest canton, representing forty per cent of the total population of all thirteen cantons, had one vote, just like the smallest canton, Zug, with its one percent of the total national population.⁶ Canton deputies mostly acted upon written instructions based on imperative mandates, but, of course, many situations arose where deputies had some room for action. However, important decisions always had to be confirmed by each canton's sovereign council.

The allied cantons, too, were very different from each other in terms of religion, type of constitution and status. Among the allied cantons there were counts, princes, a prince-bishop, a prince-abbot, three imperial cities, a territorial town (a town that is subject to a prince's territory) and two confederate republics.⁷

Flexibility

Co-operation between the cantons was characteristically flexible. They consistently and sometimes simultaneously utilised a variety of diets, conferences, embassies and correspondents. The number of diets and conferences per year varied according to circumstances and needs and could be anywhere from five or six to as many as fifty or even sixty per year.⁸ Their flexibility is evident in the fact that the number of participants at the conferences varied greatly depending upon the issue under discussion. Stable alliances emerged from the general diets of the thirteen cantons (as well as some of the allied cantons), the religious conferences held by either the Catholic or the Protestant cantons or the conferences that dealt with the condominiums. Moreover, a wide range of regional or topical meetings were organised on a fairly regular basis. All of these conferences – and that is an important point – operated according to the same (unwritten) procedures developed by the general diet in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In the late sixteenth century, there were approximately fifty different kinds of meetings that were held at least twice, with another forty kinds that were held just once.⁹ Thus, problems and controversial issues could be handled at the lowest institutional levels, reducing the distances that needed to be travelled and the total time needed for the procedures themselves. Local meetings also reduced costs and solutions were more often found because they were more likely to be appropriate to local circumstances and more acceptable to the people concerned.¹⁰

The conflict management function of the Swiss Diets represented

another aspect of the nation's flexibility. The confederates often applied arbitration and mediation procedures in similar and simultaneous ways, often switching dynamically from one to the other when necessary.¹¹ The Swiss preferred political bargaining to arbitrary jurisdiction and especially to the court suits following the Roman law, because bargaining was faster, cheaper and socially more productive.¹²

The Swiss confederate system practised flexibility in its relationships with its nearest neighbours, by integrating them into the confederation on two levels, either as full cantons (until 1513) or as allies. The integration of an ally could later be annulled if necessary either by the Swiss canton or the allies themselves (Mülhausen, Rotweil, Besançon) or merely suspended (Three Leagues in the Grisons, Valais). However, the full cantons could not actually secede from the Confederation.

2 Why has it been so enduring?

When considering Switzerland with its clear lack of a centralised (monarchical) power and central courts of appeal, plus the numerous revolts and social conflicts it had to endure, early modern Europeans often wondered whether such a loose Confederation was capable of establishing order and surviving. Others wondered why this loose 'league of discordant elements'¹³ had not yet dissolved or shattered into many pieces.¹⁴

The simplest response is to refer to explanations from the time in question. Many contemporaries, such as the English republican Algernon Sidney,¹⁵ and several French ambassadors, turned to the notion of 'miracle'. Others explained this longevity in theological terms, like the French representative who said the Swiss Confederation was a '*confusion divinément conservée*'¹⁶ or in Latin: '*Dei providentia et hominum confusione Helvetia regitur*'.¹⁷ More secular observers preferred to describe it as the result of chance rather than as a miracle, thereby hinting at the role of contingency in history.

Further arguments regarding the longevity of the Confederation have been raised by contemporary witnesses as well as modern historians. They can be distinguished by either factors contributing to independence, or factors contributing to inner stability.

Independence

French diplomacy and political theory offered a second contemporary explanation for the surprisingly long existence of this ‘composite Republic’.¹⁸ This argument states that the Swiss Confederation on several occasions would have dissolved had French diplomacy not mediated between the quarrelling cantons to return some stability to the system.¹⁹ Even Napoleon in the early nineteenth century stated: ‘Your history proves that your civil wars could never have been resolved without efficient French intervention’.²⁰ Although some modern Swiss historians continue to support this ‘French’ view,²¹ most nineteenth- and twentieth-century Swiss national historiography has contributed differing and partly contradictory arguments to the debate. Although the Swiss Confederation started as a peace movement in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, which sought to replace feuds with institutionalised courts of arbitration within the Confederation’s territory,²² European contemporaries and modern historians only began recognising it as a distinct political entity because of its military successes against the Habsburgs (1315, 1386, 1415), Burgundy (1476/77), the Swabian League (1499) and in Northern Italy (1495–1515/25).²³ The basis for this military co-operation consisted of various federal treaties, all of which contained clauses regarding mutual military assistance. Historian William Rappard, who moved from Harvard to Geneva in the early twentieth century, argued that the quest for ‘collective security’ was the main motive for co-operation among the rural and urban cantons. Their infantry militia was modern, innovative and very successful in fighting medieval cavalry – Italian humanists coined the phrase that the Swiss militia had been ‘undefeated since Caesar’.²⁴ This image of course helped promote their status as mercenaries.

A new European game thus commenced, which the emperor Maximilian I in a letter to his successor Charles v described as ‘pulling the Swiss to our side’.²⁵ But others also embraced this motto, and with greater success, in particular, the French kings from François I and Henri IV to Louis XIV and Louis XVI with their respective alliances in 1521, 1602, 1663, 1777.²⁶ Napoleon Bonaparte in as late as 1803 declared: ‘We need to have the Swiss on our side and that is why we are helping them’.²⁷ Their renown as excellent mercenaries is a key element in the special role that the Swiss Confederation played in early modern Europe. First, most European monarchies and republics

sought mercenary troops. The cantons received considerable sums of money from the European powers for the contracting of Swiss mercenaries that was the equivalent of 20 to 60 percent of the state's total revenues.²⁸ Due to these revenues the Swiss cantons were able to build their states and afford politicians without imposing taxes.²⁹ Secondly, the mercenaries preserved the image of a Swiss military elite, even while the Confederation gradually lost ground to neighbouring states in the rush to establish standing armies.³⁰ Thirdly, the mercenaries abroad were able to perform a useful function back home. All of the contracts involving the engagement of mercenaries included the stipulation that in times of war Swiss authorities could retrieve their mercenaries,³¹ to defend the Confederation against attacks. By serving abroad they were financed and educated at the expense of the foreign states. This arrangement, however, meant there was the risk that Swiss mercenaries could end up fighting on both sides of the battlefield and thus fighting one another. This type of 'exported civil war' was common from the late fifteenth to the early nineteenth centuries.³² Fourthly, the supplying of mercenaries meant that the Confederation gained valuable commercial advantages in the areas of trade, taxes and toll privileges for their own merchants in France, or cheaper imports of crucial provisions, such as grain and salt from Burgundy (Franche Comté), Swabia or Milan. Finally, the mercenaries probably had a favourable effect on levels of social stress and latent conflicts in Switzerland, because being a mercenary was one way of escaping unemployment. In this sense the mercenary service corps served as a safety valve, as a hopefully temporary outlet.³³ The cynical aspect of this trade in soldiers for hire, which basically consisted of, as Zurich reformer Huldrych Zwingli put it, selling the nation's sons like cattle to a butcher, proceeded with relatively little criticism, except short intermezzos during the Reformation and the Enlightenment.³⁴

One effect of the trade in mercenaries was the Confederation's lack of troops and technical potential to make wars of aggression. Therefore the Confederation had to engage in a politics referred to as 'remaining seated', or remaining officially uninvolved in wars. This policy eventually evolved into a position of 'neutrality'. The very term 'neutrality' begins to occur more frequently in the seventeenth century, although it does not yet have all of the elements of its modern meaning.³⁵

As a league of republics, the cantons for the most part could avoid

the dynastic mechanisms of succession and hereditary wars that plagued much of the rest of early modern Europe.³⁶ The threat was, nonetheless, that the country would be divided between the great neighbouring countries, which is what happened to Poland in the late eighteenth century. The Polish Partition caused a great deal of anxiety among the Swiss political elites. But luckily, the secular differences between France and Habsburg-Austria were – with the exception of the Seven Years War (1756-1763) when these powers were allies – a stable precondition for an independent Swiss Confederation.³⁷

On the other hand, Switzerland's confessional parties abstained from joining their confessional 'brothers' in the Holy Roman Empire in times of war on several occasions and managed to remain neutral in solidarity with the rest of the Swiss cantons, at the expense of their confessional 'brothers' abroad. This was what happened to the Protestants during the Schmalkaldic War (1546/47) and was the fate of both Protestants and Catholics during the Thirty Years War (1618-1648).

Inner stability

European observers were often sceptical about the enigmatic Swiss federalist system. They doubted its ability to establish and maintain order, or as contemporaries used to say, 'good policing'.³⁸ Early modern commentators pointed to the lack of a monarch as an obvious sign of disorder, while today's historians prefer to emphasise Switzerland's large number of social conflicts.³⁹ But the number of domestic conflicts does not necessarily condemn a political system. The number of disputes is less important than how they get resolved. Swiss conflict-management was for the most part characterised as smooth and successful.⁴⁰ The permanent state of conflict may have necessitated the creation of a specific political culture of 'Swiss mediation' (*eidgenössische Vermittlung*).⁴¹ In 1529, Strasbourg's mediator in Switzerland's confessional tensions, Jacob Sturm, noticed: 'You Confederates are wondrous folk. When you are at loggerheads, you are really united, for even then you don't forget your old friendship'.⁴²

Internal stability was sustained by various economic structures. A complex division of labour kept the plains dependent on the milk and cattle produced in the mountains, while the mountain cantons depended on the grain that came from the plains and foreign markets.

These mutual dependencies also involved capital markets and credit systems. Economic historian Martin Körner, in referring to confessional tensions and economic co-operation, coined the term '*solidarités financières suisses*', and summarised his findings by observing that economic interests took priority over confessional politics.⁴³

In terms of efficiency and the ability to solve serious problems, the Old Swiss Confederation was severely criticised by modern historians, who tended to emphasise its slow procedures, its lack of innovation and modernisation, and its inability to implement fundamental reforms.⁴⁴ This image was first created by various enlightened critics and later confirmed by some more recent historiography, and is not completely inaccurate, but it does refer mainly to the eighteenth century.⁴⁵ The confederate system was capable of finding new and long-lasting solutions to complex conflicts, when it became absolutely necessary such as the Treaty of Stans (1481), the confessional peace treaties signed in 1531, 1656 and 1712, or the organisation of its military defence in 1647, 1668 and 1702. Quarrels that occurred between cantons,⁴⁶ or within individual cantons, were sometimes resolved in original ways. For example, when the canton of Appenzell was formally split into two confessionally different parts in 1597, or one can point to the numerous peaceful settlements that Catholics and Protestants were able to arrange in Glarus (1529-1757).

In the sixteenth century, the Swiss Confederation was the first nation-state to come up with innovative political solutions for confessional divisions – solutions, which were later adopted in other parts of Europe.⁴⁷ These solutions were developed in order to govern the condominiums shared by cantons of both Catholic and Reformed confessions. The so-called 'Simultaneum' organised the way two different confessions utilised a single church in terms of time and space. Meanwhile, the so-called 'parity' solution installed committees (to resolve confessional issues) with equal numbers of Protestant and Catholic members. Both of these instruments were developed in the peace treaties of 1529 and 1531, and later adopted in the Empire (*Augsburger Religionsfrieden* 1555) and, in part, in France (local peace treaties). The famous principle of '*cuius regio, eius religio*' was first established in the Swiss cantons. The confederate solution to the confessional issue has, according to French historian Olivier Christin, enabled confessional coexistence, thus providing a degree of tolerance, which, for example, French Absolutism was unable (or unwilling) to agree to in the long run.⁴⁸

This coexistence did create some serious problems, however. Some observers, such as the British envoy Abraham Stanyan, who in 1714 went so far as to state that the Confederation was deeply divided:

So that one may say, the Reformation gave a Blow, which has split the Helvetick Body in two; For as the Interest of Religion enters more or less into all their publick Actions, the General diets are now only kept up, to regulate the Affairs to their common Bailliages, and to maintain an outward appearance of Union among them; whereas indeed all Publick Affairs of Consequence, are treated at the Particular diets of the two Religions.⁴⁹

It is true that both the complex Swiss Confederation as a whole and the single cantons individually, did not raise a standing army nor develop a modern bureaucracy, but they did provide relatively high levels of security and prosperity for their citizens and subjects. Travellers from Italy, France, Germany and Britain were surprised by how safe the roads were in Switzerland.⁵⁰ Elie Brackenoffer, who travelled from Alsace to Basel in 1643, mailed his pistols home, because he did not expect to need them during his trip to the cantons. Even the transport of large sums of gold coins from one canton to another was done by one or two men, without extra guards or military escorts.⁵¹ What was most remarkable was that this level of safety was not due to a well-ordered police state with a huge security apparatus.

Meanwhile, Swiss prosperity can be measured not only by the general absence of public debts and state treasuries with surpluses, but also by the riches of the elite, although not displayed ostentatiously, thus observing republican standards and hiding the disproportional division of wealth from the Swiss public.⁵² The dividends of peace and foreign pensions meant that the cantons in general did not need to tax their citizens as long as they did not maintain a standing army or devise a modern bureaucracy. The cantons in that time did not dare to establish a modern state because of the massive peasant protests against new taxes in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The absence of the direct taxation of private households meant that many Swiss citizens could invest early on in the newly emerging proto-industrial businesses.⁵³

Many enlightened thinkers criticised the fact that Switzerland lacked universities – with the exception of Basel – academies and art

schools. The most famous Swiss scientists and academics chose to emigrate to make their careers abroad: for example, mathematician Johann Bernoulli (1667-1748) emigrated to the Netherlands and his mathematician son Daniel (1700-1783) lived in Venice and Russia; Leonhard Euler (1707-1783) went to Russia and Prussia; while the physician-poet Albrecht von Haller (1708-1778) held a chair at Göttingen University; the philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) emigrated to France; Johann Georg Zimmermann (1728-1795) lived and worked in Hanover and Berlin; and the painter Johann Heinrich Füssli (1741-1825) moved to London, where he became the Director of the Royal Academy. This migration occurred because the Swiss republics failed to develop an academic infrastructure and therefore deprived themselves of their intellectuals. However, on the other hand, most of the discussions about reform in eighteenth-century Europe took place in private enlightened social circles, rather than in the universities or academies. Thus, in Switzerland many of the social and political innovations were debated in societies like the Helvetic Society, which was founded in 1762, rather than in official cantonal or federal institutions (e.g. city councils or the Swiss Diet).

This political disdain for intellectuals had its parallels on a social level, where access to citizenship and consequently to economic rights and political participation became increasingly restrictive. Beginning in the sixteenth century, urban and rural communities were increasingly limiting the admission of new citizens so that the advantages of communal membership remained between a limited number of established families. By the eighteenth century, however, this development had caused serious problems in the recruiting of talented politicians among this now very tiny elite. Moreover, urban residents or members of communes excluded from political and economic participation became dissatisfied and rather than emigrating, they began voicing their opposition. The consequence of these protests was that some of the rebels were exiled.⁵⁴ In weighing the advantages and disadvantages one could ask, what an attractive political alternative to the Confederation would have been for the cantons? There seems to have been no alternatives because no other system at the time offered the cantons the levels of security and autonomy at such low costs and risks as their own confederation.

Conclusion

Cooperation within the Swiss Confederation required a high level of sensitivity to the specific *complexity* of the political constellations, a good instinct for what was politically feasible and the cantons' self-restriction in favour of the Confederation as a whole. Many European observers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were surprised to see that Berne, for example, although by far the largest and most powerful canton, never insisted on being first in the ceremonial rankings of cantons. In his brilliant 1714 analysis of the Swiss system, the British resident in Switzerland, Abraham Stanyan, explained why: 'it is well known, that their common Enemies use all their Arts to raise Jalousies [*sic*] between them, and to encourage Berne to claim the Precedence of Zurich in Rank, as it already has it in Power. But ... Berne has been hitherto wise enough to reject such Insinuations.'⁵⁵ Because the boundaries between the two confessions, between rural and urban cantons, between rival economic and diplomatic options, were entangled in a variety of ways, there were no distinct lines where the complex network of interests and treaties could have been easily drawn.

Even if they did not want to, the cantons ultimately accepted their *diversity* (otherness). The confessionally homogenous cantons accepted a permanent confessional coexistence on the level of the Confederation. They respected their various constitutions: rural democracy, patrician or guild-based city governments; with regard to the allied cantons they even co-operated with secular and ecclesiastical princes. They mutually respected each other's territories, which meant that even after the Civil Wars, the cantons at most reorganised their shares into condominiums (1712),⁵⁶ but they did not redraw the borders of the cantons.

The collaborative process in the Swiss Diet and the various types of conferences developed out of practice, not theory, and over a long period of time. The processes were only vaguely formalised, which preserved a high degree of *flexibility*, which allowed them to adapt to new circumstances. When the Confederation was in turmoil, the cantons would meet more often; however, when there were no urgent problems to resolve, they met very rarely. The cantons established different types of conferences to handle different types of problems, but they all followed the same procedures as the General Diet.

The Swiss Confederation was a voluntary system, that was organ-

ised on a small scale, but in a complex manner based on the notion of formal equality, and by implementing flexible and highly participatory procedures and above all, by stipulating *permanent communication* between all of the cantons. Mere days after the end of the Civil Wars, the Swiss Diet was already assembled and ready to begin negotiations among the warring regions.

The Swiss Confederation had a federal system that has been operating longer than any other in world history.⁵⁷ However, the end came with the rise of Napoleon. The Swiss Confederation was, at least temporarily (until 1803), abolished by expanding and revolutionary France – as were many other political regimes in Europe such as the absolutist princes, whether they were enlightened or not; the ecclesiastical or secular monarchs (including the Pope), or honourable republics (Venice), and even the most powerful confederation of the early modern period, the United Provinces of the Northern Netherlands. As Abraham Stanyan predicted in 1714: ‘If they continue so prudent, as to avoid this Snare, ‘tis probable the Switzers may preserve their Liberty, as the Grecians did, between two Great Princes, ‘till such a Resistless Power, as that of the Romans, arise again, and over-run all Europe with its Conquests.’⁵⁸ But even then, the cause of the Swiss Confederation’s dissolution was not due to discord among its own member cantons.

Notes

- 1 This text dates from April 2004 and was corrected in April 2006 and January 2008. I would like to thank the editors of this volume for their very interesting, critical and useful comments. – Andreas Würigler, ‘Tagsatzung’, in: *Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz* HLS, (Internet version, also in French “Diète fédérale” and Italian “Dieta federale”, at: www.hls.ch). Andreas Würigler, *Die Tagsatzung der Eidgenossen. Politik, Kommunikation und Symbolik einer repräsentativen Institution im europäischen Kontext*, Habilitationsschrift masch. Berne 2004. For some aspects of the late medieval diets, see Michael Jucker, *Gesandte, Schreiber, Akten. Politische Kommunikation auf eidgenössischen Tagsatzungen im Spätmittelalter* (Zurich, 2004).
- 2 Peter Blicke, ‘Friede und Verfassung. Voraussetzungen und Folgen der Eidgenossenschaft von 1291’, in: Historischer Verein der Fünf Orte (eds), *Innerschweiz und frühe Eidgenossenschaft. Jubiläumsschrift 700 Jahre Eidgenossenschaft* (Olten 1990), vol. I, 15-202.

- 3 In his introduction, George Livet (ed.), *Suisse (Recueil des instructions données aux ambassadeurs et ministres de France des Traités de Westphalie jusqu'à la Révolution française, 30/1)* (Paris 1983), ix-clxi, esp. ix-xii, uses the notion of 'complexity' to describe the relation between France and Switzerland.
- 4 Another dimension of complexity to discuss would be the relations between the Swiss Cantons and the Holy Roman Empire: Ten cantons were considered as free imperial territories, whereas the free status of the three cantons that joined the Confederation after 1499 (Basel, Schaffhausen and Appenzell) was highly contested by the Empire. Some of the ecclesiastical lords within the confederate territories even managed to remain official members of the Empire until the end of the Confederation in 1798.
- 5 Cf. the so-called *Ämteranfragen*, esp. in Zurich and Berne from the fifteenth to the early seventeenth centuries, André Holenstein, 'Politische Partizipation und Repräsentation von Untertanen in der alten Eidgenossenschaft. Städtische Ämteranfragen und ständische Verfassungen im Vergleich', in: Peter Blickle (ed.), *Landschaften und Landstände in Oberschwaben: Bäuerliche und bürgerliche Repräsentation im Rahmen des frühen europäischen Parlamentarismus* Oberschwaben: Geschichte und Kultur, vol. 5 (Tübingen 2000), 223-51; or the important involvement of the rural subjects of Zurich in the fundamental treaties of 1489 and 1531: *Zweiter Kappeler Landfriede 1531*, ed. by Ernst Walder (Berne 1945), 5.
- 6 Figures refer to 1798, cf. Rudolf Braun, *Das ausgehende Ancien Régime in der Schweiz* (Göttingen 1984), 21.
- 7 Count of Greyerz (until 1555), Count, later Prince of Neuchâtel, Prince-Bishop of Basel, Prince-Abbot of St. Gallen, the imperial cities of St. Gallen, Rottweil, Mülhausen, the home town (of the Prince-Bishop of Basel) Biel, the confederate Republics of the Three Leagues in the Grisons and the Valais and the city republic of Geneva. Cf. Ulrich Im Hof, 'Ancien Régime', in: *Handbuch der Schweizer Geschichte*, vol. 2 (Zurich 1977), 752-53 (table); Andreas Würzler, Art. 'Eidgenossenschaft', in: *Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz* HLS, vol. 4 (Basel 2005), 114-21 (text without figures and images in German, French and Italian online: www.hls.ch).
- 8 In other words, up to ten times as many. Between five to six (e.g., 1471, 1472, 1680, and mostly during the eighteenth century), 50-60 (1529-1532). Sources: *Amtliche Sammlung der älteren eidgenössischen Abschiede* [1245-1798], 8 vols. in 22 parts, ed. by Jakob Kaiser et. al. (Zurich, etc., 1856-1886 [quoted hereafter as EA 1-8]). Analysis: Würzler, 'Tagsatzung', chaps. 2 and 3.

- 9 Based on the 758 meetings in the period 1556-1586 documented in EA 4/2. Thanks to Eva-Maria Laederach for counting the total number of meetings.
- 10 Very stimulating reading on these issues: J.L. Price, *Holland and the Dutch Republic in the Seventeenth Century: The Politics of Particularism* (Oxford 1994).
- 11 The most famous and best analysed examples may be the Treaty of Stans in 1481 ('Stanser Verkommnis'), Ernst Walder, *Das Stanser Verkommnis: Ein Kapitel eidgenössischer Geschichte* Beiträge zur Geschichte Nidwaldens, vol. 44 (Stans 1994), and the confederate politics during the early Reformation, Ernst Walder, 'Reformation und moderner Staat', in: Historischer Verein des Kantons Bern (ed.), *450 Jahre Berner Reformation* (Berne 1980), 441-583.
- 12 Josias Simler, *Regiment Gemeiner loblicher Eydgnoschafft*, 2nd edition Zurich 1577 [first edition 1576], also 179v-180r. Cf. Andreas Würzler, 'Aushandeln statt Prozessieren: Zur Konfliktkultur der alten Eidgenossenschaft im Vergleich mit Frankreich und dem Deutschen Reich (1500-1800)', *Traverse. Zeitschrift für Geschichte / Revue d'histoire* 8 (2001), 25-38.
13. [Ascanio Marso], *Der Discorso de i Sguizzeri des Ascanio Marso von 1558*. Mit verwandten Texten ed. by Leonhard Haas, Quellen zur Schweizer Geschichte, NF, 3. Abteilung, 6 (Basel 1956), 28-90, 42: '*Lega delli elementi discordi*'. The Italian diplomat Ascanio Marso served the Emperor as a resident or ambassador in Switzerland from 1549 to 1558.
- 14 Giovanni Battista Padavino, *Del governo e stato dei signori Svizzeri. Relazione fatta l'anno 1606* [e.g. 1608], ed. by Vittorio Ceresole (Venice 1874), 1-2.
- 15 Algernon Sidney (1698/1763) quoted in: Andreas Burckhardt, 'A league of friendly states: die Schweiz und ihr Bund im englischen Schrifttum des späten 17. und des 18. Jahrhunderts', *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Geschichte* 37 (1987), 387. Cf. James Harrington, quoted *ibid.*, pp. 387-9.
- 16 The Savoy ambassador Mellarede reported this sentence, written by the French ambassador to his King, 24. November 1703, in: Marso (1956), *Discorso*, 42n3. Swiss politicians used to quote the concept of divine grace in order to explain the maintaining of the so heterogeneous helvetic body, Andreas Ryff (1550-1603), *Liber Legationum*, ed. and introduced by Friedrich Meyer, *Basler Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Altertumskunde* 59 (1959), 14-5.
- 17 Even nowadays historians sometimes prefer the category 'miracle' to actual analysis, William Martin, *Histoire de la Suisse* (Lausanne 1974⁷),

- 90; Carl Pfaff, *Die Welt der Schweizer Bilderchroniken* (Schwyz 1991), 82.
18. ‘République composée’, Instruction à de La Barde, Paris, 18 December 1647, in: Georges Livet (ed.), *Suisse (Recueil des instructions données aux ambassadeurs et ministres de France des Traités de Westphalie jusqu’à la Révolution française, 30/1)* (Paris 1983), 9.
- 19 Jean Bodin shared and disseminated this view, cf. Jean Bodin, *Les six livres de la République* (Paris 1576) [quoted after the reprint of the Paris 1583 edition, Aalen 1977], book I, chapter 7, 112 (with an example from 1565). The French Ambassador de Puyzieulx in 1708 wrote that he had explained to the Swiss, ‘que la grande puissance du Roi étoit le plus sûr rempart de leur liberté’, Puyzieulx, ‘Mémoire sur la Manière dont j’ai traité les cantons en général 18. April 1708’, in: Jean de Boislisle (ed.), *Les Suisses et le Marquis de Puyzieulx ambassadeur de Louis XIV (1698-1708). Documents inédits précédés d’une notice historique* (Paris 1906), 85. For historiographic approaches to the French role in peace-making in Switzerland see Ferdinand Schmid, *Die Vermittlungsbemühungen des In- und Auslandes während der beiden Kappelerkriege* (Basel 1946), 48-57.
- 20 Napoleon in his Proclamation de St. Cloud, 30 septembre 1802 (8 vendémiaire an XI), in: Victor Monnier (ed.), *Bonaparte et la Suisse. Travaux préparatoires de l’Acte de Médiation (1803)* (Geneva-Basel-Munich 2003), 93: ‘Votre histoire prouve d’ailleurs que vos guerres intestines n’ont jamais pu se terminer que par l’intervention efficace de la France’.
- 21 Martin, *Histoire de la Suisse*, 120-1, and Charles Gilliard (1968), 43, both quoted in Martin H. Körner, *Solidarités financières suisses au XVIIe siècle. Contribution à l’histoire monétaire, bancaire et financière des cantons suisses et des Etats voisins* (Lausanne 1980), 387. Hans-Ulrich Jost, ‘Pour une histoire européenne de la Suisse’, *Traverse. Zeitschrift für Geschichte / Revue d’histoire* 1 (1994), 19-20, 23; Norbert Domeisen, *Schweizer Verfassungsgeschichte, Geschichtsphilosophie und Ideologie: Eine Untersuchung über die Auslegung der Verfassungsgeschichte der schweizerischen Eidgenossenschaft vom ausgehenden 15. Jahrhundert bis zum Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts durch die nationale Geschichtsschreibung* Europäische Hochschulschriften, 3/103 (Berne 1978), 40; François de Capitani, ‘Beharren und Umsturz (1648-1815)’, in: *Geschichte der Schweiz und der Schweizer*, vol. 2 (Basel and Frankfurt am Main 1983), 123-5.
- 22 Blickle, ‘Friede’.
- 23 Bernhard Stettler, *Die Eidgenossenschaft im 15. Jahrhundert: Die Suche nach einem gemeinsamen Nenner* (Zurich 2004).

- 24 Arnold Esch, *Der Alltag der Entscheidung: Beiträge zur Geschichte der Schweiz an der Wende vom Mittelalter zur Neuzeit* (Berne 1998), 112, 293, 338.
- 25 Maximilian to Karl, Innsbruck 18. Mai 1518, quoted in: Bettina Braun, *Die Eidgenossen, das Reich und das politische System Karls V.* Schriften zur Verfassungsgeschichte vol. 53 (Berlin 1997), 392.
- 26 Eduard Rott, 'Allianzen (französisch-schweizerische)', in: *Historisch-biographisches Lexikon der Schweiz*, vol. 1 (Neuenburg, 1921), 237-49; Rudolf Thommen, 'Friedensverträge und Bünde der Eidgenossen mit Frankreich 1444-1777', in: *Basler Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Altertumskunde* 15 (1916), 190ff.
- 27 'Il faut que nous ayons la Suisse pour nous, et qu'ainsi, nous fassions quelque chose pour elle', Bonaparte, 29 January 1803 [according to the notes of Roederer], in: Monnier, *Bonaparte et la Suisse*, 114.
- 28 Martin Körner, 'The Swiss Confederation', in: Richard Bonney, *The Rise of the Fiscal State in Europe, c. 1200-1815* (Oxford 1999), 327-57; Beat Immenhauser, Barbara Studer, 'Geld vor Glauben? Die Teilung Appenzells 1597 aus finanzgeschichtlicher Sicht', in: Peter Blickle, Peter Witschi (eds), *Appenzell und Oberschwaben. Begegnungen zweier Regionen in sieben Jahrhunderten* (Konstanz 1997), 177-99.
- 29 Cf. Simon Teuscher, *Bekannte – Klienten – Verwandte. Soziabilität und Politik in der Stadt Bern um 1500* Norm und Struktur, vol. 9 (Cologne, Weimar and Vienna 1998); Valentin Groebner, *Gefährliche Geschenke. Ritual, Politik und die Sprache der Korruption in der Eidgenossenschaft im späten Mittelalter und am Beginn der Neuzeit* Konflikte und Kultur – Historische Perspektiven, vol. 4 (Constance 2000).
- 30 Cf., e.g., Montesquieu, 'Pensées', in: [Charles de Secondat, Baron de la Brède et de] Montesquieu, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. by André Masson (Paris 1950-1955), vol. 2, 622: 'La Suisse est indomptable, parce qu'il n'y a pas un homme en Suisse qui ne soit pas armé & ne sçache manier les armes; & il n'y a guère d'État à qui la politique permette d'armer tous ses citoyens. Ils pourroient faire revenir leurs troupes de dehors. On trouveroit peu de vivres dans le pays; le pays seroit difficile par lui-même'.
- 31 Cf. Johann Conrad Faesi, *Genau und vollständige Staats- und Erdbeschreibung der ganzen Helvetischen Eidgenossenschaft, derselben Gemeinen Herrschaften und Zugewandten Orten.* (Zurich 1765-1768), vol. 1, 223-4.
- 32 Italy (Novara 1500); France, Religious Wars (Ivry 1590), Wars of Louis XIV (Malplaquet 1709); Spain (Napoleon 1808): Richard Feller, 'Bündnisse und Söldnerdienste', in: *Schweizer Kriegsgeschichte*, Heft 6 (Berne 1916), 36-9.

- 33 Cf. the contribution of Maarten Prak in this volume.
- 34 Zwingli called the Swiss military entrepreneurs ‘*bluotverkramer*’ (merchants of blood): ‘Sy sind den metzgeren glych, die das väch gen Costantz trybend’, quoted in: Ernst Walder, *Der Condottiere Walter Roll von Uri und die Beziehungen zwischen der Innerschweiz und Italien in der Wende zur Gegenreformation 1551-1561* (Berne 1948), 47. See also Samuel von Pufendorf, *Continuirte Einleitung Zu der Historie der vornehmsten Reiche und Staaten von Europa*, vol. 2 (Frankfurt am Main 1719), 653; Frederick II of Prussia, *Histoire de mon temps* (1746), ed. by Max Posner, (Leipzig 1879), 189. A Swiss answer in: Faesi, *Staats- und Erdbeschreibung* vol. 3, 223: ‘Swiss mercenaries are all volunteers, not forced; they are led by Swiss officers and thus educated in a Swiss manner.’
- 35 Andreas Suter, ‘Neutralität’, in: Manfred Hettling et al., *Kleine Geschichte der Schweiz* (Frankfurt am Main 1998), 133-88. Cf. the debate with: Thomas Maissen, ‘Neutralität als innen- und aussenpolitisches Argument’, in: *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 13 February 1999, p. 94, and Andreas Suter, ‘Die Entdeckung von Marignano’, in: *ibid.*, p. 93. For the beginnings of the historiographical debate cf. Paul Schweizer, *Geschichte der schweizerischen Neutralität*, 2 vols. (Frauenfeld 1895); Edgar Bonjour, *Geschichte der schweizerischen Neutralität* (Basel 1946; 2nd enlarged ed. 1965).
- 36 Thomas Maissen, ‘Disputatio de Helvetiis, an natura consentiant. Frühneuzeitliche Annäherungen an die Schweizer Konsensbereitschaft’, *Traverse* 8 (2001), 49.
- 37 As to the fears of the elite regarding being partitioned between France and Austria: Stephan Meyer, *Vorbote des Untergangs: Die Angst der Schweizer Aristokraten vor Joseph II.* (Zurich 1999).
- 38 Simler (1577), Regiment, fol. 10v. Cf. Fynes Moryson, *An Itinerary* (London, 1617; reprinted Amsterdam and New York 1971), part III, book IV, ch. 5, 257-8.
- 39 Marysia Morkowska, *Vom Stiefkind zum Liebling: Die Entwicklung und Funktion des europäischen Schweizbildes bis zur Französischen Revolution* (Zurich 1997), 39-41 (Wimpheling 1505). For the recent historiography cf. Maissen, ‘Disputatio’; Würgler, ‘Aushandeln statt Prozessieren’, 25-38; Würgler, Art. ‘Soziale Konflikte’, in: *HLS* online: www.hls.ch.
- 40 Andreas Würgler, *Unruhen und Öffentlichkeit. Städtische und ländliche Protestbewegungen im 18. Jahrhundert* Frühneuzeit-Forschungen, vol. 1 (Tübingen 1995); Würgler, ‘Soziale Konflikte’; Würgler, ‘Aushandeln’; Maissen, ‘Disputatio’.

- 41 Andreas Würgler, Art. 'Eidgenössische Vermittlung', in: *Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz HLS*, vol. 4 (Basel 2005), 127-8 (online: www.hls.ch).
- 42 This statement was related by Heinrich Bullinger (1504-1575) in his *Reformationsgeschichte*, ed. by J.J. Hottinger, H.H. Vögeli, vol. 2 (Frauenfeld 1838), 183. The English translation in: Thomas Brady, *Protestant Politics: Jacob Sturm (1489-1553) and the German Reformation* (Atlantic Highlands, N.J. 1995), 67.
43. 'Que les intérêts économiques l'emportaient sur les politiques confessionnelles': Körner, *Solidarités*, 440.
- 44 Wilhelm Oechsli, *Geschichte der Schweiz im Neunzehnten Jahrhundert*, vol. 1 (Leipzig 1903), 20-5; Johannes Dierauer, *Geschichte der Schweizerischen Eidgenossenschaft*, vol. 4, (Gotha and Stuttgart 1921, 2nd ed.), 285-97; Hans Conrad Peyer, *Verfassungsgeschichte der alten Schweiz* (Zurich 1978), 84-5, 146; de Capitani, 'Beharren und Umsturz', 127; Heinz Duchhardt, *Europa am Vorabend der Moderne* Handbuch der Geschichte Europas, vol. 6 (Stuttgart 2003), 354.
- 45 Cf. Andreas Würgler, 'Revolution aus Tradition: Die Legitimierung der Revolutionen aus den Unruhen des Ancien régime durch die schweizerische Nationalhistoriographie des 19. Jahrhundert', in: Andreas Ernst, Albert Tanner, Matthias Weishaupt (eds), *Revolution und Innovation: Die konfliktreiche Entstehung des schweizerischen Bundesstaates von 1848* (Zurich 1998), 79-90.
- 46 Between full and allied cantons (e.g., the Exchange Affair of Biel circa 1600), various disputes between the prince-abbot of St. Gallen and Appenzell or between the two full cantons Berne and Fribourg.
- 47 Contemporary observers as well as modern scholars emphasised the moderate ways of handling the confessional conflicts in Switzerland. Even the confessional civil wars (1531, 1656, 1712) were short and led to only few (5,000) casualties compared to the catastrophic religious wars in France and the Empire (War of the Schmalkaldic League; Thirty Years War), cf. Maissen, 'Disputatio', 50.
- 48 Olivier Christin, *La paix de religion. L'autonomisation de la raison politique au XVIe siècle* (Paris 1997), 196-7, 203-4. Cf. Robert C. Walton, Art. 'Switzerland', in: Hans J. Hillerbrand (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*, vol. 4 (New York and Oxford 1996), 128-31; Wolfgang Reinhard, *Geschichte der Staatsgewalt. Eine vergleichende Verfassungsgeschichte Europas von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (Munich 1999), 252. See also the contribution by F. Loetz in this volume.
- 49 Abraham Stanyan, *An Account of Switzerland* (London 1714), 118-9.

- 50 Richard Feller, 'Die Schweiz des 17. Jahrhunderts in den Berichten des Auslandes', in: *Schweizer Beiträge zur Allgemeinen Geschichte* 1 (1943), 78-9; Edgar Bonjour, 'Die Eidgenossenschaft vom Ausland her gesehen', in: Edgar Bonjour (ed.), *Die Schweiz und Europa*, vol. 8 (Basel, Frankfurt am Main 1988), 16.
- 51 Körner, *Solidarités*, 366-8.
- 52 Cf. Christoph Meiners, *Briefe über die Schweiz*, 2 vols. (Frankfurt and Leipzig 1785), vol. 1, 139 (the Bernese example).
- 53 Cf. Niklaus Landolt, *Untertanenrevolten und Widerstand auf der Basler Landschaft im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert* Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte und Landeskunde des Kantons Basel-Landschaft, vol. 56 (Liestal 1996); Andreas Suter, *Der schweizerische Bauernkrieg von 1653. Politische Sozialgeschichte – Sozialgeschichte eines politischen Ereignisses* Frühneuzeit-Forschungen, vol. 3 (Tübingen 1997).
- 54 Braun, *Das ausgehende Ancien Régime*, 218-9, 256-313, esp. 257.
- 55 Stanyan, *Account*, 214. Cf. 'Mémoire de l'ambassadeur [Puyzieulx] sur la Suisse, 16 mars 1708', in: de Boislisle, *Le Marquis de Puyzieulx*, 37.
- 56 And even that was highly controversial in political discussions even among protestants throughout the eighteenth century, cf. Isaak Iselin, 'Reisetagebuch 1754', ed. by Ferdinand Schwarz, *Basler Jahrbuch* (1917), 110-1.
- 57 Bodin already admired the longevity of the Swiss Confederation: Bodin, *Six Livres*, book VI, ch. 4.
- 58 Stanyan, *Account*, 216.

2 Challenges for the Republic: Coordination and Loyalty in the Dutch Republic

Maarten Prak

A long, long time ago, Sweden was cursed with a great famine.¹ It got so bad, that one in every ten households had to emigrate. Six thousand men and their families had to leave the country, under the leadership of one *Schwitzerus*. On their way, they were joined by 1,200 Frisians, who also trekked south. In the northern Alps, the marchers came to a halt. Here the Swedes settled in an area that was named after their leader and came to be known as Schwyz. The Frisians moved on to the Haslital, in the Berne area, where they created an independent strand of the Swiss population.

An alternative version of this story claims that a group of Frisian warriors who had supported Charles Martel in his battle with the Saracens in 741, were rewarded with a substantial piece of land which they proceeded to name after their leader Swittert. According to yet another version, a group of Frisian warriors in 802 attempted to settle in Lombardy on their return from Rome, which they had helped to conquer for Charlemagne. They were not welcome in Lombardy, however, and proceeded further north, until they reached a land that resembled their own. This turned out to be the Haslital.²

These stories raised a great deal of interest among Frisian nationalists in the nineteenth century. Their academic journal *De Vrije Fries*, launched in 1839, devoted the very first article in the very first issue to the subject of the Frisians and the Swiss. The author could not help but notice the likeness between the Frisians and the Haslitaler, who were both characterised by ‘courage, love of freedom, honour, common sense, loyalty, frankness, and benevolence’.³ This interpretation is particularly illuminating, because it highlights the key role of ‘freedom’ in the identity and self-image of both the Swiss and the Dutch.⁴



The story of the Frisians migrating to Alpine regions hints at two significant elements of this freedom: the deliberate choice to create an entirely new society, and the fact that its creation was popular, rather than monarchical, at least in the popular image. At the same time, republican freedom also created a string of problems. Two of these problems will be discussed in this chapter. The first involves the problem of coordination. In a monarchy, the prince assumes the role of coordinator. However, in a republic, which is a society based on voluntary association, coordination has to be specifically assigned to certain individuals or institutions. The second problem concerns the creation of loyalty in a state of free citizens. This will be the topic of the second part of this chapter.

The Dutch Republic's political institutions emerged from the Revolt with a double agenda, inscribed in the Union of Utrecht (1579), which laid down the constitutional framework for the centuries to come. In its famous first clause, the Union underlined how, on the one hand, the separate provinces of the Republic would act, 'as if they constituted only a single province'. On the other hand, however, 'each province and the individual cities, members and inhabitants thereof shall each retain undiminished its special and particular privileges, franchises, exemptions, rights, statutes, laudable and long-practiced customs', and so on.⁵ In other words, the Union of Utrecht called for coordinated action, but at the same time left all of the individual arrangements that local and regional institutions had accumulated during the previous centuries intact. The result would, inevitably, have to be muddled.⁶

Local and regional institutions were and remained very influential in Dutch politics. To give a more or less random example: during the seventeenth century, Zwolle's municipal institutions had approved the peace treaties with Spain, England and France in 1648, 1654, 1667, 1697, 1714, 1748, and 1784.⁷ This involvement was because of the town's membership in the state assemblies in the province of Overijssel. In six out of the Republic's seven provinces, towns comprised at least half of the votes. In Holland, by far the most important and powerful province, the eighteen enfranchised towns completely dominated the provincial states, while the nobility, who represented the countryside, had only one vote.

The provinces in turn were all represented in the States General, the most important central institution of the Dutch Republic. Significantly, each province had one vote in the States General, irrespective of its size. Behind the scenes, of course, Holland's influence went far beyond that of any other province. However, formally, Holland was no more important than any of the others. The distribution underlines a significant aspect of the Dutch state: the provinces were more or less autonomous. This was reflected in the division of labour within the political system. Central institutions, like the States General, or its executive, the Council of State, were mainly concerned with foreign policy. Domestic issues were the realm of the provinces, or even their composite parts, the rural districts and towns. As English Ambassador Sir William Temple wrote in 1673 about the Dutch Republic:⁸

It cannot properly be stiled a Commonwealth, but is rather a Confederacy of Seven Sovereign Provinces united together for their common and mutual defence, without any dependence one upon the other. But to discover the nature of their Government from the first springs and motions, It must be taken into yet smaller pieces, by which it will appear, that each of these provinces is likewise composed of many little States or Cities, which have several marks of Sovereign Power within themselves...

The implications of this remark are very obvious: how did the Dutch Republic prevent a complete disintegration of its political system and manage, on the contrary, to become hugely successful, at least during the seventeenth century?

That it was successful, would be difficult to dispute. Despite its small population, the Dutch Republic had one of Europe's largest armies during much of the seventeenth century.⁹ As a result, it was able to engage much larger and potentially more powerful countries. The Dutch Republic maintained a high level of taxation, demonstrating a high level of confidence in the efficiency of the state. It was also able to raise large sums of money on the capital market, against declining interest rates, which by the end of the seventeenth century were the lowest of all of Europe's major states, again suggesting a high level of confidence in the effectiveness of the Dutch state.¹⁰ This is all the more surprising, given the, at first sight, inefficiency of the Dutch Republic's political structures.

Several aspects of Dutch political life can be credited with countering the permanent tendencies of institutional disintegration. The first was the office of stadholder, although even this position was tarnished by the ambiguities of the Dutch constitution. Originally, the stadholders were merely the governors who represented Habsburg authority in the provinces. William of Orange's leadership during the Dutch Revolt, meant that the office did not merely survive, but actually thrived.¹¹ This was first of all due to the fact that no less than five of the seven provinces shared the same stadholder most of the time; only Friesland and Groningen persisted in electing their own stadholder from a minor branch of the Nassau family. In the absence of a proper head of state, the Orange stadholders developed into its equivalent, and became the arbiters in the inevitable disputes between the provinces. The Union of Utrecht basically gave them this

role. During the stadholderate of Maurice of Orange (1584-1625), and that of his half-brother Frederic Henry of Orange, the stadholders' ill-defined political duties were expanded to include the most important military functions as they rose to the positions of commanders-in-chief of the Republic's armed forces. Because warfare was by far the most important task of the States General, the combined functions of political arbiter and military leader were mutually reinforcing. This also enabled the Orange dynasty to evolve into a powerful national symbol, personifying the country's otherwise precarious unity.¹²

Another, perhaps equally paradoxical aspect of Dutch political life that also helped to stabilise the political system was the preponderance of the province of Holland. More than half of the population lived in this province alone, of the ten largest towns in the Republic in 1650, eight were located in Holland. Meanwhile, economically it was, of course, by far the most successful of the provinces.¹³ Almost inevitably, the province of Holland had to become the financial centre of the Dutch state. Holland alone paid almost sixty percent of the annual budget.¹⁴ It often paid the arrears of the other provinces as well. And, perhaps most importantly, Holland was prepared to act as banker for the Dutch state.

A third element, more difficult to document, which reinforced the collaborative efforts among the provinces – or 'allies' as they sometimes called each other – was warfare itself. In times of war, decisions could be forced through the political institutions with a reference to their expediency. Its significance becomes most obvious during times of peace. After the Treaty of Utrecht of 1713, which ended forty years of almost constant war with France and left the Republic financially exhausted, the political system collapsed in the absence of external pressure. Not long thereafter, one of Holland's leading politicians complained to a French diplomat 'that in order to get his financial [reform] projects accepted, he wished the Republic did not suppose that peace abroad was assured'.¹⁵ In other words, the urgency of a military threat, either real or imagined, was necessary to smooth out the differences between the provinces, which, during a time of peace, ran rampant.

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There was, however, another reason why the Dutch Republic was able to function as a vital political unit. This was, I believe, because of its citizenship arrangements. There are several ways to discuss citizenship. The most obvious is to look at the formal situation.¹⁶ There was, of course, nothing like an official form of national citizenship in the Dutch Republic. Towns, on the other hand, had their own local citizenship requirements.¹⁷ Perhaps, however, it would be more fruitful to look beyond the strictly legal definition, and profit from the general perspective of Charles Tilly's definition of citizenship as 'a continuing series of transactions between persons and agents of a given state in which each has enforceable rights and obligations'.¹⁸ To better understand the various options in this relationship, we turn to an approach that was first developed by American political scientist Albert O. Hirschman, in his ground-breaking 1970 book, *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty*. The problem consists basically of the fact that the state and its citizens are involved in an uncomfortable relationship. When the state is weak it needs the help of its citizens but they have little reason to provide assistance because the state is incapable of delivering basic services, such as legal and military protection. When the state grows stronger, on the other hand, citizens acquire reasons for mistrusting the state, because it may become their oppressor. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are full of evidence of this uneasy relationship. Between the middle of the sixteenth and the middle of the seventeenth centuries, countries like Spain, France, Germany, England and the Low Countries were ravaged by protracted civil wars, that concerned a variety of ideological and financial arrangements, and indeed the political order of these same countries.¹⁹ What was always at stake was the amount of influence the state had over its citizens and vice versa.

In his book, Hirschman investigates the relationship between firms and their customers. More specifically, he is interested in what a customer does when he, or she, becomes dissatisfied. A normal reaction, Hirschman argues, is to stop buying the unsatisfactory product. In other words, the customer exits. There is an alternative, however. A loyal customer may prefer complaining, arguing that the product, for instance, has decreased in quality or has otherwise deteriorated and that he or she would like the product to return to its former level of quality. This option is called 'voice'. Voice assumes either future gains, or some other type of customer-firm relationship. This bond between the two involved parties might be labelled loyalty. Of

course, it also assumes the loyal customer's voice will be heard and his loyalty gives the customer a certain influence over the firm's decisions. The three concepts allow for an analysis of the alternative options afforded not only customers, but also the state's citizens. Moreover, it brings the costs and benefits these options entail for customers or citizens to our attention. And last but not least, it forces us to think again about what it requires of firms and states to ensure the loyalty of their customers and citizens respectively.

Exit

The most unusual political option would be to 'exit'. Several types of exit options were nonetheless employed by a variety of social groups in the Dutch Republic of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In 1643, for example, the journeymen-shearers of Leiden, the Republic's most significant industrial centre and a town completely dependent on its wool industry, threatened to leave, 'unless they were granted higher wages'.²⁰ These labourers were employing a traditional form of protest, the '*uitgang*', or literally the 'exit', which was already quite common in the Middle Ages. In the seventeenth century, this form of protest became less common than it had been during the Middle Ages because the employers had managed to organise a national committee of shearers, the so-called shearers' synod, with which they could co-ordinate their authority within the Republic.²¹ Nonetheless, eighteenth-century guilds in Amsterdam regularly warned their local governments that their members had no other option but to leave unless improvements of their position were made through legislation.²²

The exit option was also regularly employed by religious groups in the seventeenth century. There were several pilgrimage sites in the southeastern part of Holland, just across the border in Germany, that were popular among Dutch Roman Catholics. During Catholic holy days, thousands would hike as much as twenty miles to visit Handel, Kevelaer and Uden to worship. As soon as the pilgrims had crossed the border, they would unfurl religious banners and other distinctive icons, to more fully express their religious beliefs. These Catholic pilgrims were not trying to impose their views on the Protestants, but they merely wanted to maintain their own religious practices in the face of official intolerance. Thus exit, although it was temporary in

this case, was made possible by the short distances to the Dutch border. During one particular conflict within the Dutch Reformed Church that brought the country to the brink of civil war, Orthodox Protestants who belonged to a parish with a liberal minister, would walk long distances along muddy roads to attend the services of a minister of their own persuasion. These weekly treks earned them the nickname of mud-beggars.²³ They were trying to force a change within their own parish. In the end, they succeeded, when in 1618 the stadholder Maurice of Orange staged a coup d'état and had the liberal, remonstrant ministers removed from office.

Economic exit was practised more frequently by the many immigrants who entered the Republic, than by those exiting, but it served as a strong reminder of the potentially devastating effects of exit. Between 1585 and 1609, tens of thousands left Antwerp and other towns and villages in Brabant and Flanders. Most of them eventually settled to the north in the Dutch Republic. This massive migration caused Antwerp to lose its position as the hub of international trade in North-western Europe, allowing Amsterdam to overtake it.²⁴ Later in the seventeenth century, the Dutch Republic profited from a similar, albeit much smaller influx, when in 1685 Louis XIV repealed the Edict of Nantes, which forced tens of thousands of French Protestants to emigrate. Again, many of them migrated to the Dutch Republic, where the economy received a boost, which has been considered significant by most economic historians.²⁵

A strong reminder that merchant capital was highly mobile came in 1675, when Dutch capitalists objected to the idea of stadholder William III becoming the Duke of Guelders, a step seen by many as the first on the road to monarchical rule. In protest, a lot of capital was transferred from Amsterdam to London, and it was obvious that other capitalists would have followed suit if this plan had been pushed through.²⁶ Although he was said to be furious, William heeded the warning and withdrew from consideration.

A juridical exit was available in several enclaves along the border between the provinces of Holland, Utrecht and Gelderland. Here the more or less independent lordships of Culemborg, Vianen, Buren, Leerdam and IJsselstein offered asylum to bankrupt capitalists, murderers and couples who wanted to marry without parental consent.²⁷

Perhaps none of this was very impressive in terms of quantity, but as Hirschman reminds us, the exit option does not have to be put into practice to actually be successful. It may be enough that 'the possibil-

ity of exit is merely well understood to be an element in the situation by all concerned'.²⁸ The effectiveness of this threat was maintained by its well-publicised use by a variety of social groups. The working class threatened to use the '*uitgang*', the Protestant middle class made their point by attending churches outside their own parishes, while the capitalist classes migrated to protect their economic interests. None of these forms of exit are considered typically Dutch. What may have been specifically Dutch was the relatively modest cost of exit. The Dutch Republic was a small country, and the border was within easy reach for most inhabitants. Inside the Republic's territory, the fragmentation of authority provided many opportunities for exit strategies. Interestingly, the exit option seems to have been open to both men and women. Women were probably not involved in labour strikes, but marriage figures from Amsterdam indicate that they migrated in large numbers.²⁹ Women were also involved in the religious movements, and often claimed asylum, either with their husbands or independently.

Voice

The exit strategy was an extreme and relatively expensive strategy that was perhaps most accessible to the very rich and the very poor. Voice was thus a serious alternative. Riots and rebellions are probably the best-known ways in which the common people in pre-democratic times could express their political opinions. Thanks to the work of George Rudé and others since the 1960s, we have become increasingly aware of Europe's contentious, and indeed revolutionary, history.³⁰ The Dutch, it seems, made a fair share of this history. The Dutch Republic itself arose out of a revolution, a fact that no one was likely to forget. A systematic investigation of the patterns of rioting is only available for the province of Holland. Rudolf Dekker's work has brought to light two somewhat contradictory results.³¹ On the one hand, it effectively demolished the image of the Dutch Republic as a country where everything was worked out via compromise. Dekker convincingly demonstrated that during the Golden Age and its aftermath, the usual catalogue of food riots, tax rebellions and political upheaval also occurred in Holland. On the other hand, one cannot help but notice that most of the riots were limited in scope and relatively non-violent. There were only twenty four tax riots in the peri-

od between 1600-1795, all but two of which were purely local affairs, which suggests that modest use was made of riots as a way of voicing political discontent.

Most riots mobilised the working classes or '*gemeen*' (common people). The middle classes, however, had their own traditions of protest.³² In a series of local clashes, punctuated by nation-wide rebellions in 1672, 1702-03, 1747-48, and 1783-87, artisans and shopkeepers, sometimes joining in coalitions with the working class or the dissatisfied among the elite, tried to voice their opinions. These protests were mostly organised by the guilds or local civic militias. The latter were particularly vocal in Holland, and were able to play several cards. First of all, civic militias had been asked to offer their opinions during the Revolt, suggesting a legitimate involvement in local political life. Secondly, the militias represented a sizable part of the local citizenry. Thirdly, the militias were the main armed forces that local authorities could turn to. The latter were thus dependent upon the support of the militias. And last but not least, the arms that the militias possessed gave them powerful sway over their opponents. Although technically the militias were supposed to be the forces of order, they could easily be transformed into the instigators of civil disturbances. This was the case, in Leiden in the summer of 1748, for example, when militia leaders, working in close alliance with alienated elements on the town council, came to rule the town and purged the council of their opponents.³³ During the 1780s, the guilds of Deventer constituted the core of a massive protest movement, which at some point included more than two-thirds of the town's male population if we go by the number of signatures on petitions drafted by the movement's leadership. These petitions were undersigned by the memberships of various different crafts together, thus reinforcing a political bond among the rank and file.³⁴ These are but a few examples of many others that could be detailed.

Citizens in some Dutch provinces directly or indirectly elected local officeholders and involved themselves in policy decisions. This was especially the case in the provinces of Overijssel and Gelderland, where urban constitutions included representatives of the civic community, which were usually organised in wards. Thus, the town of Zwolle was divided into four wards, each represented by twelve members of the town's Common Council, or *Gezwoeren Gemeente*. This Common Council discussed all of Zwolle's major policy issues,

and they decided on new taxation issues, but also had a voice in international treaties that the Republic was considering.³⁵ In Zutphen, guilds and civic militias annually elected their town's magistrates during a meeting in the main church.³⁶ In other provinces, similar arrangements had been abandoned in the past, as was the case in Utrecht, where the guilds lost their political powers in 1528. Or these arrangements had simply never existed, as was the case in most of Holland's towns. But even there we find traces of citizen participation.³⁷

In Holland, petitions provided an alternative channel for communicating with the authorities. Petitions were seen as a specific political right that the Republic's citizens were entitled to.³⁸ The so-called Leiden Draft, a political programme launched in 1785 by the patriotic opposition, basically claimed that 'This is the only constitutional influence that no one has thus far tried to deny the People of the Netherlands'.³⁹ Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, numerous petitions were submitted by individuals, but more significantly by various interest groups. The guilds, for example, were keen petitioners, pointing out time and again how their membership formed the backbone of urban society, through their economic activities, their tax contributions and their services to the community as militiamen.⁴⁰ The submission of these types of petitions was usually embedded in a lengthy process of negotiation. When the guild of St. Luke in Haarlem, which represented the painters and other artists there, petitioned the town in 1642 for a regulation on public sales and lotteries, its board visited the burgomasters to discuss the matter, before submitting a formal petition. Later that year, they arranged another meeting with the authorities to try to speed up the decision-making process. However, the town council first wanted to hear what the other parties had to say on the issue. After all of the opinions had been heard by the burgomasters, they invited the guild's board to attend a meeting. When these negotiations did not lead to a swift decision, the guild's board had to call upon town hall another two times in December, hoping to have an outcome before Christmas. But this was not to be and they ended up disappointed.⁴¹ Guilds and similar organisations usually included specific proposals to remedy particular problems in their petitions. Detailed research in Amsterdam has demonstrated that not only did guild petitions receive a generally positive hearing among the authorities, but many of their proposals were directly accepted and passed as legislation to become local laws.⁴²

Therefore, despite the absence of democratic institutions, ordinary people did have a voice in politics.⁴³ The types of influence were dictated by the size of the political arena and by the constitutional traditions of that political space.⁴⁴ However, it is also true that voice was circumscribed in a variety of ways. There was no proper democratic influence for Dutch ordinary people in the seventeenth and eighteenth-century Republic. Where this influence did exist, such as in rural Friesland, it was systematically undermined by the elite.⁴⁵ In most of the Republic, the oligarchy ruled supreme.⁴⁶ The voice option was even more restricted for women. Women were conspicuously involved in the riots.⁴⁷ They were, however, mostly excluded from other political options of voice.

At the same time, we have seen that opportunities for voice did exist, but these were primarily local in focus. In terms of area, all of the Dutch territories were relatively small. The provinces were sovereign, but provincial politics was to an important extent a local affair. Local authorities made a point of living among their constituents, and were generally accessible. They also depended on the co-operation of their constituents – specifically the civic militias – for the maintenance of public order.. Given the low cost of exit and the numerous opportunities to voice their opinions, the Dutch state, and more particularly its political elite, had to think hard about how to ensure the loyalty of the population.

Loyalty

Four elements of loyalty will be discussed here: local ideology, formal citizenship, social welfare schemes, and elite commitment. In the seventeenth century in particular, substantial efforts were made to raise the profile of urban (and rural) communities through cultural means. Many towns built new town halls for practical purposes but also as a celebration of their community's prosperity. Amsterdam's town hall is, of course, the most famous example, and it is well-known for the public relations aspects of the art work it houses. But on a more modest scale, we find the same phenomena elsewhere as well. And it wasn't just town halls that caught the fancy of local authorities. Urban expansion provided them with ample opportunities to impress the public, always making sure that their names and coats of arms were clearly visible as a reminder of the council's contribu-

tions.⁴⁸ Construction was often accompanied by the commissioning of paintings and other works of art, which served the same purpose.⁴⁹ Interestingly, from a gender point of view, the community was usually depicted as a woman. For instance, the figurine of Amsterdam, prominently displayed both on the outside and the inside of the new town hall, was female.⁵⁰

This creation of a local ideology was institutionally underpinned by formalised citizenship arrangements. Their precise form varied from town to town, but a sizable minority of the local population everywhere had formal citizen status, by birth or because they had paid a fee of between 12 to 50 guilders (two to eight weeks of wages) for the privilege.⁵¹ New citizens who did not descend from citizen families – in some towns it was *all* individuals who aspired to become citizens – were required to take a citizen's oath. In Zwolle, this oath required each citizen 'to obey the regents [i.e., town council], to follow their orders, to not to participate in secret meetings ... and to be prepared at all times to take up arms and defend the town'.⁵² In 's-Hertogenbosch (Bois-le-Duc) new citizens promised 'to always be loyal to the town of 's-Hertogenbosch and my fellow citizens, till death do us part'.⁵³ Interestingly, citizenship here was available to men and women alike; 's-Hertogenbosch's citizen oath indicated both male and female citizens – '*poorters en poortressen*'.⁵⁴

One of the advantages of citizenship was that it gave access to special welfare schemes. Besides ideology and formal citizenship status, another way that elites could ensure loyalty was to provision public goods.⁵⁵ In the seventeenth century, the Dutch Republic, and more particularly the towns of Holland, were well-known for their excellent welfare provisions. Although comparative analysis of levels of provisions is not available, some of the defining characteristics of the Dutch welfare system are easily enumerated.⁵⁶ Perhaps the most significant was its almost exclusive reliance on family-based relief. While other countries experimented with workhouses and similar institutions – which were not completely unknown in the Netherlands, of course – the poor were generally permitted to continue living on their own, and were encouraged to look after themselves as much as possible. Welfare was organised locally and often church-based, but it was always religiously comprehensive in that no one was excluded from welfare provisions for religious reasons. In the seventeenth century, this was reputedly a fairly generous system, although this has to

be compared to the very low standards of the age. Another important characteristic of the system was that it was two-tiered. There were schemes that targeted the destitute, the truly poor, but also provisions for the middle classes. The contrast was very clear in, for instance, the caring for orphans. The city of Amsterdam boasted two orphanages, both of which housed hundreds of children. The *Burgerweeshuis*, or civic orphanage, only admitted the children of Amsterdammers who were formal citizens. The boys and girls admitted to the civic orphanage were served a healthy and varied diet and prepared for a middle class life. The boys were properly trained in one or another craft, whilst the girls were educated as housewives. At the *Aalmoezeniersweeshuis*, on the other hand, the diet was monotonous, and the children were sent off to work in menial jobs that provided little or no education.⁵⁷ Still, the availability of a variety of welfare provisions was seen by contemporaries as one of Amsterdam's chief attractions.⁵⁸ Meanwhile, those who dispensed this relief understood that this was supposed to buy the loyalty of those on the receiving end. Because 'those to whom we now demonstrate our generosity would endanger our property' if their needs would not be attended to, as the Amsterdam banker G.K. van Hogendorp observed in 1804.⁵⁹ It must have been a fairly similar situation in the rest of the country as well.

A fourth strategy to boost loyalty, which could also serve as an important contribution to resolving the tensions that existed between authorities and their subjects, was for the elite to demonstrate their commitment and provide transparency. It can be demonstrated that the Dutch Republic's urban elite, and particularly those in Holland, made serious attempts at both. Whilst in other European countries the tax system placed the heaviest burden on the weakest shoulders, the Dutch elite not only paid taxes like everybody else, but in the eighteenth century, even experimented with progressive taxation.⁶⁰ Tax payment was considered a crucial element of citizenship; guild petitions invariably emphasised this aspect when pointing out that the guild's members were not just defending their own positions, but those of the community as a whole.⁶¹ The fact that some Leiden regents had received illegal reductions of the grain excise tax from collectors, caused an uproar here in 1748.⁶² Citizens protesting in Haarlem that same year insisted on the 'equity' that was necessary for a fair tax system.⁶³ Dutch taxes, compared to those in other countries, generally seemed to meet these criteria relatively well. The

Leiden and Haarlem tax riots of 1748 also underline the importance of transparency. Secret deals made with tax collectors, and in general the whole system of tax collecting, impairing the confidence people had in the fairness of taxation and thus undermined the willingness of citizens to pay their taxes. The Leiden protesters demanded a public accounting of the town's financial situation in the future, arguing that the town's regents were merely the 'supervisors' of public funds provided by the citizens.⁶⁴ To restore that confidence, tax farming was abolished in Holland in 1748 and replaced by a state tax collection system. The tax assessment of individual citizens was given to those trusted within the community, with no obvious ties to city hall. In Leiden, for instance, the wards' representatives, the *bonmeesters*, were assigned the task of drawing up the tax registers. In Zwolle, meanwhile, new tax registers were drawn up by committees composed of town magistrates and ward representatives, ensuring legitimate results.⁶⁵

Conclusion: The coherence of the Dutch Republic

The above analysis of the Dutch experience seems to suggest a number of connections between exit, voice and loyalty. The cost of exit in the Dutch Republic was low. This was due to three major factors. The Republic was relatively small. That area was also politically fragmented. And, given the commercial orientation of the Dutch economy, many of the major businesses could easily be relocated. The low cost of exit lent a strong bargaining position to local political actors vis-à-vis central government authorities. In the Dutch context, this is stating the obvious, but in a comparative perspective it still seems a point worth making.

In terms of voice, we have observed that here too the threshold (or costs) were relatively low, given the consolidation of authority on a local and regional level. Two factors in particular contributed to the low cost of voice. First, the relevant authorities were close at hand, as they lived among their own constituents. Secondly, local corporate institutions, such as civic militias and guilds, were available for political mobilisation at marginal costs. The low cost of voice offered the local, ordinary people a strong bargaining position – especially for full citizens who were well-established in these corporate institutions – vis-à-vis local government officials.

The low costs of both exit and voice created a strong incentive for the authorities in the Dutch Republic, and more specifically local authorities, to work hard to ensure the loyalty of their citizens. Phrased in a slightly different way: the specific interplay of exit, voice and loyalty in the Dutch Republic helps to explain the relatively wide scope of citizens' demands on the authorities and vice versa. From this point of view, the often derided organisation of the Dutch Republic, its loose structure with its ill-defined chains of command, while generally considered a liability, actually turns out to have been an asset. In an age when many monarchical governments were battling with their citizens, Dutch republican authorities were encouraged to negotiate with them.

Notes

- 1 I would like to thank my Utrecht colleagues Josine Blok and Oscar Gelderblom, and co-editor Thomas Maissen for their comments on the first draft of this chapter.
- 2 F. Binckes, 'Over eene nederzetting of volkplanting der Friesen in Zwitserland, benevens eenige aanmerkingen over den tocht der Friesen naar Rome', *De Vrije Fries* 1 (1839), 1-63; M.P. van Buijtenen, 'Friezen en Zwitsers', *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 76 (1963), 319-324; Guy P. Marchal, *Die frommen Schweden in Schwyz: Das 'Herkommen der Schwyzer und Oberhasler' als Quelle zum schwyzerischen Selbstverständnis im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert* Basler Beiträge zur Geschichtswissenschaft (Basel 1976). I discovered this intriguing story while browsing through the bibliography prepared by Simon Hari for this volume.
- 3 Binckes, 'Over eene nederzetting', 33.
- 4 See, e.g., Dario Gamboni, Georg Germann (eds), *Zeichen der Freiheit: das Bild der Republik in der Kunst des 16. bis 20. Jahrhundert* (Berne, 1991); E.O.G. Haitsma Mulier, W.R.E. Velema (eds), *Vrijheid: een geschiedenis van de vijftiende tot de twintigste eeuw* (Amsterdam 1999).
- 5 Herbert H. Rowen (ed.), *The Low Countries in Early Modern Times* (London 1972), 70.
- 6 The following discussion covers much the same ground as my contribution to Mogens Herman Hansen (ed.), *A Comparative Study of Thirty City-State Cultures* (Copenhagen 2000), albeit, from a somewhat different perspective.
- 7 J.C. Streng, 'Stemme in staat'. *De bestuurlijke elite in de stadsrepubliek Zwolle 1579-1795* (Hilversum 1997), 112n106.

- 8 William Temple, *Observations upon the United Provinces of the Netherlands*, George Clark ed. (Oxford 1972) 52.
- 9 Olaf van Nimwegen, 'Deser landen krijchsvolck': *het staatse leger en de militaire revoluties 1588-1688* (Amsterdam 2006).
- 10 For this argument, see Jan Luiten van Zanden, Maarten Prak, 'Towards and economic interpretation of citizenship: The Dutch Republic between medieval communes and modern nation states', *European Review of Economic History* 10 (2006), 111-45.
- 11 Herbert H. Rowen, *The Princes of Orange: The Stadholders in the Dutch Republic* (Cambridge 1988).
- 12 Olaf Mörke, 'Staedtholder' oder 'Staetholder'? *Die Funktion des Hauses Oranien und seines Hofes in der politische Kultur der Republik der Vereinigten Niederlande im 17. Jahrhundert* (Münster and Hamburg 1997).
- 13 Jan de Vries, Ad van der Woude, *The First Modern Economy: Success, Failure, and Perseverance of the Dutch Economy, 1500-1815* (Cambridge 1997).
- 14 J.L. Price, *Holland and the Dutch Republic in the Seventeenth Century: The Politics of Particularism* (Oxford 1994) 236.
- 15 J. Aalbers, 'Holland's financial problems, 1713-33 and the wars against Louis XIV', in: A.C. Duke, and C.A. Tamse (eds), *Britain and the Netherlands* vol. VI: *War and Society* (The Hague 1977) 92; see also J. Aalbers, *De Republiek en de vrede van Europa* (Groningen 1980) chaps. 1-3.
- 16 See, for instance, many of the essays collected in *Cittadinanze*, a special issue of *Quaderni Storici* 30 (1995) 281-513, edited by Simona Cerutti, Robert Descimon, Maarten Prak, esp. the essays by Regula Schmid and Maarten Prak on the Swiss Confederacy and the Dutch Republic respectively. The literature on citizenship is extensive and continues to grow rapidly. Two important recent contributions that use different approaches from the one favoured in this chapter, however, are: Tamar Herzog, *Defining Nations: Immigrants and Citizens in Early Modern Spain and Spanish America* (New Haven 2003), and Peter Sahlin, *Unnaturally French: Foreign Citizens in the Old Regime and After* (Ithaca 2004).
- 17 I have written extensively about this, for example in: 'Cittadini, abitanti e forestieri: una classificazione della popolazione di Amsterdam nella prima eta moderna', *Quaderni Storici* vol 30, n89 (1995), 331-357; 'Burghers into citizens: Urban and national citizenship in the Netherlands during the revolutionary era', *Theory and Society* 26 (1997), 403-420; 'The politics of intolerance: citizenship and religion in the Dutch Republic (17th-18th C.)', in: Ronnie Po-chia Hsia, Henk van Nierop (eds),

- Calvinism and Religious Toleration in the Dutch Golden Age* (Cambridge 2002) 159-175.
- 18 Charles Tilly, 'Citizenship, Identity, and Social History', in *ibid.* (ed.), *Citizenship, Identity, and Social History* (Cambridge 1998) 8. See also Michael Hanagan, Charles Tilly (eds), *Extending Citizenship, Reconfiguring States* (Boulder, etc. 1999).
- 19 The point about the seventeenth-century crisis being primarily a political crisis has been forcefully made by Niels Steensgaard in his contribution to Geoffrey Parker, Lesley M. Smith (eds), *The General Crisis of the Seventeenth Century* (London 1978), esp. 42-48. See also Perez Zagorin, *Rebels and Rulers 1500-1660* vol. 2: *Provincial Rebellion, Revolutionary Civil War, 1560-1660* (Cambridge 1982); Wayne te Brake, *Shaping History: Ordinary People in European Politics, 1500-1700* (Berkeley 1998).
- 20 N.W. Posthumus (ed.), *Bronnen voor de geschiedenis van de Leidsche textielnijverheid* vol. 4, Rijksgeschiedkundige Publicatieën, vol. 22 (The Hague 1914) no. 316; cf. Rudolf Dekker, "'Getrouwe broederschap": organisatie en acties van arbeiders in pre-industrieel Holland', *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 103 (1988) 6.
- 21 Dekker, "'Getrouwe broederschap"', 6.
- 22 E.g., Maarten Prak, 'Individual, corporation and society: the rhetoric of Dutch guilds (18th C.)', in: Marc Boone, Maarten Prak (eds), *Statuts individuels et statuts judiciaires dans les villes européennes (moyen âge et temps modernes)* (Louvain and Apeldoorn 1996) 276.
- 23 A.Th. van Deursen, *Bavianen en slijkgeuzen. Kerk en kerkvolk ten tijde van Maurits en Oldenbarnevelt* (Franeker, etc.[1991]) 320-326.
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PART II

Republican Religions

3 **Bridging the Gap: Confessionalisation in Switzerland¹**

Francisca Loetz

According to Ernst Walter Zeeden's classic definition, confessionalisation is the development of separate churches distinguished by dogma, organisation and the believers' way of life.² For a long time, this definition was the formative one in historical research. Although Zeeden referred to the 'religious and moral way of life' of believers as an element of confessionalisation, secular and church history were long dominated by works which focussed on the articles of faith and on the institutional and political consequences of the Reformation. Recent research has criticised Zeeden's understanding of confessionalisation – or that of his successors – as too narrow. Andreas Holzem, for example, following Heinrich Richardt Schmidt, calls for a broader concept of confessionalisation, which concentrates on religious and church life as a space of experience and action,³ even though the sources do not allow much of a glimpse into 'the subjective experience of a close relationship with God'.⁴

In Holzem's view, religious experience is not only comprised of church societisation – or, I would add, of political societisation – in the parish or community, but is also realised by the social interaction among believers.⁵ In contrast to Berndt Hamm's understanding of confessionalisation as a process of 'normative centring' within the dualism of state and church, it should be seen as a non-linear process in which church and state, local societies and individuals gave confessional shape to their lives, their societies and their states well into the twentieth century.⁶ Without going into further detail on the debates surrounding the concept of confessionalisation 'from above' or 'from below',⁷ I should like to examine Holzem's suggestion. How did Catholic Switzerland, in constitutional terms, become the strictly

bi-confessional construction of the post-Reformation era? My thesis is that in order to answer this question one must trace both the divides between churches and cantons, subjects and believers – as well as the connections between the confessions. This will mean an examination of both the era and the dynamics of confessionalisation.

On the basis of my concept of confessionalisation set out above, this article aims, firstly, to summarise the existing, relatively disparate literature on confessionalisation in Switzerland. An empirical description will at least indicate where the visible boundaries between Catholic and Reformed lie; the invisible boundaries have yet to be adequately researched.⁸ Secondly, I aim to show that the divides identified in confessionalisation research are in part the product of boundaries drawn in historiography. Recent research points to the phenomenon of confessional boundary-crossing. Whether this is termed ‘interconfessionalisation’, ‘transconfessionalisation’ or ‘internal confessionalisation’,⁹ the notion of boundary-crossing implies that people moved between two confessional worlds, sometimes on the Catholic side, sometimes on the Reformed side of the boundary. They were also capable of occupying different domains within one confession. I should like to pursue this argument further. Recent research indicates that, while the confessions were formally separate, in everyday life they may have formed a heterogeneous entity in which the closely connected ‘spaces’ were experienced and lived as interwoven. The examples available are inevitably heterogeneous in view of the current research situation. In conclusion, I will consider the research perspectives arising from this presentation of Swiss confessionalisation as a phenomenon of boundary-setting and boundary-crossing. Switzerland can be regarded as representative of overall confessional conflict in early modern Europe.¹⁰ Hence, the methodological approach offered here should be transferable to other countries.

Setting visible boundaries: Confessionalisation as a divide

There is agreement among scholars that in the era of confessionalisation, Switzerland oscillated between dissent and consensus in a manner specific to that country. Consensus occurred because of the Swiss interest in preserving the system of alliances. Dissent, on the other hand, centred on the question of what was the true religion, in other

words, which confession was preferable? Within a space marked out by visible and invisible confessional boundaries, cantons and churches either drew their limits – and as often as not, drew their swords as well – or reached a compromise, and individuals either converted to the other confession, or provoked each other in confessional terms. The boundaries operated on two levels: that of political and ecclesiastical agreements, and that of everyday life.

The formation of bi-confessionalism in Switzerland is, in domestic and external terms, grounded in political and ecclesiastical developments. I will merely outline this structural framework here.¹¹ Between 1513 and the eighteenth century, the domestic political situation in the Swiss Confederation was characterised by a non-uniform alliance system of thirteen cantons. In contrast to the cantons, the Associated Members (*Zugewandte Orte*) were allied only with individual cantons and were not full members of the Confederation. The Mandated Members (*Gemeine Herrschaften*) were bailiwicks administered jointly by several cantons which, after the Reformation, were frequently of different confessions. Thus we find that, in domestic terms, the Swiss Confederation was not a unitary state. Rather, the Confederation was a collective security alliance whose members had united to safeguard their internal and external security without relinquishing their autonomy.

Relations within the alliance were marked by fundamental political tensions among the members. Berne and Zurich in particular sought to exert political influence on their neighbouring cantons, provoking opposition and hostility. The notion of empire had implications for Switzerland, but these will not be examined in detail here.¹² As a transit country on the route to Italy, and as suppliers of mercenaries for the European wars, the cantons neither could nor wanted to avoid the impact of the pan-European conflict. Depending on their relations with Austria, Spain, France or Savoy, the cantons formed various alliances in pursuit of financial and political gains. Thus, in external relations Switzerland did not have a unified approach which might have given rise to a common confessional position.

Confessionalisation in Switzerland is, of course, not just a matter of political alliances. The church, and church politics, also had their own interests. This is not the place to pay tribute to the work and works of the great Reformers, but ecclesiastical and theological developments should at the very least be outlined. In terms of church

politics, confessionalisation in Switzerland is marked by three crucial factors: the issue of mercenaries, the church rights of political communities, and the armed conflict between Roman Catholic and Reformed cantons.¹³

It is well known that Zwingli protested vehemently against Switzerland's mercenary system.¹⁴ The cantons of Central Switzerland – Luzern, Uri, Schwyz, Unterwalden and Zug, which profited considerably from the mercenaries, had good reason to reject Zwingli's position and remain loyal to the Catholic Church. Moreover, the political communities of Central Switzerland had enjoyed church rights since the late Middle Ages, which were not granted to other regions until the Reformation. The Reformed Church also did not effectively support political groups which were open or lenient towards the Reformation. Thus, in Central Switzerland, the evangelical 'community Reformation' failed to attract a following for economic and political reasons.¹⁵ The impact of cultural and religious factors remains unclear.

The situation in Graubünden shows parallels with that of Central Switzerland. Political communities there had claimed some church rights as early as the fifteenth century. However, the Three Leagues making up the Grisons consisted of over fifty communities, each of which decided autonomously – in some cases down to the level of villages and hamlets – regarding the confession of their churches, practising strict confessionalism while granting religious liberty to individuals.¹⁶ Undoubtedly, questions of faith played their part, but the influence of individual clergy was often decisive, as were local relations between political and church communities. The resulting heterogeneous distribution of Catholic and Reformed communities¹⁷ is not due to geography or language or what various authorities ordained, but instead reveals the primacy of communal interests. As Randolph Head noted, it opened up the possibility of a limited degree of religious tolerance at the level of confessional identity.¹⁸

The third significant element of church politics in the confessionalisation of Switzerland is the outcome of armed conflict arising from the Reformation. Following several such conflicts, the second Peace of Kappel in 1531 produced an agreement on a number of principles, with some local variants permitted.¹⁹ Every canton was free to decide its own confession. Subjects adhering to the other confession were obliged either to convert or to leave. This principle of strict confessionalism was consolidated in the Empire some twenty years later

in the Peace of Augsburg.²⁰ Zurich, Berne, Basel and Schaffhausen became Reformed, while Luzern, Uri, Schwyz, Unterwalden, Zug, Solothurn and Freiburg remained Catholic. Appenzell split in 1597 into the Catholic Inner Rhoden and the Reformed Ausser Rhoden. Glarus developed a system based on equality. The Mandated Members mostly retained both confessions, although the Reformed side did suffer some disadvantages. While Reformed Christians in the Mandated territories were free to return to Catholicism, Catholics were not permitted to adopt the new faith. Moreover, although the tolerance and rights of Catholic minorities in the Reformed regions were established, the opposite did not occur in Catholic territory.

Thus, with very few exceptions, the Peace of Kappel in 1531 drew the confessional map of Switzerland. Numerically, there were more Catholic cantons, but the Reformed cantons were more populous and economically dominant. Despite the official rules, the confessionally mixed regions experienced recurring tensions, with each side attempting to interpret the Peace to its own advantage.²¹ In West Switzerland, where the second Peace did not apply, Berne and Geneva fought fiercely against the Duke of Savoy in the 1530s. Following his defeat in 1536, and under the influence of the Reformers Guillaume Farel and Jean Calvin, much of West Switzerland converted to the Reformed faith. In the sixteenth and seventeenth century, there was open conflict in Glarus between the Reformed majority and the Catholic minority. Behind the confessional problems lay the question of who should exercise political power. Up to the early eighteenth century, military conflicts flared repeatedly between Berne or Zurich, on the one hand, and the cantons of Central Switzerland, on the other. In the end, neither confession triumphed. Neither could assert itself strongly enough throughout the country. Instead, the Treaty of Baden in 1632 laid down that a court with equal Catholic and Reformed membership should decide on confessional matters. The third and fourth Peace of 1656 and 1712 confirmed the arrangements of 1531. Political pragmatism dominated, the primary concern being the security of the Confederation.

In terms of dogma, the confessionalisation of the Reformed cantons in Switzerland was based largely on the Consensus Tigurinus of 1549 and the *confessio helvetica posterior* of 1566.²² In these articles of faith, Zwinglians and Calvinists converged on the question of the Lord's Supper, distancing themselves from the Lutherans. The church in these cantons became a state church based on this theologi-

cal foundation, with the parishes forming a part of the secular territorial organisation. In practice, this meant that they were ruled from the central cities. Calvinist ecclesiology, unlike its Zwinglian counterpart, envisaged a Church involved in secular leadership. The full complexity of the issue cannot be discussed here, but the consequence was that the political autonomy of the cantons prevented the development of a central Reformed church structure.²³ These ecclesiological and theological developments had concrete consequences for the parishes. Iconoclasts removed or destroyed ‘papist images’;²⁴ Holy Scripture assumed a central place in the architecture of the churches.²⁵ A full century after the Reformation, the clergy continued to attack the Catholic faith from the pulpit.²⁶

On the Catholic side, much remained unchanged and unresolved until the Council of Trent.²⁷ There was little diocesan supervision of the Catholic cantons belonging to the Dioceses of Constance, Basel, Lausanne, Besançon, Geneva, Sitten/Sion, Como, Milan and Chur. In the 1560s and 1570s, the Diocese of Constance and the Archdiocese of Milan attempted to implement the Tridentine decrees, but decisive change came only with the establishment of a permanent *nunciature* in Luzern in 1586 and the conclusion of a concordat in the same city in 1605, establishing an episcopal commissary. The Jesuits and Capuchins intensified their catechising,²⁸ and the monasteries took various initiatives. The Principality of St Gall, which had become Reformed in 1529, had been restored to the Catholic faith in the second Peace of Kappel, albeit with the loss of some Toggenburg territories. Einsiedeln, in contrast, survived the confessional conflicts unscathed. The fact that the majority of Swiss cantons remained loyal to Catholicism is attributable more to their political and economic interests than to the influence of (arch)dioceses or indeed Rome.

Rejection of the Reformed faith remained an issue for Catholic parishes throughout the early modern era and into the twentieth century.²⁹ In early modern Luzern, for example, it was customary to give communicants a sip of non-consecrated wine after receiving the host, to facilitate swallowing. To ensure that there was no confusion with Reformed Communion (i.e. with receiving communion in both kinds), this ‘ablution wine’ was offered by the verger in a vessel quite distinct from the chalice.³⁰ Similarly, to distinguish itself from the Reformed faith, the Catholic Church emphasised the significance of the sacraments at the expense of the sermon.³¹ In the seventeenth century in particular, the Church supported the founding of new

brotherhoods. These were popular because their members could expect special indulgences.³² Polemical sermons of the eighteenth century continued to impress upon the Catholics their doctrinal differences from Reformed believers.³³ In the Catholic parishes of Graubünden, Counterreformation reforms included rules of hygiene and church interiors structured to emphasise the significance of communion and confession.³⁴

Confessionalisation was not only driven by ecclesiastical and political developments; the subjects or believers also played their parts by provoking each other confessionally, thus breaking the ban on defamation laid down by the authorities in the 1531 Peace. On the one hand, such provocations resulted in prolonged conflicts between the cantons, with the problem of confessional boundaries arising time and again. On the other hand, the conflicts were played out as personal rivalries.³⁵ Current research, meagre though it is, reveals that the provocations took various forms. The large number of conflicts of honour between private individuals that have found their way into court records show that the purpose of giving a confessional slant to the reproaches was to present oneself as a respectable person. The use of confessional slogans sometimes gave rise to or accompanied a dispute, indicating that they were 'dispute currency'. There is also evidence that the confessional disputes sometimes turned into small-scale religious disputations. In such cases, the opponents were concerned with the use of the articles of faith as doctrinal evidence of the superiority of their own confession. The intellectual level of such theological disputes varies, but it is striking that the opponents argued over doctrinal issues with great seriousness.³⁶ The aim of such disputes, evidently, was to fault the opponent. Here, confessionalisation meant distancing oneself from the other, false confession, and this was often done with considerable theological knowledge.

As well as verbal disputes, the provocations took various non-verbal forms in everyday life. Examples of this can be found, *inter alia*,³⁷ in the parish of Ramsen, which as a result of the customary early modern changes of rulers had become a Catholic enclave in a Reformed region.³⁸ Even though legal provisions were made, the Reformed residents refused to accept their Catholic neighbours. Well into the nineteenth century, political and ecclesiastical representatives were preoccupied with solving confessional conflicts which took on familiar forms. The Reformed farmers often sent their cattle out onto the roads to disrupt the Corpus Christi processions. They

prevented the erection of crucifixes; they disturbed Catholic holidays by going demonstratively about their daily work.³⁹ There were disputes about how the confessions should be represented when it came to appointing judges to the local courts. And should the Reformed residents have a right to a say in the appointment of a new (Catholic) verger? The conflicts eventually ebbed away when, in 1838, two separate and independent parishes were founded. This structural separation of the confessions brought three centuries of 'cohabitation' to an end.

This example from the parish of Ramsen is not unique, neither are similar cases limited to the nineteenth century. In other regions of mixed confession such as Thurgau in the seventeenth and eighteenth century,⁴⁰ processions are known to have been disrupted, the erection of crucifixes prevented or the peace of religious festivals disturbed. The *simultaneum*, i.e. the use of churches by both confessions, also gave rise to conflict. There were disputes between the Catholics and the Reformed about the use of the font, for example, or the presence of a choir screen separating chancel and nave. The screen was appropriate for Catholics because it accorded with the Tridentine requirements; the Reformed however saw it as reducing the limited seating space, and being doctrinally questionable in that it contradicted the principle of the priesthood of all believers. In some cases, the services actually took place simultaneously, so that congregants of both confessions could hear and possibly also disturb the others. The contrasts were especially marked where, as in Bischofszell in Thurgau, the Reformed parishioners shared the whole church with the Catholics. They were surrounded by Catholic images of saints and the Virgin, but also held an annual procession celebrating the iconoclasts of the Reformation.⁴¹ Rites, signs and symbols characteristic of one confession were often used to provoke members of the other.⁴² This tendency even increased in the seventeenth century, with sharp conflicts continuing into the eighteenth century.⁴³

Tracing the course of confessionalisation on the level of political and ecclesiastical structures or of religious provocations, we have a picture of sharp contrasts. The survival instinct of the Swiss Confederation imposed pragmatism on its members, however. Following a time of open conflict, the two confessions learned to accept each other's existence. This pragmatic consensus did not, however, do away with fundamental confessional dissent. Although there were confessionally mixed regions in Switzerland, the principle and ideal of strict

confessionalism dominated the ecclesiastical and political establishment, a principle which individuals and groups in society made use of for their own ends.

Setting invisible boundaries: Confessionalisation as a connection

Recent, as yet sparse, research on the issue of boundary-crossing causes us to nuance the picture of sharp contrasts in the landscape of confessionalisation in Switzerland.⁴⁴ Rather than taking political conflict and ecclesiastical arrangements as their starting point, these recent studies examine the consequences of confessional differentiation in the everyday lives of citizens. Three themes are dominant: the implementation of the *simultaneum*, the question of conversion and the problem of social or political action under the impact of confessionally charged conditions.

In view of the source situation, there has been little research to date on the *simultaneum* in Switzerland as a space for the accommodation of encounters between the confessions.⁴⁵ Sources were created when action was necessary, i.e. when conflicts were to be avoided or resolved. However, one should not overlook the fact that joint use of the church building necessarily meant that members of the two confessions were intimately familiar with each others' rites. In Bischofszell, Thurgau, an episcopal mandate of 1556 laid down that Reformed pastors should also pray the Ave Maria from the pulpit. This mandate was regularly renewed until 1712, without the Reformed Council raising any objections. Evidently it was observed with varying degrees of strictness, but the mandate indicates that Reformed pastors were familiar with the prayer. At a Catholic wedding in Arbon in 1674, when the guests failed to intone the Ave Maria, they were helped out by a Reformed guest who knew the tune.⁴⁶

Similar disparate, heterogeneous evidence suggests on-going connections between the confessions, especially in the sixteenth century. The introduction of the Reformation did not entail a complete break in every field. In Geneva, the consistory found itself instructing believers up to the mid-sixteenth century that they did not need to pray in Latin, nor invoke the Virgin or the saints. Only in the second half of the century did the consistory find it appropriate to demand knowledge of the Lord's Supper and the doctrine of predestination.⁴⁷ In Zurich, Zwingli retained the Marian festivals, even though his

own Mariology was not that of the Catholic faith.⁴⁸ Moreover, the Reformed in Zurich retained the Ave Maria until the mid-sixteenth century. The attitude of the Synod of 1604 is instructive in this respect. It explained that, as it had not been possible to break forcibly with liturgical and spiritual custom, the Ave Maria had been tolerated during a period of transition.⁴⁹ The Reformation mandate of Altstätten, Marbach, Balgach and Berneck in 1528 established both the Marian festivals and a number of saints' days as religious holidays.⁵⁰ The abolition of the Communion wafer also took some time to achieve. Only in the early seventeenth century did the use of bread and the breaking of bread become customary in Switzerland.⁵¹ It is significant, moreover in this context, that the legend of Zwingli's heart being kept as a relic lasted right into the eighteenth century.⁵² In Basel, the prominent statue of Mary on the city hall's clock face was converted into the figure of Justice only in 1608-09. The city's patron saint was consigned to the background, while on the west face of the minster, a Madonna figure has remained untouched to this day, as has the Madonna statue on the side of the Spalentor.⁵³

Catholic tradition of this kind also survived in the Reformed canton of Schaffhausen, which bordered on Catholic regions. The choice of godparents, for example, was not determined by confession but by family and social proximity.⁵⁴ In Thayingen – and elsewhere too, we may assume⁵⁵ – it was customary well into the seventeenth century to kneel during baptism.⁵⁶ Meanwhile, the *Salve Regina* maintained its place in the official Reformed liturgy. Catholics in neighbouring – Catholic – Bietingen who had attended church in Thayingen before the Reformation continued to do so, bringing their children to be baptised in the Reformed city.⁵⁷ When looking for work⁵⁸ or attending church fairs, both Reformed and Catholic believers ignored the legal arrangements which provided for a separation between the confessions.⁵⁹ A full thirty years after the Reformation, some members of the Council in Schaffhausen were suspected of still adhering to the Catholic faith.⁶⁰ In 1597, the Council was even bold enough to decide on the restoration of the organ. The clergy, it must be said, protested vehemently against this in the name of Reformed dogma!⁶¹

We still do not have a full account of the continuation of Catholic rites and rituals in the Reformed Church. We can be certain however that the continuities detailed above were not exceptions, neither were they restricted to Northern Switzerland. The Luzern city scribe Renward Cysat reported that Reformed citizens sent their Catholic rela-

tives on pilgrimages for their own purposes. He also recorded how, in Mandated Members Thurgau, the Reformed residents of Üsslinger protested when the prior sought to divide the cemetery into separate Catholic and Reformed sections. Their argument was that, having been related to and friends with Catholics in their lifetime, they considered this separation in death nonsensical.⁶² This account cannot be simply dismissed as the polemic of a Catholic scribe. Reformed clergy in the same region complained of their members taking part in processions in neighbouring Catholic parishes.⁶³ In 1638, Catholics in Würenlos in Mandated Members Baden sought to have paintings of the twelve apostles displayed in the church. Despite the confessional ban on such images, many of the Reformed supported them.⁶⁴ Moreover, there is evidence from the Waadt region that even a century after the Reformation, sacred springs from the pre-Reformation era were still regarded as sacred by Reformed believers.⁶⁵ Similarly, book miracles were not restricted to Catholics.⁶⁶ In Graubünden there was also a confessional overlap which was not separated along confessional lines until political developments of the seventeenth century caused this to happen.⁶⁷ The Reformed church courts there can certainly be traced back to their pre-Reformation roots.⁶⁸

We may conclude that the boundary between Catholics and the Reformed was not as firmly set as church and politics (and indeed historiography which has followed their lead) would have liked. Significantly, some parishes developed pragmatic solutions. In 1532, the people of the Catholic parish of Linthal in Reformed Glarus, unable to find a suitable priest, elected the Reformed pastor of Betschwanden as their clergyman.⁶⁹ In Ramsen, where there was only a Catholic parish, up until 1624 the Reformed residents listened to the priest's sermon and then left the church before Communion. In this way, they could demonstrate their adherence to their Reformed faith. That did not, however, deter them from being married by the Catholic priest, who also baptised their children.⁷⁰ Conditions were very similar in Wängi in Thurgau, where the Reformed did not have their own pastor until 1607.⁷¹ The Reformed church rules stated that the unbaptised could not have an honourable burial in the cemetery. So, in the Rhine valley and Toggenburg regions, parents made their own provisions. In the course of the seventeenth century, increasing numbers of them had Catholic midwives give their children emergency baptisms.⁷² In Catholic Wallis, Reformed residents who had founded organisations in the sixteenth century to further the cause of

the Reformed faith pondered the question of whether, since they had no clergy of their own, it would be permissible to take part in the Catholic service and also have Catholic baptisms, weddings and funerals.⁷³

The bridging of the gap between Catholic and Reformed worked both ways. Reformed rites and rituals also found their way into Catholicism. In Luzern in the first half of the eighteenth century, the doctor and wealthy farmer Augustin Salzmann and the miller Jakob Schmidlin initiated a pious movement. Inspired by pietism, and in contrast to Catholicism, it emphasised the independent reading of the Bible.⁷⁴ The church reacted sharply against the two initiators and their adherents.⁷⁵ Despite this, it seems that the significance of the Bible grew among Catholics. Increasing numbers of the clergy possessed a Bible, and by the beginning of the nineteenth century, most clergy members in the Luzern region had their own Bible.⁷⁶

Whatever the differences between them in terms of the content of their faith, both Catholics and the Reformed experienced similar attempts by the authorities to control them. Although the understanding of Communion or the Lord's Supper separated the two confessions irreconcilably, the disciplinary measures to which both were exposed showed strong parallels. In Luzern, communicants were obliged to prove that they had at least attended Easter confession and Easter Communion. The priest would provide them with the necessary confession or communion note.⁷⁷ Reformed communicants were subject to comparable rules in that admission to the Lord's Supper was strictly controlled by the pastor.⁷⁸ The sumptuary laws laid down by the secular authorities were also strikingly similar in Catholic and Reformed regions. The Reformed mandates required that the expenditure on wedding and baptism celebrations was to be limited.⁷⁹ Exactly the same applied to a Catholic First Communion and the profession of faith celebrations.⁸⁰

Is it not true that conversions, i.e. the move from one confession to the other, speak the language of separation rather than connection? The phenomenon of conversion⁸¹ in Switzerland has thus far been poorly researched.⁸² However, there are signs that conversion did not necessarily mean changing one's personal religious convictions.⁸³ Beat Hodler regards conversion as a barter object which could be used more than once, enabling people to improve their position in society.⁸⁴ Frauke Volkland reaches the same conclusion in her micro-history of Thurgau. Conversion could be a means to attaining a de-

sired office, or avoiding a confessionally mixed marriage. In such cases, it was mostly the women who converted, often reverting to their former confession after the death of their husbands.⁸⁵ Here, conversion does not mean concerning oneself with the religious content of the confessions, but making use of strategies for social purposes. This is especially evident in the case of Reformed residents who wanted to marry close relatives. Such marriages would have been forbidden, but couples threatened to convert to Catholicism if they were not allowed to marry,⁸⁶ thus making successful use of confessional rivalries without a concern for confessional content. This speaks for a confessionalisation with low confessional boundaries rather than for confessional boundary-crossing.

Volkland shows how confessionally charged issues, such as problems surrounding the disruption of a Corpus Christi procession, could become 'de-confessionalised' to assume a political significance instead. In 1677, when the Catholics of Bischoffszell set off on their Corpus Christi procession, a number of Reformed citizens went into the nearby woods carrying musical instruments. Suspecting trouble, the bailey sent Catholic observers after them. They reported that the Reformed citizens had parodied the Corpus Christi festival, whereupon the bailey called them to account. According to Volkland, in the conflict between Catholic accuser and the Reformed accused, the respective images of self and other were at variance. Whereas the Catholics had taken the Reformed behaviour to be a parody of their festival, the Reformed had meant their behaviour to express resistance to the city's Catholic governor. Their piece of theatre in the woods, according to Volkland, should not be construed as confessional polemics. Instead, it should be seen as political protest by confessional means.⁸⁷ It follows from this argument that the actors were not drawing confessional boundaries, but pulling confessional stops for non-confessional purposes.

Tracing the history of political and ecclesiastical developments in the era of confessionalisation means telling the story of conflicts which resulted in two irreconcilable worlds. When we look at how the official separation into two worlds translated into practice in the everyday lives of the citizens and believers, however, the picture is a different one. People knew very well how to provoke each other polemically, emphasising the boundaries between the confessions. But when they wanted to, they could ignore confessional differences. The disciplinary measures they experienced were similar for both

confessions. If they chose to, they could combine what they saw as connected, even when it was officially divided. They shared religious traditions, enjoyed relations with their neighbours, worked on marriage strategies and expressed political opposition. In these cases, they were ‘de-confessionalising’ confessional conflicts. They were pursuing their own interests, rather than confessional interests, by confessional means. Those who underestimate this are drawing implicit and invisible boundaries where in reality there were none.

**Dissolving Boundaries:
Perspectives in Confessionalisation Research**

Given the current research situation, the bold paradox of ‘de-confessionalised confessionalisation’ can be no more than an appeal to look again at the historiographical approaches to confessionalisation. Perhaps historians have not taken their own claim, namely that confessionalisation was a process, seriously enough.⁸⁸ The analysis of armed conflicts and political and church rules can lead all too easily to the assumption that two separate worlds developed. The setting of boundaries between these worlds is now giving rise to the surprising recognition that these boundaries were in fact blurred or even open. It seems to me, however, that these recent reflections on the problem of boundary-crossing do not go far enough. Historiography has created a gap which needs to be bridged. In all probability, subjects and believers were able to choose between several confessional languages. They could speak the official language of confessional separation, or they could choose not to draw the boundaries. When they were pursuing their own concerns by confessional means, they instrumentalised confessional rivalries without dealing with the content of confessional boundaries. Sometimes they spoke the language of their own confession, at other times they spoke the language of their own interests using the grammar of the confessions. The relation between these languages has yet to be explored. In view of these ‘spaces’ now opening up, future research should perhaps consider arguing on two levels in order to do justice to confessionalisation. No one will want to question the boundaries drawn between Catholicism and Protestantism in historiography. But I suggest that some of these boundaries should be dissolved in order to make room for confessional multilingualism. The examples indicate that such multilin-

gualism can be found in the Reformation era⁸⁹ right on into the nineteenth century. This once again raises the question of the epochal character of confessionalisation and its dynamics in history.⁹⁰ And we should not lose sight of early modern people who evidently did not concern themselves with religious questions.⁹¹ If we are to take religious life in the era of confessionalisation seriously as the space of action and experience occupied by subjects acting under specific conditions of ecclesiastical and political societisation, we must pay attention not only to the language of division, but also to the language of connection using the grammar of division.

Notes

1 I would like to thank Rosemary Selle (Heidelberg) for translating this text.

2 E.W. Zeeden, *Konfessionsbildung. Studien zur Reformation, Gegenreformation und katholischen Reform* (Stuttgart 1985), 9ff.

3 A. Holzem, 'Die Konfessionsgesellschaft: Christenleben zwischen staatlichem Bekenntniszwang und religiöser Heilshoffnung', *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 110 (1999), 85.

4 A. Holzem, 'Bedingungen und Formen religiöser Erfahrung im Katholizismus zwischen Konfessionalisierung und Aufklärung', in: P. Münch (ed.), *'Erfahrung' als Kategorie der Frühneuzeitgeschichte* (Munich 2001), 321.

5 Cf. *Ibid.*, 324-29.

6 A. Holzem, 'Konfessionsgesellschaft', 83.

7 On the debate concerning the idea of confessionalisation as a process directed 'from above' (by means of vertical disciplining by secular and church authorities) or 'from below' (horizontal disciplining by members of the community among themselves), cf. H.R. Schmidt, 'Sozialdisziplinierung?', In: *Historische Zeitschrift* 265 (1997), 639-82; H. Schilling, 'Disziplinierung oder "Selbstregulierung" der Untertanen', *Historische Zeitschrift* 264 (1997), 675-91. A concise summary of the debate on vertical and horizontal discipline can be found in U. Pfister, 'Geschlossene Tabernakel – saubere Paramente, Katholische Reform und ländliche Glaubenspraxis in Graubünden, 17. und 18. Jahrhundert', in: N. Haag, S. Holtz and W. Zimmermann (eds), *Ländliche Frömmigkeit. Konfessionskulturen und Lebenswelten 1500-1800* (Stuttgart 2002), 115-17. For additional empirical studies on the problems of disciplining in the Romandie, D. Tosato (ed.), *Sous L'oeil du consistoire: Sources consistoriales et histoire du contrôle social sous l'Ancien Régime* (Lausanne 2004).

- 8 There is as yet no monograph for Switzerland comparable to that of Etienne François's on the visible and invisible boundaries between the Catholic and Lutheran city populations of Augsburg: *Die unsichtbare Grenze: Protestanten und Katholiken in Augsburg 1648-1806* (Sigmaringen 1991).
- 9 T. Kaufmann, 'Einleitung', in: K. von Greyerz et al. (eds), *Interkonfessionalität – Transkonfessionalität – binnenkonfessionelle Pluralität: Neuere Forschungen zur Konfessionalisierungsthese* (Göttingen 2003), 14-15.
- 10 Cf., e.g., R.C. Head, 'Catholics and Protestants in Graubünden', *German History* 17 (1999), 341.
- 11 See A. Würgler in this volume; also H. Berner, U. Gäbler, H.R. Guggisberg, 'Schweiz', in: A. Schindling, W. Ziegler (eds), *Die Territorien des Reichs im Zeitalter der Reformation und Konfessionalisierung: Land und Konfession 1500-1650* (Münster, 1993), 278-323; K. von Greyerz, 'Switzerland', in: B. Scribner, R. Porter, M. Teich (eds), *The Reformation in National Context* (Cambridge 1994), 30-46.
- 12 An example of the significance of internal developments in the Empire for the Swiss Confederation is detailed by T. Maissen, 'Die Eidgenossenschaft und das Augsburger Interim. Zu einem unbekanntem Gutachten Heinrich Bullingers', in: L. Schorn-Schütte (ed.), *Das Interim 1548/50. Herrschaftskrise und Glaubenskonflikt* (Gütersloh, 2005), 76-104.
- 13 B. Gordon, *The Swiss Reformation*. (Manchester 2002); U. Gäbler, Schweiz, in: *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* vol. 30. (Berlin, New York 1999), 682-721; here: 690-703; K. v. Greyerz, Switzerland, in: B. Scribner, R. Porter and N. Teich (eds), *The Reformation in National Context* (Cambridge 1994), 30-46; P. Stadler, Eidgenossenschaft und Reformation, in: H. Angermeier (ed.), *Säkulare Aspekte der Reformationszeit*. (Munich 1983), 91-99; R. Pfister, *Kirchengeschichte der Schweiz. Von der Reformation bis zum 2. Villmerger Krieg*. (Zurich 1974); A. Würgler, Eidgenossenschaft. Konfessionalisierung und Ende (1515-1798), in: www.dhs.ch/externe/project/deutsch.htm
- 14 H. Romer, *Herrschaft, Reislauf und Verbotspolitik. Beobachtungen zum rechtlichen Alltag der Zürcher Solddienstbekämpfung im 16. Jahrhundert* (Zurich 1995).
- 15 For a detailed discussion of the political and economic factors to which the failure of urban and rural reformation in Switzerland may be attributed, cf. A. Zünd, *Gescheiterte Stadt- und Landreformationen des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts in der Schweiz* (Basel 1999) in partic. 94, 102-104, 152, 167, 190ff., 234-242.
- 16 I. Saulle-Hippenmeyer, 'Gemeindereformation – Gemeindekonfessionalisierung in Graubünden', in: H.R. Schmidt et al. (eds), *Gemeinde*,

Gemeindereform und Widerstand (Tübingen 1998), 264-73. Summary in U. Pfister, 'Konfessionskirchen und Glaubenspraxis', in: Verein für Bündner (ed.), *Handbuch der Bündner Geschichte, Frühe Neuzeit, Kulturforschung* (Chur 2000), 204. The conflicts arising from tensions between individual religious liberty and communal membership of a confession are examined by R.C. Head, 'Religiöse Koexistenz und konfessioneller Streit in den Vier Dörfern: Praktiken der Toleranz in der Ostschweiz 1525-1615', *Bündner Monatsblatt* 1999, 323-44.

17 Cf. the map of confessional distribution in A. Fischer, *Reformation und Restitution. Das Bistum Chur im Zeitalter der tridentinischen Glaubenserneuerung. Zugleich ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Priesterausbildung und Pastoralreform (1660-1661)* (Zurich 2000), 744ff.

18 On the detail of the 'slow Reformation' in Graubünden in debate with Peter Blickle's thesis of 'communalisation', R.C. Head, "'Nit alls zwo Gmeinden, oder Partheyen, sonder ein Gmeind": Kommunalismus zwischen den Konfessionen in Graubünden', in: B. Kümin (ed.), *Landgemeinde und Kirche im Zeitalter der Konfessionen* (Zurich 2004), 26-30.

19 In Bischofszell in Thurgau, for instance, the Reformed majority of the citizenry, from which the politically and economically most influential families came, were able to come to some special arrangements with the Bishop as overlord or the bailey as his representative.

20 Some places however broke with this principle in the course of adjusting their boundaries: R.E. Hofer, "'Nun leben wir in der gefährlichsten Zyt": Prolegomena zu einer Geschichte Schaffhausens im konfessionellen Zeitalter', *Schaffhäuser Beiträge zur Geschichte* 1995, 66f.

21 For Glarus, Markus Wick emphasises that the confessional conflicts were largely a matter of power politics rather than religious controversies or issues of church rights: 'Der "Glarnerhandel": Strukturgeschichtliche und konfliktsoziologische Hypothesen zum Glarner Konfessionsgegensatz', *Jahrbuch des Historischen Vereins des Kanton Glarus*, 1982, 182-84, 200.

22 E. Zsindely, 'Confessio Helvetica Posterior', in: *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, vol. 8 (Berlin and New York 1981), 169-73.

23 R. Pfister, 'Kirchengeschichte'; L. Vischer, L. Schenker, R. Dellsperger, *Ökumenische Kirchengeschichte der Schweiz* (Freiburg, Basel 1994).

24 On the problem of iconoclasm in general cf. C. Dupreux, P. Jezler, J. Wirt et al. (eds): *Bildersturm, Wahnsinn oder Gottes Wille?* (Munich 2000).

25 G. Germann, 'Protestantischer Kirchenbau in der Schweiz bis 1900, 300 Jahre Forschungsgeschichte', in: K. Raschzok, R. Sörries (eds), *Geschichte des protestantischen Kirchenbaues* (Erlangen 1994), 192-200; B. Reymond, *L'architecture religieuse des protestants* (Geneva 1996).

- 26 In Würenlos in 1638 the Catholic curate complained that the Reformed pastor Jörg Rott had ridiculed the system of indulgences in a sermon: S. Bott, M. Fuchs, “*Es ist denen Herren von Zürich gram um das würenlos*”, *Bausteine zu einer Konfessionalisierungsgeschichte der Grafschaft Baden: Die Reformierten im 17. Jahrhundert* (Aarau 2002), 169ff.
- 27 A. Fischer, *Reformation und Restitution*; H. Wicki, *Staat Kirche Religiosität, Der Kanton Luzern zwischen barocker Tradition und Aufklärung* (Luzern and Stuttgart 1990).
- 28 D. Sieber, ‘Jesuitenmission und „Magie“ der Sakramente Ende des 16. Jahrhunderts in Luzern’, in: N. Haag, S. Holtz, W. Zimmermann (eds), *Ländliche Frömmigkeit*, 207-08. Further details in: D. Sieber, *Jesuitische Missionierung, priesterliche Liebe, sakramentale Magie, Volkskulturen in Luzern 1563 bis 1614* (Basel 2005).
- 29 The fundamental problem of a ‘second confessionalisation’ in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is discussed by H. Klüeting, “‘Zweite Reformation’ – Konfessionsbildung – Konfessionalisierung: Zwanzig Jahre Kontroversen und Ergebnisse nach zwanzig Jahren’, *Historische Zeitschrift* 277 (2003), 309-41; A.J. Steinhoff, ‘Ein zweites konfessionelles Zeitalter? Nachdenken über die Religion im langen 19. Jahrhundert’, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 30 (2004), 549-70.
- 30 Wicki, *Staat*, 201.
- 31 *Ibid.*, 212, 218.
- 32 *Ibid.*, 222-230.
- 33 *Ibid.*, 215.
- 34 Cf. on this point U. Pfister, ‘Tabernakel’.
- 35 What is known as religious defamation has been focused on as the object of political conflict. There is as yet limited awareness of confessional provocation as a form of social action: D. Hacke, ‘Zwischen Konflikt und Konsens: Zur politisch-konfessionellen Kultur in der Alten Eidgenossenschaft des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts’, *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 32 (2005), 575-604; R.E. Hofer, Prolegomena, 36-45. On the issue of confessional conflict in everyday life as a desideratum of research, cf. R.E. Hofer, *Uepigges, unzüchtiges Lebewesen, Schaffhauser Ehegerichtsbarkeit von der Reformation bis zum Ende des Ancien Régime (1529-1798)* (Berne 1995), 27.
- 36 F. Loetz, *Mit Gott handeln. Von den Zürcher Gotteslästerern der Frühen Neuzeit zu einer Kulturgeschichte des Religiösen* (Göttingen 2002), 272-340.
- 37 Bott, Fuchs, *Bausteine*, 150-58.
- 38 Until 1770, Ramsen was under the divided rule of Austria and Zurich. On condition of legal protection for the Catholics, Austria sold its political

rights in 1770 to Zurich. In the Helvetica 1798/1803, Ramsen was assigned to the canton Schaffhausen, with the result that it became a legally protected Catholic enclave within a Reformed region. The Principal Decree of the Imperial Deputation ('Reichsdeputationshauptschluß') of 1803 gave the Grand Duchy of Baden the property and rights of the parish, which had previously belonged to the Prince Bishopric and Cathedral Chapter of Constance. Following several disposals, these rights eventually passed in 1819 to Schaffhausen. From then on, Catholics and Reformed lived side by side, the legal protection of the Catholics no longer being retained. See M. Spätz-Walter, 'Katholische Minderheiten und konfessionelle Minderheitenpolitik im Kanton Schaffhausen im 19. Jahrhundert, Echte Toleranz oder Duldung wider Willen?', *Schaffhauser Beiträge zur Geschichte* 76 (1999), 95-113.

39 As well as having fewer holidays, the Reformed, who had refused the introduction of the Gregorian calendar as a papist measure in 1582, continued to observe the Julian calendar. This meant that Catholic and Reformed believers celebrated the festivals they held in common, such as Christmas, Easter and Pentecost, some ten days apart. Thus the disruption of religious holidays was confessionally a highly charged issue which led to repeated conflicts: Bott, Fuchs, *Bausteine*, 154ff; P. Kern, 'Kirche und Konfessionen', in: W. Kuster, A. Eberle and P. Kern (eds), *Aus der Geschichte von Stadt und Gemeinde Altstätten* (Altstätten 1998), 279-84.

40 F. Volkland, *Konfession und Selbstverständnis: Reformierte Rituale in der gemischt-konfessionellen Kleinstadt Bischofszell im 17. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen 2005), 71-76. For examples from the County of Baden, see Bott and Fuchs, *Bausteine*, 155-57. For Altstätten in the Rhine Valley, Kern, 'Kirche und Konfessionen', 274ff.

41 Volkland, *Konfession*, 76-80. In the County of Baden, the partitioning off of the chancel or the use of the font gave rise to conflict: Bott and Fuchs, *Bausteine*, 161-66.

42 Analogous examples from the Catholic regions in A. Schmidiger, *Das Entlebuch zur Zeit der Glaubensspaltung und der katholischen Reform* (Schüpfheim 1972), 91-103.

43 For the County of Baden and Graubünden: Bott and Fuchs, *Bausteine*, 170ff.; U. Pfister, 'Konfessionskirchen', 210.

44 A typical example of this is Beat Hodler's conclusion that the Reformation is not simply an era of rigid boundaries, but also an era of boundary-crossing: 'Konversionen und der Handlungsspielraum der Untertanen in der Eidgenossenschaft im Zeitalter der reformierten Orthodoxie', in: H.R. Schmidt, A. Holenstein, A. Würigler (eds), *Gemeinde, Reformation und Widerstand* (Tübingen 1998), 291. See also Hofer, 'Prolegomena', 24-28.

- 45 Current research continues to depend on older publications in legal history which examine the arrangements determining the separation of the confessions, such as P. Brüscheiler, *Die landfriedlichen Simultanverhältnisse im Thurgau* (Frauenfeld 1932).
- 46 Volkland, *Konfession*, 114ff.
- 47 R.M. Kingdon, 'Wie das Konsistorium des calvinistischen Genf zur Unterstützung von konfessioneller Konformität gebraucht wurde', in: P. Prodi (ed.), *Glaube und Eid*, Schriften des historischen Kollegs vol. 28 (Munich 1993), 181-83.
- 48 E. Campi, *Zwingli und Maria* (Zurich 1997).
- 49 Cf. the Synod record, Staatsarchiv Zurich, E.II.451, 133f.
- 50 Cf. P. Kern, 'Kirche und Konfessionen', 266. Keeping to saints' days did however take on theologically specific Reformation features, as Thomas Maissen shows for Zurich's patron saints Felix and Regula. These saints caused no problems for Zurich theologians and councillors as long as they were regarded as role models and representatives of statehood. The idea that they could perform miracles or intercede for believers, however, was not acceptable: T. Maissen, 'Die Stadtpatrone Felix und Regula: Das Fortleben einer Thebäerlegende im reformierten Zurich', in: D.R. Bauer, K. Herbers and G. Signori (eds), *Patriotische Heilige* (Stuttgart 2005), 211-27.
- 51 T. Wollmann, 'Die neuen Abendmahlsgeräte der evangelisch reformierten Kirche in Basel', in: B. Meles, F. Egger (eds), *Wettstein – die Schweiz und Europa 1648* (Basel 1998), 62-73.
- 52 K. von Greyerz, 'Religiöse Erfahrungsräume im Reformiertentum', in: P. Münch (ed.), *'Erfahrung' als Kategorie der Frühneuzeitgeschichte* (Munich 2001), 310ff.
- 53 B. Meles, 'Konfessionelle Verhältnisse', in: B. Meles and F. Egger (eds), *Wettstein*, 156f; St. Hess, 'Totgesagte leben länger, Basels Abnabelung von seiner mittelalterlichen Stadtpatronin', in: St. Hess, and T. Lochmann (eds), *Basilea: Ein Beispiel städtischer Repräsentation in weiblicher Gestalt* (Basel 2001), 46-57.
- 54 Hofer, 'Prolegomena', 32.
- 55 In 1659, for example, the Zurich General Werdmüller, accused of unorthodox words and deeds, noted in his defence document that the *confessio helvetica* (prior) did not specify whether or not one should kneel to pray: Staatsarchiv Zurich, E.II.97, f. 1254. On the ritual of kneeling as a confessional distinction between Lutherans and Calvinists: B. Stollberg-Rilinger, 'Knien vor Gott – Knien vor dem Kaiser', in: G. Althoff, Ch. Witthöft (eds), *Zeichen – Rituale – Werte. Zum Ritualwandel im Konfessionskonflikt* (Münster 2004), 523-25, 528-30.

- 56 Hofer, 'Prolegomena', 58f.
- 57 Ibid., 62f.
- 58 Vice versa, the Bishop of Chur had the Reformed city craftsmen working for his court: U. Pfister, 'Konfessionskirchen', 225.
- 59 Hofer, 'Prolegomena', 34f., 63.
- 60 Ibid., 30f.
- 61 Ibid., 37.
- 62 T. Brugisser, 'Frömmigkeitspraktiken der einfachen Leute im Katholizismus und Reformiertentum', *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung*, 17 (1990), 16, 26.
- 63 F. Volkland, 'Reformiert sein "unter" Katholiken. Zur religiösen Praxis reformierter Gläubiger in gemischtkonfessionellen Gemeinden der Alten Eidgenossenschaft im 17. Jahrhundert', in: N. Haag, W. Zimmermann (eds), *Ländliche Frömmigkeit 1500-1800* (Stuttgart 2002), 170.
- 64 Bott, Fuchs, *Bausteine*, 169.
- 65 Greyerz, 'Erfahrungsräume', 308n5.
- 66 A 'book miracle' is the miraculous saving of books from damage by fire or flooding: *ibid.*, 310n11.
- 67 I. Saule-Hippenmeyer, 'Gemeindereformation', in: H.R. Schmidt et al. (eds), *Gemeinde*, 275-78.
- 68 H.R. Schmidt, 'Über das Verhältnis von ländlicher Gemeinde und christlicher Ethik. Graubünden und die Innerschweiz', in: P. Bickle (ed.), *Landgemeinde und Stadtgemeinde in Europa* (Munich 1991), 454-87. Ulrich Pfister suggests that the activity of the church courts in Graubünden was slight: 'Reformierte Sittenzucht zwischen kommunaler und territorialer Organisation: Graubünden, 16. -18. Jahrhundert', in: *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 87 (1996), 285-333.
- 69 Wick, "'Glarnerhandel'", 124n 192.
- 70 M. Späth-Walter, 'Katholische Minderheiten und konfessionelle Minderheitspolitik im Kanton Schaffhausen im 19. Jahrhundert', *Schaffhauser Beiträge zur Geschichte* 1999, 98.
- 71 Volkland, 'Reformiert sein', 165f.
- 72 Ibid., 168. On the problem of emergency baptism in Alstätten Kern, 'Kirche und Konfessionen', 276f.
- 73 C. Schnyder, *Reformation und Demokratie im Wallis (1524-1613)* (Mainz 2002), 141-64.
- 74 Little is known about the distribution of the Bible in Switzerland. One of the few studies is G. Alder, *Die Bibel in der Innerschweiz, Schicksale und Bekenntnisse* (Basel 1964). On pietist tendencies among Catholics in Luzern see A. Messerli, 'Pietistische Strömungen im katholischen Kanton

Luzern in der ersten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts', in: H. Lehmann, H.-J. Schrader and H. Schilling (eds), *Jansenismus, Quietismus, Pietismus* (Göttingen 2002), 175-88.

75 Wicki, *Kirche*, 125-44.

76 *Ibid.*, 182.

77 *Ibid.*, 201.

78 H.R. Schmidt, *Dorf und Religion. Reformierte Sittenzucht in Berner Landgemeinden der Frühen Neuzeit*. (Stuttgart, Jena and New York 1995).

79 C. Schott, 'Policey in der Schweiz: Das Beispiel Zurich', in: M. Stolleis, K. Härter, L. Schilling (eds), *Policey im Europa der Frühen Neuzeit* (Frankfurt am Main 1996), 489-507.

80 Wicki, *Kirche*, 176.

81 On the question of conversion as a historical phenomenon, cf. presentations at a Berlin Conference in 2004: <http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/tagungsberichte/id=699>. A general introduction is provided by D. Breuer, 'Konversionen im konfessionellen Zeitalter', in: F. Niewohner, F. Rädle (eds), *Konversionen im Mittelalter und in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Hildesheim, Zurich and New York 1999), 59-69.

82 We may await with interest Heike Bock's doctoral project (Luzern) 'Konversion als sozio-kulturelles Phänomen: Konfessionelle Grenzüberschreitungen in Zurich und Luzern im 17./18. Jahrhundert'.

83 On the critical discussion of conversion exemplified in Thurgau, Volkland, *Konfession*, 161-183.

84 Hodler, 'Konversionen', 290.

85 Volkland, *Konfession*, 155, 158-60, 175f., 183. In Mandated Members Baden too, it was mostly the women who converted to the Catholicism of their husbands: Bott and Fuchs, *Bausteine*, 156f.

86 Volkland, *Konfession*, 163f.

87 *Ibid.*, 135-37.

88 The same point is emphasised by Christophe Duhamelle, who asserts that confessionalisation should be understood not so much as a conflict between opposites as a 'mutual process in which the subjects developed their confessional identity': 'Konfessionelle Identität als Streitprozess. Der Gesangbuchstreit in Wendehausen (Eichsfeld), 1792-1800', *Historische Anthropologie* 11 (2003), 413f.

89 Heinrich Schmidt formulates for the Empire: 'Confessionalisation began in the Reformation era': *Konfessionalisierung im 16. Jahrhundert*. (Munich 1992), 2.

90 Here I follow Wolfgang Reinhard's consideration of the problem of periodisation in history. Although the designation of epochs is heuristically and didactically necessary, these should be recognised as historiographical con-

structs which require deconstruction: *Probleme deutscher Geschichte 1495-1806: Reichsreform und Reformation 1495-1555* (Stuttgart 2001), in particular 63f.

91 G. Schwerhoff, 'Die alltägliche Auferstehung des Fleisches. Religiöser Spott und radikaler Unglaube um 1500', *Historische Anthropologie* 12 (2004), 309-316.

4 Was the Dutch Republic a Calvinist Community?

The State, the Confessions, and Culture in the Early Modern Netherlands

Willem Frijhoff

One of the most common characteristics the Dutch use to describe themselves is the Calvinist nature of their society and culture.¹ In the most recent survey of religious affiliations in Europe, however, the Netherlands figure as a Catholic country. Since the largest denomination determines the result, Catholicism with 31 per cent of the total population is by far the largest church community.² Even the total of all of the varieties of Protestantism (21 per cent) is still a minority in the land of Gomarus, Teellinck and Voetius. The seventeenth-century Calvinist ministers who defined their country as God's own chosen nation would be indignant, and many present-day European readers would be surprised. Is the Netherlands not the Calvinist country *par excellence* in Europe? The many rifts and denominations of Dutch Protestantism have achieved that Protestantism – or Calvinism – is no longer the largest religious community in the Netherlands and this despite the merger of the major Protestant denominations into a single 'Protestant Church of the Netherlands' (PKN) in May 2004.

But while even Dutch Catholics when interrogated about the colour of their religious feelings, admit to having a Calvinistic outlook, a closer look at Dutch society may suggest another hypothesis. Through its ethics, values, symbols and rituals – which at first sight are group-characteristics of the Calvinist denomination, but appear to be really of a public nature – Calvinism has thoroughly shaped the nation's character. However, we may well ask whether the secular society of the present-day Netherlands, with its *Calvinistic* flavour, is perhaps merely another manifestation of a *public* religion, of which medieval Catholicism was the first, and Calvinism after the Reformation the second. During the early modern era, public religion and

the Calvinist church were one and the same thing. The Calvinists must have taken for granted as the triumph of their particular denomination what in reality was simply a triumphant form of social discipline and public religion, for all Dutch citizens, in a time when religion was still the predominant source of public morality and the main provider of civic ritual. The very notion of a 'Dutch Israel',³ where Protestant ministers commonly expressed their conviction that God had elected their Reformed community as his privileged political instrument, refers to an identification of church and state which also works the other way around because if the church shapes the religion of the state, the state in turn defines the public space in which the church operates.

This chapter shall therefore raise some questions about the Calvinistic character of the Dutch cultural community in the early modern era, by focussing on the relationship between religion, culture, and the state. The first question focuses on the nature of public religion during the early modern period. What do we mean when we discuss religion in an early modern state? Three different notions that are often used interchangeably should, however, be distinguished.⁴ Analytically, they denote three different dimensions of the world of religion, although in everyday reality they did overlap, of course. These notions are religion, belief, and church. Roughly, the focus of *religion* is the symbolic interpretation of reality; *belief* (and personal practice) refers to the personal involvement of the individual and his or her group, while *church* represents the social organisation of creed and practice in the public space. These three terms are related but not equivalent. The ambition of a church organisation is to encompass and control these three dimensions of religious life in one single movement, but its outlook depends very much on the interaction it manages to achieve between social life, political power, cultural values and the church organisation itself, through a variety of procedures ranging from struggle and negotiation to complicity. A symbiosis between political power and church organisation (viz. theocracy) will bring about a community form of religious life that differs notably from the Erastian solutions of cautious distance between the public church and the state, which prevailed in other early modern European societies, or from the harmony between the church and the cultural values of society, without any involvement of a purely secular or *laïque* state, which is characteristic of many modern European nations.

Categories of believers

Churches depend on believers. According to recent historical research, at least three categories of ‘believers’ have to be distinguished among the early modern ‘consumers’ of Reformed church services in the Northern Netherlands. Firstly, we have those church-members who had been admitted into the community of the Church via a public ceremony and were thus entitled to attend Holy Communion. Secondly, there are the so-called *liefhebbers* or ‘devotees’ of the Reformed Church,⁵ i.e., men or women who called themselves ‘Reformed’ and normally attended public church service without, however, committing themselves to ecclesiastical discipline or theological orthodoxy. And finally the occasional users, simple consumers of some religious commodity for instant gratification: a pious word, a piece of moral advice, bread from the poor relief authorities, the joy of reading or singing together, some form of conflict mediation, or simply some basic human sociability.

These categories, clearly singled out for the Reformed Church, probably apply to all the Church communities in the Netherlands. Among the Catholics, for instance, we would distinguish between active church members, simple communicants, and occasional consumers of ‘Catholic’ ritual, i.e., instrumental forms of religion rooted in pre-Reformation practice, assimilated into more recent, Counter-Reformation forms of Catholic devotion, or ascribed to Catholicism because of their symbolic or ritualistic character.⁶ This distinction should be enhanced with an analysis of the various strategies Catholic Church authorities employed to recuperate their original flocks either by proclaiming the ‘Dutchness’ of the Catholic faith – i.e., by stressing the continuity of the local Church organisation, and purifying folk belief and ritual, as did much of the secular clergy – or by emphasising the new, ‘missionary’ situation of the country that requested a Counter-Reformation strategy with an international outlook, and that renewed attention be given to the meaning of religious symbolism and the importance of ritualistic behaviour – as the regular clergy did, which was dominated by the Jesuits.⁷

This double analysis would account more efficiently for the apparent fluctuations in Church membership and the persistence or penetration of Catholicism into the various strata of local populations. This was even more so because the more or less ‘clandestine’, non-public character of the Catholic Church organisation in the early

modern Netherlands favoured the involvement of lay elites in church affairs and the growth of a particular lay piety. The best examples are the thousands of so-called *klopjes*, female Catholic lay persons who acted either as auxiliaries to the clergy, as quasi-nuns, or as small entrepreneurs on the religious market in matters concerning teaching, singing, nursing, the making or selling of religious objects, and so on.⁸

However, other, broader categorisations traverse such intra-confessional stratifications. In his study of the Reformation in Utrecht, Benjamin Kaplan has argued that, contrary to the historical evolution in most countries of Europe, the real opposition in the early modern Netherlands was not between Catholics and Protestants, but between Calvinists and Libertines, who were Calvinists who rejected essential aspects of Calvinism, including ecclesiastical discipline.⁹ Although the Utrecht case is rather peculiar, the opposition between Calvinists and Libertines is actually one of the major issues of early modern Dutch history, and one with tremendous consequences for later centuries. In my view, this basic, structural opposition was time and again transformed and adapted to new groups and new creeds.

As Kaplan points out, three basic interpretations of the Calvinist-Libertine conflict have prevailed in Dutch historiography, but they are not mutually exclusive.¹⁰ This hypothesis fits in very well with our threefold distinction. The first interpretation makes it essentially a political conflict between church and state, as the Libertines were prominent among the urban magistrates. In this interpretation, the concept of a 'public church' underpins the opposition, since the Libertine regents viewed the Calvinists as defenders of theocracy and hence a potential threat to their own authority. Therefore, 'the Libertines championed toleration for essentially political reasons'.¹¹ The second interpretation draws on the 'belief' dimension of religion, since it emphasises the intellectual oppositions between Catholics on the 'right' (conservative) wing of the spectrum of beliefs and Calvinists on the 'left' (progressive) wing, with the Libertines positioned as Erastian humanists in the middle, often inspired by other Christian creeds or alternative religious attitudes, and sometimes even destitute of any form of religious commitment. The third interpretation, which is simultaneously political and ecclesiological, puts the relation between 'religion' and 'church' at the heart of the issue. Indeed, the Calvinists wanted the church to be an exclusive organisation of committed believers, which regulated the symbolic expression

and interpretation of reality, whereas the Libertines essentially wished a comprehensive, open community welcoming people of all religious persuasions to communion and full membership.

Church and state

Kaplan rightly argues that none of these three interpretations suffice, even in combination. In his view, Dutch religious pluralism has been too long considered in terms of Dutch uniqueness, whereas it was in fact 'a local manifestation of a much broader struggle between the champions and opponents of confessionalism'.¹² The important point for our theme is the need to combine this view with other factors, if we are to accurately account for the Dutch evolution in the long run.

In reality, the development of confessionalism was permanently hampered by two facts. Firstly, the official Reformed Church proved unable, or unwilling, to make an unequivocal and unanimous choice in favour of the public church model, which could have transferred to the 'ruling church' (as the Dutch Reformed Church was then called) the major prerogatives enjoyed by the state churches of other countries. Instead, the Reformed Church's options fluctuated between a Church of the elected – such as in the seventeenth-century concept of an *Ecclesia purior* or in eighteenth-century Pietism – with a restricted social scope, and the utopia of a full theocracy.¹³ The latter was most certainly unacceptable for the civil authorities because of a second fact, the coexistence of a flourishing variety of denominations, churches and religious congregations. This confessional diversity was due to the very conditions in which the Dutch Republic had been created. It benefited from the culture of sociability that permeated everyday life in the Netherlands, and was protected by the civil authorities who preferred social consensus to religious disputes. Confessional diversity was indeed at the heart of the Republic since the Revolt had been undertaken under the sign of religious dissent, and the Reformed Church had only gradually succeeded in monopolising the religious choice of the political insurgents.

One of the main problems of the Dutch Republic was, in fact, the ambiguous relationship between church and state at the very origin of the nation. In retrospect, the Revolt of the Netherlands against Spain has often been interpreted as a rebellion for the sake of Calvin-

ism. This historical option pervades much of the nineteenth and twentieth-century literature as a grand narrative, but it suffers from a double bias. Firstly, other Protestant communities did manage to co-exist side by side with Calvinism; some of them were older, and locally stronger than the Calvinist community. Secondly, the Revolt arose as a struggle for liberty, which, in the sixteenth-century context, meant an almost inextricable mix of political liberty and freedom of conscience. Humanists, Mennonites, some Lutherans, several smaller religious communities, but also an important group of moderate Catholics had fought for a concept of freedom that prevented any encroachment on the principle of establishing a loose relationship between the church and the state.

Article 13 of the Union of Utrecht (29 January, 1579), i.e., the treaty of Union between the rebellious provinces which has ever since been considered the constitution of the Dutch Republic, gave freedom of conscience to one and all, but allowed the individual provinces to determine their own religious policies. All of the provinces opted almost immediately for the Reformed Church as the only public church, but none of them went so far as to question the freedom of conscience, which remained a cornerstone of the state's religious policy, despite its profound distrust of the Catholics as potential allies of the enemy, the king of Spain, who had used Catholicism as an argument for war. The Great Assembly of the States General (*Grote Vergadering*), convened in 1651, after the Peace of Westphalia, which was established to regulate the constitutional, military, and religious policies of the now formally independent Union, left the religious situation as it was, adding only the canons of the national Synod of Dort (Dordrecht, 1618-19) to the founding principles of the State. But the impact of this addition was limited. It simply meant that, among the Reformed believers, Calvinist orthodoxy as defined by that Synod was to be the exclusive creed authorised in public life.

By adopting the principle of freedom of conscience, understood not as the freedom of religious practice but as the freedom of thought, the United Provinces nevertheless became a distinct case in the European religious landscape. Throughout Europe, in fact, territorial or community limitations of religious conscience by the ecclesiastical and civil authorities remained or eventually became the rule, even in places where edicts of toleration for particular confessions had been issued. The distinctive feature of the Dutch solution was precisely a generalised practice of toleration, that had nothing to do with legisla-

tion, and whose limits were therefore inevitably vague and changeable, a matter of practice really.¹⁴ This evolved out of a new, largely implicit relationship between the ecclesiastical and civil authorities, regulated by the practice of everyday policy. It was based on a new idea of the civic body.¹⁵ The desire for a single Church encompassing all the people was gradually transferred to the civic secular community, which had to be close-knit. By stripping the urban and rural landscape of its religious elements, images, statues, crosses, paintings, inscriptions, and chapels, the town itself, in its role as body politic, in a way became the new sacred community. It developed its own history, its own legitimacies, its own legends, symbolism and rituals, which ensured a civic peace that went beyond any difference of (religious) opinion.

A public church

Formally, there was no state religion in the early modern Northern Netherlands, only a 'public church'. Religious convictions could not be enforced, not even those of Calvinist orthodoxy. This public church, the Reformed Church of Dutch expression,¹⁶ was acknowledged by the secular authorities of the individual Dutch provinces and towns as the only church that was allowed to publicly perform religious functions and to intervene publicly in moral affairs. As the public church, the Reformed Church was endowed with all the privileges of a public body, whether it pertained to the position of its ministers and other officials, or with respect to its right to proclaim and stand up for public norms and values. As the successor to the medieval public church, it inherited at least part of the income from former church property, as well as the exclusive religious use of public church buildings. Yet there was no formal symbiosis between church and state, such as it existed in most European countries.

The civil authorities adopted the rituals of the Reformed Church for the religious design of civic life, and the Reformed Church had to watch over the norms of public morality. Civil meetings and conferences were opened and closed by prayer; days of public prayer and fasting were prescribed on important occasions (catastrophes, war-related events, victories, plagues, etc.); baptisms and marriages performed in the Reformed Church had a civil effect, albeit not exclusively: in many places, Catholics, and all those who, for whatever reason, wanted to avoid Reformed ceremonials, could benefit from a secular marriage administration in the town halls, in front of the alder-

men or the village authorities. In Amsterdam, the town authorities almost from the very beginning enforced compulsory civil registrations of everybody's marriage intentions, regardless of the customs of the public church. On the other hand, the Reformed practice of public days of prayer was considered by the States, as well as by the various competing denominations, as a supra-confessional ritual involving by and large all confessions in the experience of a unique, great 'fatherland' and fostering a sense of genuine national identity.¹⁷

In the past, this double track – i.e., *Reformed* rituals in *civil* use – has often confused historians familiar with less ambiguous relations between church and state. It means, in fact, that a 'church' ritual performed within the Reformed Church does not necessarily have a 'Reformed' meaning (i.e., that it does not always pertain to the Reformed order of 'belief'); conversely, a function that may appear civil can nonetheless have a 'Reformed' background. The main problem for modern historians is that 'public', 'civil' (or secular), and 'Reformed' meanings are not immanent to the religious acts themselves but can only be understood from contextual evidence. To give just one example: during the first decades after the Revolt, in many villages and towns of the Northern Netherlands, new-born children of all denominations were baptised by the Reformed minister in the building of the local Reformed Church. But their baptism did not always testify to an adhesion to the Reformed Church. The persistence of this ritual was, on the contrary, a sign of the conviction among many believers that the church building was still the property of the whole community, regardless of confession.¹⁸

Former historians started, anachronistically, from the assumption of the equivalence between confessional rituals and church adhesion. They translated attendance at religious functions into numbers of church members. The picture of a very quick penetration of the Reformed Church into Dutch society that resulted mechanically from this assumption was, however, obviously in contradiction with the persistence of very large religious groups outside the new public church. First of all were the Catholics, who, depending on the sources and their interpretation, are still estimated at 30 to 50 per cent of the population at the time of the Peace of Westphalia, eighty years after the introduction of Protestantism in public life; but also the Mennonites, whose numbers – difficult to retrieve due to the absence of infant baptism and its registration – are estimated locally at about 10 per cent in Haarlem or 20 per cent of the population in the

province of Friesland; not to mention the Lutherans of either Netherlandish or German origin, a wide range of more or less dissenting groups organised on a congregational basis, and informal networks of free believers like the Family of Love and its offspring.¹⁹

Non-confessionalised Christians

Current Dutch historiography works with the concept of the ‘middle groups’, i.e., the undecided people who for many years – sometimes decades or a lifetime – postponed joining one church or another. Stadholder William of Orange, who changed church-affiliation twice during his lifetime, is their prototype. One of the best documented examples, recently studied by Judith Pollmann, is that of the erudite Utrecht lawyer Arnoldus Buchelius, whose diaries reveal a very gradual shift from traditional Catholicism (with a strong accent on popular ritual) through a period of indecision to orthodox and militant Calvinism, a point he only reached after a phase of despair and attempted suicide.²⁰ Interestingly, Buchelius’s choices, though very consciously made, do not reveal a strong commitment to ‘belief’. For example, although he was an elder of the Utrecht consistory, Buchelius never seemed to correctly understand what predestination was all about. As a Christian and a Calvinist, his commitment was much more to social control, cultural conformity, and individual piety.

Those were precisely the aims of the public church as viewed by the civil authorities, that is: firstly the moral control of the civic community as a whole – even at the risk that the diversity of confessional standards would cause a certain depravation in the eyes of the public church; secondly a useful form of civic religion that aimed at the cohesion of society; and thirdly an all-pervasive, non-confessional piety. This was exemplified by the steady-selling works of Erasmus and Thomas à Kempis in the Northern Netherlands, and updated by best-selling liberal Christians like Hugo Grotius or immensely popular pietistic spirituals like Dirck Raphaelsz Camphuysen or Jodocus van Lodensteyn, the latter a true ‘living saint’ who escaped categorisation.²¹ Ongoing research clearly shows the numerical importance of the group of undecided, especially in the maritime and central provinces during several decades, at least until the Truce (1609–1621) and the Synod of Dort. Though they considered themselves Christians (but not always even that), they rejected the need to make a quick choice, or the very need to make a choice as such, in favour of one of the existing denominations, since the public church, as a pub-

lic church, not as the Reformed community of the elected, provided sufficient shelter for their religious demands (the order of 'belief').²²

Therefore, I presume that the very concept of a public church allowed many Dutch men and women to postpone their decisions in favour of their adhesion to one church or another. An indication of this is the public status of the church building itself. Administered by publicly appointed churchwardens, who were normally of the Reformed confession but whose membership among the civil elites was really the decisive argument for their nomination, the church building was a public building indeed because it served as a public burial place regardless of confession. The town council often kept its archives there and maintained other public services, including some form of public library; the organ in the building was property of the town council that appointed the organ-player and decided upon the music to be performed outside of religious services; the council could also put the building at the disposal of whatever corporation needed it, as, for instance, the charity board, the grammar school, or some guild. In a Dutch town in the province of Holland with complex confessional fault lines like Woerden, for example, where the Catholics had been succeeded by the Lutherans, then by the liberal Calvinists (the later Remonstrants), and finally by a Pietistic and Puritan orthodoxy, the church in the centre of the town embodied the continuity of religious praxis in the face of confessional divisions. It was consequently and uninterruptedly called the *stadskerk* (the town church). It was this public character that determined its religious meaning. There is at least some reason to argue that 'belief' played only a minor role in Woerden during the transition to Lutheranism and then to liberal Calvinism, and that the public character of religious service must have been the main factor of adhesion for the majority of the population. Several ministers in fact changed their confessions together with that of the church building itself.²³

This analysis has far-reaching consequences for the interpretation of the relations between state and belief in the early modern Netherlands. It not only means that it took the Calvinists a very long time to impose their theological and ecclesiological options on the majority of the population, but it also implies that the old claims of Catholic historians that a long and massive survival of the heavily persecuted Catholic church and the slow and gradual decrease of the number of Catholics, due to the on-going process of more or less forced Protestantisation, must be considered with scepticism. After having lost its

status as a public church, the meaning of the Catholic Church was quickly reduced to the two other dimensions of religious life: the Church as a provider of rituals, instrumental in the sacred sphere, and sheltering a community of Catholic believers. In the latter sense, however, the Catholic Church was reduced to a numerical minority as early as the first half of the seventeenth century. Contemporary local estimates that point to very small groups of practising Catholics, for example at Rotterdam, may well reflect the actual size of the true community of Catholic believers after the breakdown of the old church structures and before the reconstruction of a new, socially meaningful church organisation.²⁴ But this also means that it would be wrong to postulate a close relationship between the rise of Protestantism and the crisis of Catholicism: both may have followed separate courses.²⁵ This is not to say that there was no competition in a broad religious market. But when applying the market model, we have to include the non-church option where people hesitate or refuse to make a definite choice in favour of one specific church and confession, though sometimes maintaining another interpretation of the Christian creed, like Socinianism or Gnosticism.

Religion and culture

At any rate, the public church obviously was unable to monopolise *religious* ritual. But was it able to monopolise *public* ritual and give it a confessional, Calvinistic meaning? To answer that question we must now briefly examine a second major issue, the relationship between society, culture and religion.²⁶ The interplay between these three dimensions of social reality is probably the most peculiar feature of the Dutch Republic, even though interpretations differ as to which element must be considered most significant for Dutch cultural evolution, and how exactly their mutual relations must be defined. Protestant historians like A.Th. van Deursen tend to privilege religion and to stress almost from the start the confessional Calvinistic character of the Dutch Republic, indeed of Dutch culture itself.²⁷ Surprisingly, the same is true for Simon Schama's militantly moralistic and profoundly Protestant interpretation of Dutch culture.²⁸ Other authors point to the heterogeneity of Dutch social life and culture, and to the Dutch authorities' relative indifference to confessional values, at least after the 1620s.²⁹ Still others presume that the singularity of Dutch culture was a simple reflection of its economic growth and political power, and of the practical needs this entailed, includ-

ing the supposedly Calvinistic work ethic and the acceptance of slavery.³⁰ The pietistic minister Godfried Udemans, whose spiritual handbooks regulated merchant ethics and managed to superimpose a practical justification for slavery onto the aim of Christianisation, shows this, for instance.³¹

In fact, the Republic of the Seven United Provinces offers the rather special case of a *state* that called itself mono-confessional and Protestant while at the same time organising the *civic community* along the lines of religious toleration. The Calvinist church was an integral part of the Dutch Republic's political and social identity, while Dutch culture was at the same time broader and much different. It was therefore able to provide the country with an alternative sense of identity, beyond the cohesion that was fostered by religion. The tension between these two aspects of collective life and its representation – that is, confessional co-existence, and the neutrality of public life in a state that claimed to be Calvinistic – explains the contrasting images of the United Provinces that we find in both the contemporary and more recent literature. The variety of solutions adopted in the different provinces, jealously autonomous where religion was concerned, adds still more to the opacity of the picture.

My key hypothesis is that Dutch culture got its particular outlook and its own cultural flavour through the empirical solutions for inter-confessional co-existence wrought by the secular authorities of the Dutch Republic on the basis of a political evaluation of the demands on the market of belief, and readily assimilated by all of the confessional groups.³² Although recruited from among the confessing Calvinists, or at least considered as such, the Dutch rulers, or 'regents', as a group at the same time maintained either a liberal, meta-religious, or a straightforward Erastian attitude regarding public order and the social discipline that characterises the confessionalisation process. Though recurring to the public Calvinist church for the organisation of civic values, worded in religious terms, they simultaneously allowed and sometimes even organised a large political toleration of dissenting groups, minorities in the political sense of the word, though not always in numbers. In doing so, they basically secularised public life and de-confessionalised the meaning of religious expression in the public sphere. Calvinist rituals, such as public prayer, Sunday observance, or sober dress, became public conventions that were taken over by other confessional groups and in the process lost their confessional Calvinist flavour. They became, in-

stead, constitutive of Dutch public culture in general. Bible culture quickly lost its militantly Protestant connotation and was soon a general feature of the Dutch way of interpreting and visualising the world, its values and its norms. The same holds for its counterpart, the reference to classical Antiquity. In the decoration programs of public buildings, such as the new Amsterdam town hall of the 1650s, or in other traditions of visual representation, such as that of women, the two cultural repertoires quite clearly converged towards a single civic language.³³

Some cultural features of the Netherlands had very little, if anything at all, to do with Protestantism, in spite of their public image and the impressions of foreign visitors. The workhouses for the idle or criminal poor, for instance, were a measure of public health and an instrument of ethical correction promoted by late-humanist thinkers like Dirck Volckertsz Coornhert or Jan van den Hout, disconnected from ecclesiastical or religious values.³⁴ However, the Reformed church resisted a complete secularisation of its ethical program. This was the case with divorce, which was allowed by the Reformed church in the cases of couples with well-defined motives. The new regulations were taken over by the secular authorities and inscribed in 1580 in the provincial marriage regulations of Holland. The same holds for the domain of social welfare, in which the civil authorities and the Reformed Church maintained two separate tracks of charity: the first out of a long tradition of community welfare, social control, and civic ideology, the latter out of a new concern for confessional discipline.³⁵ But the two sets of approaches – ecclesiastical discipline and secular control – never completely overlapped, and Catholics had to reject them altogether in order to maintain their own moral theology and its international casuistry.³⁶

These facts authorise the historian to look for alternative solutions to the traditional confessional discourse of competing Catholic and Protestant communities. One of these is the civil discourse, more interested in the identification of the different stakeholders on the socio-religious market than in claims of orthodoxy. Prominent among these stakeholders is what I would call the humanistic, Erasmian tradition in Dutch history, inclined towards individual belief, cherishing a matter-of-fact attitude towards the denominations and their dogmatism, respectful of human values and considering social harmony more important than religious truth. The language of freedom, that founded the multi-confessional society as well as the federal

state of the Dutch Republic, could be either political or confessional. One may even suspect that freedom of conscience meant something different to a humanist and to a Calvinist. We must resist the temptation of trying to bring history back to an easy dichotomy between Catholics and Protestants, which was exactly what the churches tried to suggest. This was the confessionalised narrative of that time, but does it necessarily need to be ours?³⁷

By de-confessionalising and indeed basically secularising public life, public officials simultaneously created the foundations for an internal re-confessionalisation of the various religious groups. While they were unable to express their religion in public, religious minority groups started a process of internalisation of their basic values and worldviews. For their spiritual and moral standards, they withdrew inside their own communities, where they made these standards the basic features of their internal organisation in order to constitute themselves as full-fledged denominations in their own right. The Reformed Church soon followed suit, inasmuch as, socially, it became a denomination among others. In the end, all of the denominations became closed cultural communities, with their own sub-cultures, within Dutch society. Although religious exogamy could never be completely banished, it probably diminished steadily during the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The churches, at any rate, were very keen from the start on the maintenance and the protection of the intra-confessional *connubium* in order to maintain homogeneous confessional communities.

This two-step process of internalisation, which took three centuries to complete, by the end of the nineteenth century became a new form of socio-religious cultural organisation, known as *verzui-ling* (*Versäulung*, ‘pillarisation’). During the first phase of the process, roughly from the moment of the nation’s virtual independence in the last quarter of the sixteenth century until the zenith of the Golden Age in the third quarter of the seventeenth century, the state, though proclaiming itself to be Calvinist, withdrew from its too-narrow ties with the Calvinist church and indeed from any form of theocracy. It organised a public culture according to Calvinist norms but without permitting the Calvinist church to publicly sanction it. Church discipline in every aspect of society was never accepted by secular powers. On the contrary, from the earliest period on, the city councils appointed ‘political commissioners’ to control the Calvinist consistories from within.

It is precisely at this point that the issue of the Calvinist character of Dutch culture comes into focus. It appears from the very beginning as a matter of interpretation, not as a matter of fact. Whereas the Calvinist church interpreted the public Protestant outlook of Dutch society as a confessional victory, public officials saw it as their own work, some in their quality as Protestants, some others in their quality as secular leaders of the citizenry. Cultural Calvinism was their language of power, but only because in Calvinism power was restored to the laity and, because of the Reformation, secular power was recognised as a political authority in its own right. It was only in this secular interpretation that other confessional groups could assume cultural Calvinism as their own cultural code. It is therefore justified to ask whether Calvinist culture in the Dutch Republic was really the outcome of a process of cultural self-fashioning of and within a general Calvinist community, or whether it must be seen as a form of accommodation of initially Calvinist values, norms, images, metaphors and codes of behaviour to the reality of public life in the Dutch Republic that went beyond confessional adherence. Indigenous forms of Pietism and Puritanism, known as the Further Reformation, for instance, became important and long-lasting elements of Dutch religious culture. Although they never totally controlled the public expression of Calvinism and remained mostly group phenomena, similar cultural features in other religious communities, including the Mennonites and Lutherans, and even the Roman Catholics, among whom Jansenism may be considered the contemporary Catholic alternative to pietistic Puritanism, reflected them.³⁸

During the second phase of this process of confessional identity construction, singular religious communities started to reformulate their own religious programs on the basis of full internal autonomy, but with limited external expansion. Every religious community developed its own internal cohesion by defining particular group features.³⁹ One of those features was a growing differentiation of group attitudes towards reading culture. Calvinism developed as the religion of the pure word, of reading, and of books, and of the removal of all signs of non-verbal religiosity from church buildings, as well as from the whole public sphere. The Catholic strategy, on the contrary, consisted of maximizing the visual and publicly ritualistic character of its religiosity, adding a basic mistrust of the freedom to read, which formed the foundation of Calvinistic lay autonomy.⁴⁰

After the third quarter of the seventeenth century, individual

churches became increasingly equal players within Dutch society, but only by paying the price of accepting the outward presentation of the public norms marked by Calvinism. The general Calvinistic outlook of Dutch culture as it was shaped during the Dutch Republic was therefore, in fact, a broadly shared general religiosity of all religious groups. It is important to understand the strength of this general religious culture. Since, from the very beginning of the Dutch Republic, public culture had been given a religious shape in a basically secular sphere, religion in the Netherlands was, as the fate of Dutch Enlightenment has shown, a steadier and stronger feature of culture than elsewhere in Europe.

This paradox is all too apparent. Indeed, though it was the main cohesive factor of public life, religion as a cultural factor was much less spoilt by the ups and downs of a single church than in mono-confessional societies. As has been shown in recent studies by Wiep van Bunge, Jonathan Israel, and others, late seventeenth-century Dutch culture was even capable of giving rise to the first radical and ungodly Enlightenment, precisely because of the particular relationship between religion and secular society.⁴¹ Religion, therefore, remained a more pervasive and persistent, but at the same time politically less pronounced, element of Dutch culture than in many other European nations. The singularity of the Dutch position became clear during the second Enlightenment in the eighteenth-century, when the Dutch elite remained profoundly attached to Christian forms of enlightened thought, such as physico-theology, ethical revivalism, and other cultural trends of a general Christian nature, designed to include believers from all churches and confessions. The same holds true for the Batavian Revolution of 1795, which was anything but an anti-Christian, anti-religious, or even anticlerical event in the Netherlands.

Conclusion

Before the political unification of the country at the time of the Batavian Revolution there was no formal common legislation for the state as a whole concerning religious and cultural issues. Culture and religion, as features of the Dutch Republic, were therefore largely affairs of common practice, and of local or provincial initiatives. On a more general level, religion was, in fact, one of the forms assumed by culture, or its major public agencies in education, public health care, so-

cial discipline and public morality. The existence of a plurality of denominations in the private sphere other than the public, Calvinist church, and their tacit toleration, led to a considerably complicated cultural landscape in the Dutch Republic. We can refer to a triple regime where public culture had a secular, civic face and a Calvinist face, but public culture also tolerated private confessional cultures, along with a more inner-directed version of the Calvinist church itself. This particular configuration was reflected in the high culture of the arts and letters, theatre and music, where art was essentially public, mainly secular, although it chose many of its themes and metaphors from the religious domain.⁴² In the public sphere religious themes were confessionally indifferent: decoration programs like those of the Amsterdam town hall and other public buildings used biblical metaphors for purely civic virtues acceptable for all the citizens without distinction.⁴³ In the public sphere, *civitas* had replaced *corpus christianum*, despite the persistent visual language of Christianity. In that sense, the Dutch Republic was certainly not a Calvinist community.

However, Calvinism also manifested itself via a form of group culture, in, for instance, the way that public churches were decorated, which managed to conserve much of their pre-Calvinist appearance. However, they were selectively whitewashed or stripped of those very objects and ornaments which at particular moments were considered popish or superstitious, with the two terms used largely interchangeably. As a confessional group culture, Calvinism developed some characteristics that were overtly antagonistic towards other confessional groups, such as the Roman Catholics, the Arminians, or the Lutherans. Catholic group culture turned increasingly towards ritualistic and visual expressions of identity and spiritual intimacy. Calvinism, meanwhile, fostered its image as the religion of the public word and book, and the public expression of faith.⁴⁴ In fact, the privatisation of religion was a blessing in disguise. Indeed, in the private sphere of the non-recognised denominations much was permitted which would not have been tolerated in the official domain of civic culture and public church, both of which more and more marked by a Calvinist outlook. Culturally speaking, Calvinism has therefore had two distinct impacts on the early modern Northern Netherlands: it shaped the various forms of public culture, but at the same time implicitly criticised that culture by taking the militant outlook that is characteristic of a confessional sub-culture. The minority confes-

sions took over the public values and codes of behaviour with their semi-Calvinist imprint, but within their group, they shaped and interpreted them in their own ways.

All in all, it was the secular physiognomy of public culture and the reduction of public Calvinism to a function of public order that forced the confessional groups, including Calvinism itself, to seek their identity in a variety of sub-cultures. Some of these inevitably had to collude with older forms of popular culture, in a common front against the pressures applied by public authorities. Thus, Roman Catholicism reshaped itself as a Rome-controlled religion of everyday rituals, agreeable devotions, popular narratives and moral casuistry. Meanwhile, the Old Catholic Church, which emerged from the 1723 Jansenist Schism, by contrast adopted a more modern, national and intellectual outlook over the long term. Both recognised themselves in what is often called the Calvinist mentality of the Netherlands, but which may be better interpreted as a centuries-old, broadly shared community culture, a secular form of 'civic Calvinism' reshaped time and again by the continuous interplay of ruling churches and minority confessions in a state that may be retreating, dominant, neutral, or even secular.

Notes

1 See G.J. Schutte, *Het Calvinistisch Nederland. Mythe en werkelijkheid* (Hilversum 2002); Jan Art, 'Religion and secularization: the continuing Iconoclastic Fury', in: Douwe Fokkema, Frans Grijzenhout (eds), *Accounting for the Past: 1650-2000 Dutch Culture in a European Perspective*, vol. 5 (Assen and Basingstoke 2004), 93-111. On Dutch national characteristics: Rob van Ginkel, *Notities over Nederlanders. Antropologische reflecties* (Amsterdam and Meppel 1997), with an extensive bibliography.

2 Loek Halman and Ole Riis, *Religion in a Secularizing Society: The Europeans' Religion at the End of the 20th Century* (Leiden 2003); obviously, these figures relate to the religious population only and do not take into account the huge numbers of agnostics and the large degree of secularisation.

3 R. Bisschop, *Sions vorst en volk. Het tweede-Israëlidee als theocratisch concept in de gereformeerde kerk van de Republiek tussen ca. 1650 en ca. 1750* (Veenendaal 1993); C. Huisman, *Neerlands Israël: Het natiebesef der traditioneel-gereformeerden in de achttiende eeuw* (Dordrecht 1983); Joris van Eijnatten, *God, Nederland en Oranje: Dutch Calvinism and the search*

for the social centre (Kampen 1993); Paul Regan, 'Calvinism and the Dutch Israel thesis', in: Bruce Gordon (ed.), *Protestant History and Identity in Sixteenth-century Europe. II: The Later Reformation* (Aldershot 1996), 91-106.

4 I have discussed this thesis in two other publications: Willem Frijhoff, *Embodied Belief: Ten Essays on Religious Culture in Dutch History* (Hilversum 2002), 275-89; and 'The state, the churches, sociability, and folk belief in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic', in: James D. Tracy (ed.), *Religion and the Early Modern State. Visions from China, Russia and the West* (Cambridge 2004), 80-97.

5 First identified by A.Th. van Deursen, *Bavianen en slijkgeuzen. Kerk en kerkvolk ten tijde van Maurits en Oldenbarnevelt* (Assen 1974; 3rd ed. Franeker 1998), 134-35.

6 Willem Frijhoff, 'Problèmes spécifiques d'une approche de la 'religion populaire' dans un pays de confession mixte: le cas des Provinces-Unies', in: *La Religion populaire, Paris, 17-19 octobre 1977* Colloques internationaux du CNRS, 576 (Paris 1979), 35-43. For a more general perspective on these issues, see my chapter 'Popular religion', in: Stewart J. Brown and Timothy Tackett (eds), *Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol. 7: *Enlightenment, Reawakening and Revolution 1660-1815* (Cambridge 2006), 185-207.

7 See for some examples and their interpretation: Willem Frijhoff, 'La fonction du miracle dans une minorité catholique: Les Provinces-Unies au XVII^e siècle', *Revue d'Histoire de la Spiritualité*, 48 (1972), 151-78; English transl.: 'The function of the miracle in a Catholic minority: The United Provinces in the seventeenth century', in: Frijhoff, *Embodied Belief*, 111-36.

8 Marrit Monteiro, *Geestelijke maagden. Leven tussen klooster en wereld in Noord-Nederland gedurende de zeventiende eeuw* (Hilversum 1996).

9 Benjamin J. Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines: Confession and Community in Utrecht 1578-1620* (Oxford 1995).

10 Ibid., 3-4.

11 Ibid., 3.

12 Ibid., 5.

13 On Pietism: Fred van Lieburg (ed.), *Confessionalism and Pietism: Religious Reform in Early Modern Europe and North America* Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Europäische Geschichte, Beiheft 67 (Mainz 2006); Daniel Lindmark (ed.), *Pietism, Revivalism and Modernity 1650-1850* (Cambridge 2006).

14 On toleration in the Netherlands: D. Nobbs, *Theocracy and Toleration:*

A Study of the Disputes in Dutch Calvinism from 1600 to 1650 (Cambridge 1938); Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra (ed.), *Een schijn van verdraagzaamheid. Afwijking en tolerantie in Nederland van de zestiende eeuw tot heden* (Hilversum 1989); Ernst H. Kossmann, 'Freedom in seventeenth-century Dutch thought and practice', in: Jonathan I. Israel (ed.), *The Anglo-Dutch Moment: Essays on the Glorious Revolution and its World Impact* (Cambridge 1991) 281-98; Antonio Rotondò, *Europe et Pays-Bas. Évolution, réélaboration et diffusion de la tolérance aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Florence 1992); Ole P. Grell, Bob Scribner (eds), *Tolerance and Intolerance in the European Reformation* (Cambridge 1996), in particular: Andrew Pettegree, 'The politics of toleration in the free Netherlands, 1572-1620', 182-98; Christiane Berkvens-Stevelinck, Jonathan I. Israel and G.H.M. Posthumus Meyjes (eds), *The Emergence of Tolerance in the Dutch Republic* (Leiden, New York and Cologne 1997); R. Po-chia Hsia and H.F.K. van Nierop (eds), *Calvinism and Religious Toleration in the Dutch Golden Age* (Cambridge 2002); Joris van Eijnatten, *Liberty and Concord in the United Provinces: Religious Toleration and the Public in the Eighteenth-Century Netherlands* (Leiden 2003); Horst Lademacher, Renate Loos and Simon Groenveld (eds), *Ablehnung – Duldung – Anerkennung. Toleranz in den Niederlanden und in Deutschland: Ein historischer und aktueller Vergleich* Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur Nordwesteuropas, vol. 9 (Münster, etc. 2004).

15 On this topic, see also Wiebe Bergsma, 'Church, state and people', in: Karel Davids and Jan Lucassen (eds), *A Miracle Mirrored: The Dutch Republic in European Perspective* (Cambridge 1995), 196-228.

16 In 1578, in the Dutch Republic a Reformed Church of French expression (the so-called 'Walloon Church') also emerged with its own synod, but in close relation with the Dutch Reformed Church. Formally, it enjoyed the same privileges as the latter. During the eighteenth century, it developed into the church of the Frenchified Dutch elite. See Willem Frijhoff, 'Uncertain Brotherhood: The Huguenots in the Dutch Republic', in: Bertrand Van Ruymbeke and Randy J. Sparks (eds), *Memory and Identity: The Huguenots in France and the Atlantic Diaspora* (Columbia, SC 2003), 128-71.

17 Peter van Rooden, *Religieuze regimes. Over godsdienst en maatschappij in Nederland, 1570-1990* (Amsterdam 1996), 78-120; Joris van Eijnatten, Fred van Lieburg, *Nederlandse religiegeschiedenis* (Hilversum 2005), 210-19, use the concept of 'controlled diversity'.

18 See also Van Deursen, *Bavianen en slijkgeuzen*, 23, 135-36; H.P.H. Nusteling, *Binnen de vesting Nijmegen: Confessionele en demografische verhoudingen ten tijde van de Republiek* (Zutphen 1979), 10.

19 Contemporary scepticism on the issue of the Calvinisation process was eloquently worded by Jean-Baptiste Stoupe [Stoppa], *La Religion des Hollandais, Représentée en plusieurs lettres écrites par un Officier de l'Armée du Roy, à un Pasteur et Professeur en Théologie de Berne* (Cologne 1673). The most important study of the confessional ratios remains: J.A. de Kok, *Nederland op de breuklijn Rome-Reformatie: Numerieke aspecten van Protestantisering en Katholieke herleving in de Noordelijke Nederlanden 1580-1880* (Assen 1964). It includes full documentation of the available figures and has been the basis for the excellent synthesis with numerous maps by Hans Knippenberg, *De religieuze kaart van Nederland: Omvang en geografische spreiding van de godsdienstige gezindten vanaf de Reformatie tot heden* (Assen and Maastricht 1992). For further data and references, see chapter 6 in Willem Frijhoff, Marijke Spies, *1650: Bevochten eendracht* (The Hague, 1999; English transl. by Myra Heerspink Scholz: *1650: Hard-Won Unity Dutch Culture in a European Perspective* vol. 2 (Assen and Basingstoke 2004), 349-427. On the Mennonites: Samme Zijlstra, *Om de ware gemeente en de oude gronden: Geschiedenis van de dopersen in de Nederlanden 1531-1675* (Hilversum 2000).

²⁰ Judith Pollmann, *Religious Choice in the Dutch Republic: The Reformation of Arnoldus Buchelius (1565-1641)* (Manchester 1999). Another eloquent yet very singular curriculum is that of Pibo Ovittius: P.H.A.M. Abels, *Ovittius' metamorphosen: De onnavolgbare gedaantewisselingen van een (zielen)dokter in de Reformatietijd* (Delft 2003).

21 H.J.M. Nellen and E. Rabbie (eds), *Hugo Grotius Theologian* (Leiden 1994); H.G. van den Doel, 'Daar moet veel strijds gestreden zijn': *Dirk Rafaelsz Camphuysen (1586-1627) en de Contraremonstranten* (Meppel 1967); J.C. Trimp, *Jodocus van Lodensteyn, predikant en dichter* (Kampen 1987). Lodensteyn as a 'living saint' is analysed by John Exalto, *Gereformeerde heiligen. De religieuze exempeltraditie in vroegmodern Nederland* (Nijmegen 2005), 17-31.

22 See, for instance, Wiebe Bergsma, *Tussen Gideonsbende en publieke kerk. Een studie over het gereformeerd protestantisme in Friesland, 1580-1650* (Leeuwarden and Hilversum 1999).

23 Willem Frijhoff, *Wegen van Evert Willemsz. Een Hollands weeskind op zoek naar zichzelf 1607-1647* (Nijmegen 1995), pp. 69-118; abbreviated version in English translation: *Fulfilling God's Mission: The Two Worlds of Dominie Everardus Bogardus 1607-1647* (Leiden and Boston 2007), 41-53.

24 On the survival of Catholicism, see also: Christine Kooi, 'Popish impudence: The perseverance of the Roman Catholic faithful in Calvinist Holland, 1572-1620', *Sixteenth Century Journal* 26 (1995), 49-74; the same,

Liberty and Religion: Church and State in Leiden's Reformation, 1572-1620 (Leiden 2000). On Rotterdam: G. Scheerder, *De Contrareformatie te Rotterdam: De Leeuwenstraatse statie van de Paters Jezuiten 1610-1708-1800* (Rotterdam 1988). Cf. James D. Tracy, 'With and Without the Counter-Reformation: The Catholic Church in the Spanish Netherlands and the Dutch Republic, 1580-1650: A Review of the Literature since 1945', *Church Historical Review* 71 (1985), 547-75.

25 See, for example, the very slow Protestantisation of the South Holland, Utrecht, and Drenthe countryside, for which apparently opposite reasons may be advanced: Alastair Duke, 'The Reformation of the backwoods', in: idem, *Reformation and Revolt in the Low Countries* (London 1990, 2nd ed. 2002), 227-68, and the contributions to: *Drenthe in de zestiende en zeventiende eeuw. Tiende verzameling bijdragen van de Vereniging voor Nederlandse Kerkgeschiedenis* (Delft 1998).

26 The following paragraphs reproduce Willem Frijhoff's argument, 'Kalvinistische Kultur, Staat und Konfessionen in den Vereinten Provinzen der Niederlande', in: Peter Claus Hartmann (ed.), *Religion und Kultur im Europa des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts* (Frankfurt am Main 2004), 109-42.

27 A.Th. van Deursen, *Plain Lives in a Golden Age: Popular Culture, Religion and Society in Seventeenth-Century Holland*. Transl. by M. Ultee (Cambridge 1991); and his recent book *De last van veel geluk. De geschiedenis van Nederland, 1555-1702* (Amsterdam 2004).

28 Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (New York 1987).

29 Jonathan I. Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall 1477-1806* (Oxford 1995), 361-98, 499-505, 637-76

30 J.G. van Dillen, *Van rijkdom en regenten. Handboek tot de economische en sociale geschiedenis van Nederland tijdens de Republiek* (The Hague 1970), 310-28; Jan de Vries and Ad van der Woude, *The First Modern Economy: Success, Failure, and Perseverance of the Dutch Economy, 1500-1815* (Cambridge 1997).

31 Godfried Udemans, 't *Geestelyck roer van 't Coopmans Schip* [The Spiritual Rudder of the Merchant Ship, 1638] (2nd ed. Dordrecht 1640), fol. 179-83.

32 On the regents' political ideology, see Heinz Schilling, 'Der libertär-radikale Republikanismus der holländischen Regenten: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des politischen Radikalismus in der frühen Neuzeit', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 10 (1984), 498-533, reprinted in: idem, *Ausgewählte Abhandlungen zur europäischen Reformations- und Konfessionsgeschichte*, eds. Luise Schorn-Schütte and Olaf Mörke (Berlin 2002), 377-

413; on political praxis also: Heinz Schilling, 'Religion und Gesellschaft in der calvinistischen Republik der Vereinigten Niederlande: "Öffentlichkeitskirche" und Säkularisation; Ehe und Hebammenwesen; Presbyterien und politische Partizipation', in: Franz Petri (ed.), *Kirche und gesellschaftlicher Wandel in deutschen und niederländischen Städten der werdenden Neuzeit* (Cologne and Vienna 1980), 202-22.

33 Yvonne Bleyerveld, *Hoe bedriechlijck dat die vrouwen zijn: vrouwenlisten in de beeldende kunst in de Nederlanden ca. 1350-1650* (Leiden 2000).

34 Pieter Spierenburg, *The Prison Experience: Disciplinary Institutions and Their Inmates in Early Modern Europe* (New Brunswick, NJ 1991); Cyrille Fynaut, Pieter Spierenburg, *Scherp toezicht: Van 'boeventucht' tot 'samenleving en criminaliteit'* (Arnhem 1990).

35 See, for instance, Charles H. Parker, *The Reformation of Community: Social Welfare and Calvinist Charity in Holland, 1572-1620* (Cambridge 1998).

36 Manon van der Heijden, *Huwelijk in Holland: Stedelijke rechtspraak en kerkelijke tucht 1550-1700* (Amsterdam 1998); Dini Helmers, 'Gescheurde bedden': *Oplossingen voor gestrande huwelijken, Amsterdam 1753-1810* (Hilversum 2002).

37 For an assessment of this concept in the Dutch situation, see Olaf Mörke, "'Konfessionalisierung" als politisch-soziales Strukturprinzip? Das Verhältnis von Religion und Staatsbildung in der Republik der Vereinigten Niederlande im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert', *Tijdschrift voor Sociale Geschiedenis* 16 (1990), 31-60.

38 Theo Clemens, 'La répercussion de la lutte entre jansénistes et antijansénistes dans la littérature de spiritualité depuis 1685 jusqu'à la fin du XVIIIe siècle', in: E.J.M. Van Eijl (ed.), *L'image de C. Jansénius jusqu'à la fin du XVIIIe siècle* (Louvain 1987), 203-29.

39 For Reformed culture, see: W.J. op 't Hof, 'Het culturele gehalte van de Nadere Reformatie', *De Zeventiende Eeuw* 5 (1989), 129-40; M.A. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, 'Cultural Participation as Stimulated by the Seventeenth-Century Reformed Church', in: Ann Rigney and D. Fokkema (eds), *Cultural Participation: Trends Since the Middle Ages* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia 1993), 39-50.

40 Willem Frijhoff, 'Calvinism, literacy, and reading culture in the early modern Northern Netherlands: Towards a reassessment', *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte / Archive for Reformation History* 95 (2004), 252-65; the same argument in a longer version: 'The Confessions and the Book in the Dutch Republic', in: Heinz Schilling and Stefan Ehrenpreis (eds), *Frühneuzeitliche Bildungsgeschichte der Reformierten in konfessionsvergle-*

ichender Perspektive: Schulwesen, Lesekultur und Wissenschaft Beihefte der Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung, 38 (Berlin 2007), 185-211.

41 Jonathan I. Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650-1750* (Oxford 2001); Wiep van Bunge, *From Stevin to Spinoza: An Essay on Philosophy in the Seventeenth-Century Dutch Republic* (Leiden, Boston and Cologne 2001).

42 David Freedberg and Jan de Vries (eds), *Art in History, History in Art: Studies in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Culture* (Santa Monica and Chicago 1991); Ilja Veldman, 'Calvinisme en de beeldende kunst in de zeventiende eeuw', in: M. Bruggeman et al. (eds), *Mensen van de nieuwe Tijd: Een liber amicorum voor A.Th. van Deursen* (Amsterdam 1996), 297-306; John Loughman and John Michael Montias, *Public and Private Spaces: Works of Art in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Houses* (Zwolle 2000); Exalto, *Gereformeerde heiligen*, 117-22.

43 Katherine Fremantle, *The Baroque Town Hall of Amsterdam* (Utrecht 1959). Cf. Mariët Westerman, *The Art of the Dutch Republic 1585-1718* (London 1996).

44 See, for instance, Xander van Eck, *Kunst, twist en devotie. Goudse katholieke schuilkerken 1572-1795* (Delft 1994). A coherent picture of the internal strategy of the Catholic community is proposed by Charles H. Parker, *Faith on the margins: Catholics and Catholicism in the Dutch Golden Age* (Cambridge and London 2008).

PART III

Republican Ideas

5 Inventing the Sovereign Republic: Imperial Structures, French Challenges, Dutch Models and the Early Modern Swiss Confederation¹

Thomas Maissen

Sallustius' '*concordia res parvae crescunt*' inspired the device of the Dutch Republic, but the motto was also well-known in Early Modern Switzerland.² Around 1500, it appeared on a fresco in Geneva's town hall, and Zwingli quoted the phrase in his first Zurich disputation.³ Concord was always a major concern for the Confederate cantons. The lack of unity belonged to the structure of their league without a common sovereign. When Jean Bodin analysed Switzerland, he consequently spoke not of one state, but of thirteen sovereign petty states.⁴ There was of course the Diet; but compelled to decide unanimously and lacking the decisive leadership of a province like Holland, let alone an institution like the stadholderate, it was much weaker than the Dutch States General.

The absence of a centralised power was not yet a problem when the Confederation was gradually established during the late Middle Ages. At this time, it was just one among several other city leagues, like the Hanse or the Swabian League, where free or imperial cities helped each other to defend against foreign aggression and maintain domestic law and order. The distinguishing characteristics of the Swiss Confederation were that rural communities were equal members in the league and, unlike other leagues, it would survive and ultimately emerge as an independent territorial state. However, when the Confederation first emerged, nobody had this in mind. This chapter will show how the Swiss understanding of the Confederation and its cantons gradually evolved, how a league of free estates within the Empire would become one – if not several – sovereign nation(s) in the international community. To adopt this distinct concept of sovereignty, the Swiss had to follow and borrow from foreign models, especially from France and the Dutch Republic.

When the German vernacular notion of *Republic* (*Republik*, *Republick*, *Respublik* et al.) first appeared with the meaning of a ‘free state’, this was a sign of the evolution of the constitutional language which is studied in this chapter. In the sixteenth century, the Swiss did not refer to the Confederation or to any one single canton as a ‘republic’, and the traditional Latin word *respublica* was generally understood in a broader sense of a ‘state’ or ‘commonwealth’, as in Jean Bodin’s *Six livres de la république* (1576). In Switzerland back then, there was no notion of what today’s scholarship has baptised as ‘republicanism’.⁵ Machiavelli’s comparison of the ‘*Svizzeri armatissimi e liberissimi*’ with Sparta and Rome was often quoted in the twentieth century and his praise interpreted as a republican qualification.⁶ But it is telling that, until Rousseau, the Swiss reception of the Florentine chancellor’s work was generally negative.⁷ He was repudiated with theological arguments as the teacher of atheism and immorality. Neither was there enduring constancy in the moral criticism that Swiss humanists and early reformers like Zwingli and Bullinger had expressed against princes and the nobility. What was important during this sixteenth and seventeenth-century period of confessional conflict was not whether somebody was a monarch, an aristocrat, or a democrat, but that he adhered to the right creed. Even before the Reformation, however, the Swiss never had considered themselves to be outsiders in an otherwise feudal, hierarchic world. The cantons had defended their own autonomy against the Habsburgs, but they had always made it very clear that they were fighting against an intermediate power, not against the Empire. For the Swiss, the Swabian War of 1499 did not create a sense of ‘de facto independence’ from the Empire, until national historiography made it precisely that in the late nineteenth century.⁸

Legitimacy within the Empire

These points of reference are clearly visible in the writings of the most influential early modern authority on the Swiss constitution, Josias Simler (1530–1576), whose *De republica Helvetiorum* was first printed in 1576, the same year his own German translation *Regiment gmeiner loblicher Eydtgnoschafft* appeared. To Simler, Swiss liberty did not mean liberation from the Empire, but liberty through and within the Empire.⁹ Liberty was a privilege granted by the universal

source of all secular power, the Empire, the only source of legitimate rule and thus the foundation of the cantons' rule in their respective territories. The only theoretical framework that Simler used was the mixed constitution, with a surprising, apologetic emphasis on the role of the nobility in Swiss history. It was within this ideal concept of Empire that Simler best found the Swiss mixture of powers and privileges that generally belonged to the cantons, but to some extent also to the Confederation. Ultimately, they all emanated from the Emperor's jurisdiction, the *merum et mixtum imperium*. By using essentially jurisdictional powers – with high justice chiefly understood as capital punishment – to maintain law and order, the Swiss cantons claimed they proved their loyalty to the Empire.¹⁰

Simler's Latin text was often reprinted in Paris, Leiden and, for the last time in 1734, in Zurich; the German *Regiment* was also reprinted several times, and an expanded edition appeared as late as 1792 in Zurich. A French translation was often reprinted after 1577 and a Dutch translation appeared in 1613, so that Simler's essentially historical narrative remained the standard explanation of the Swiss constitution and more or less the only one accessible for an international audience throughout the Ancien Régime. The Swiss actually did not have a strong interest in political theory at the time, which was quite different from the Dutch, who published many political treatises including works of such illustrious philosophers as Grotius and Spinoza.¹¹

Why was there no similar impulse in the Confederation? Several structural reasons can help explain why. Reflections on (natural) law and legal practice were important aspects of modern political theory. Traditionally, however, the law, lawyers and jurisprudence never really played an important role in Swiss politics. Custom dominated, while written law – such as Roman Law used in the Empire – was at best a subsidiary aspect. In the Zwinglian tradition Swiss higher education was interested in producing ministers, and the Catholic institutions followed the Protestant example. Thus the schooling of the political elite had more of a theological than a legal slant. Their teachers were Reformed ministers or Jesuits who taught at theological colleges, and not professors of law. At the only Swiss university, in Basel, one could study public law, but throughout the seventeenth century, the curriculum offered only courses in imperial law and dissertations were accordingly very theoretical and far from the Swiss reality.¹² There was no academic discourse on politics in Switzerland

until after 1700, the first chairs in natural law were founded in Zurich, Berne, and Basel. Even then, the Confederation itself, as a league of independent states, did not instigate or necessitate theoretical analysis. Political reflection and criticism were confined to the city-states, where government was experienced. This was still the case in the eighteenth century, for example, in Rousseau's Geneva. Moreover, the Swiss were, for the most part, spared major domestic crises and civil wars that elsewhere had motivated authors like Bodin, Grotius, Hobbes, or Locke to write. Neither was there an external monarchical threat, as Spain and France were to the Dutch republic, nor was there a dichotomy between republican states and a paramonarchical stadholder. What was really at stake – the political legitimacy for the Swiss league of burghers and peasants – could not be provided by modern political theory. It was historiography, as in the case of Josias Simler, that could justify the revolt of the first cantons against Habsburg by telling a story of tyrannical reeves and, according to the rules of the Empire, a legitimate form of resistance against them.

According to nineteenth-century historiography, all this should have changed in 1648, when Switzerland acquired its '*de iure* independence'.¹³ Meanwhile, the Westphalian treaties considered the Dutch provinces as '*liberi et supremi ordines, provincias ac terras*', as their former ruler, the king of Spain, accorded sovereignty to them, although the institutions of the German Empire did not immediately recognise the independence of the Netherlands as a *Reichskreis*.¹⁴ The Swiss were an even more ambiguous case because, unlike the Dutch, the Confederation did not sign any of the Westphalian treaties as party to an international law contract, and the Emperor merely conceded the Swiss a so-called 'exemption' as part of his agreements with other sovereign powers (France and Sweden).¹⁵ From the imperial perspective, this was just an extension of privileges to the three newer cantons – Basel, Schaffhausen, and Appenzell – privileges which the first ten cantons had already enjoyed since 1499. According to Theodor Reinking, a renowned German scholar of public law, this exemption for the Swiss (like those for the Netherlands, Burgundy, or Savoy) meant that they were exempted from taxation, '*Imperii tamen Majestate non sprete*' – although they continued to recognise the majesty of the Empire.¹⁶ '*Majestas*' is the Latin word for sovereignty; for Reinking and other apologists of strong imperial power it was obvious that the sovereignty resided solely with the Emperor. Compared

to other members of the Empire, the privileges afforded the Swiss a special status; this did not necessarily mean that they were legally equal to the Emperor, as sovereign nations would be.

The Emperor's position regarding Swiss independence was always more pragmatic than legally binding, and although the final claim that the Confederation still belonged to the Empire dated from as late as 1801, German intransigency in this matter had already begun to seriously fade in the seventeenth century.¹⁷ More surprisingly, perhaps, was that several Swiss authors actually remained devoted to the Empire. In 1684, Johann Caspar Steiner, for instance, revealed his loyalty by pointing out that the Swiss cantons still bore the Empire's two-headed eagle in their coats of arms. This symbolic subordination, according to Steiner, did not contradict the Republic's independence as confirmed by the Peace of Westphalia.¹⁸ The emphasis here is on 'confirmed', '*gut geheissen und bestättiget*', because Steiner was not talking about sovereignty in the same way the Dutch had obtained it *expressis verbis* in Westphalia. He meant it as a privilege granted by the Emperor that could theoretically be withdrawn at any time. In 1704, an anonymous author also referred to the imperial eagle in the cantons' coats of arms as a sign of '*Lands-Obrigkeit, Juris Superioritatis, Souveraineté genannt*'.¹⁹ This expression is a rather paradoxical mixture of two legal languages: the symbol of an immediate power within the Empire (*Freyer Stand*) was identified with the sovereignty according to international law – a status that a state of the Empire (*Reichsstand*) could logically not attain because it was always a subject of the Emperor.

Steiner was completely correct when he observed that the imperial regalia were on display in numerous places in the Confederation. The Swiss actually continued producing new two-headed eagles, and only rarely was there as deliberate a shift from imperial to republican symbols as when Zurich built a new town hall in 1698.²⁰

Nidwalden's and Obwalden's town halls were embellished with two-headed eagles until as late as 1714 and 1733 [figure 1], respectively, and Obwalden, Appenzell Innerrhoden, and Schwyz minted two-headed eagle coins into the 1740s. In Appenzell, the institution that was equivalent to the court of law was called *Reichskammer* (imperial chamber) until well into the nineteenth century, and until 1872 the *Reichsvogt* (imperial reeve) not only presided over this chamber, but also supervised executions, while sitting on a horse and holding the 'imperial sword'.²¹ Obviously, the reeve had not been ap-



Figure 1: Supraporta of the town hall of Obwalden in Sarnen around 1730. Staatsarchiv Obwalden, Sarnen, Switzerland.

pointed by the Emperor, but had already been an elected community representative for centuries. Still, the reference to the medieval office of the *Reichsvogt* shows why the original cantons maintained their imperial symbols for so long. The reeve represented the Emperor as the source of all legitimate authority and his most noble duty consisted of presiding over capital punishment trials. This is why even the patrician governments in Berne and Luzern continued to pronounce the death sentence using the phrase ‘according to imperial law’ (*nach Inhalt keÿserl. Rechtens*) until 1730.²² This formula did not refer to positive law of the Empire, such as Charles v’s *Constitutio Criminalis Carolina*, but to the Emperor as source of jurisdictional power. However, these references could mean more than just a framework of legitimacy, especially in the Catholic rural cantons. Unlike the hostile Protestant cantons, most of these petty states were so small and weak that their independence depended on the moral and political powers of the Emperor and the Pope. The conservative, static, ‘medieval’ notion of political order therefore seemed to suit them best.

Sovereignty as an alternative concept in the cantons

What type of legitimacy could successfully replace these traditional justifications of political power? The alternative was obviously of-

ferred by the concept of sovereignty, as defined in 1576 by Jean Bodin in the aforementioned *Six livres de la république: 'la puissance absolue & perpétuelle d'une République'*.²³ Sovereignty as the absolute and perpetual power in any given state consists of the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force and the ultimate decision in choosing officials to perform political tasks. The sovereign is immediate to God the Almighty and he does not recognise any secular power above himself. Absolute sovereign power does not depend on someone's privileges, concessions or delegation, but only on God's will and the ruler's capacity to maintain his authority by force. The core element of Bodin's sovereignty was no longer jurisdiction, as in the traditional, medieval understanding of government, but legislation. From this it follows that the sovereign could introduce new laws and abolish old norms as he pleased, without any consent from other (internal) powers, such as the Estates.²⁴

Bodin's concept combines two theoretical goals: on the one hand, the sovereign is unrestrained, absolute in foreign affairs based on international law and involving other sovereigns as his peers, on the other in the nation's internal affairs involving constitutional and public law where he does no longer recognise any peers. These implications help explain the growing interest in the concept of sovereignty during the seventeenth century, at least for those Swiss cantons powerful enough to a) defend their territories with the sword against foreign threats, and b) to vanquish internal rivals through the competence of the state to abolish existing laws and create new ones, something they were not able to do within the imperial framework. It was in this situation that the term '*republic*' emerged also in the political language of the Swiss (and later in the other German speaking territories, as well). The use of neologisms or rather germanised words like '*republic(k)*', combined with terms adopted from Italian or French such as '*souverän*', '*absolut*', '*neutral(ität)*', and '*Staat*' (the state itself) indicates that the traditional language of imperial law had been abandoned in favour of the modern Western European language of constitutional and international law. The new 'language' enabled the Swiss to better adapt to the changing world of European politics, to render their own ruling and administration more dynamic and less reverent of ancient privileges.

It was for a variety of concrete reasons, usually including political conflicts, that the Swiss cantons and their allies (*Zugewandte*) eventually emerged as republics. This means that they began considering

themselves sovereign aristocracies or democracies outside the Empire, with a constitution fundamentally different from that of monarchies precisely because the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force was not in the hand of a single ruler. It belonged to a group or corporation, as the following examples will show.²⁵ When the French king Henry IV granted diplomatic assistance to the ‘*Ville et République de Genève*’ in 1602, he made a sovereign republic out of a city and thus reinforced its position in the ongoing conflict with the house of Savoy, which pretended to the sovereignty of the city. In 1610, another Swiss ally, the city of Neuchâtel, expressed a similar desire for autonomy and tried to replace the traditional oath to the common weal (*bien commun*) by an oath to the ‘republic’. However, the territorial lord of Neuchâtel, Henri II of Orléans-Longueville, immediately prohibited what he called the usurpation of ‘*ledict mot de républicque*’, because Neuchâtel, unlike Berne, was not sovereign. A little later, the communes of Valais, a Swiss ally as well, declared themselves a free democratic government that owed its liberty to God and to its own blood and arms. The territorial lord in this case was the bishop of Sion, who had to resign his secular powers to the communes in 1628, or, more precisely, to the dominant patrician families, who considered themselves a ‘*souverainischer status*’ beyond the reach of the Empire and minted their own coins with the inscription ‘*Mon[eta] Reip[ublicae] Vallesiae*’.

In the late seventeenth century, in the canton of Zug and in the Grisons (an allied federation like the Valais), the rural communes managed to limit the importance of their respective capital city, Zug (the city) as well as Chur, arguing that within a small sovereign democratic republic the equality of the members was opposed to privileges of one particular community. In both cases, the popular assembly (*Landsgemeinde*) claimed to be the prince and supreme governing authority (‘*Fürst und höchste Gewalt*’). This phenomenon can be labelled ‘democratic absolutism’, as the popular assembly abolished prerogatives of the capital and created new political regulations. The fear of absolutism was exactly why the village of Wilchingen, in the canton Schaffhausen, revolted during the period 1718 to 1730, denying the city of Schaffhausen the title of absolute ruler (*dominus absolutus*). Wilchingen then declared itself to be a fiefdom under the Emperor, implying that the village could appeal to him – the imperial structure was supposed to preserve local, communal privileges of autonomy against the domineering city. In Basel, the citizens wanted to

abolish the Secret Council, the town's most important governmental institution, in 1691 because it 'tasted' of sovereignty. However, Basel's citizens failed, and, as a consequence, both the craft guilds and the citizenry were ostracised from the 'Republic'. In a similar controversy, Berne's Great Council in 1682 protested against the Small Council's tendency towards 'absolute rule', because it tried to exclude the Great Council (let alone the ordinary citizens) from participating in government. An edict eventually resolved the conflict and posited sovereign authority with the mayor, the Small, and Great Councils as governing bodies and claimed the same power for them as for the 'sovereign prince and supreme lord' of any 'well-policed' state.²⁶

Other examples could be included, but the trend seems obvious. The traditional imperial structure corresponded to a pyramid as it was symbolically expressed in the superstructure of Swiss armorial bearings [figure 1], where the top, the Emperor, conceded a decreasing number of privileges and rights of autonomy to rulers and corporations (such as the cantons) at various lower levels of government. While members of the (universal) Empire held positions in a hierarchy of relative dependencies, the political relationships within the sovereign state (be it monarchy or republic) remained absolute because everybody was either part of the sovereign authority or a subject. Subjects did not belong to the 'republic' in the pre-modern sense of *repraesentatio identitatis*, just like a king's subjects were not members of the royalty.²⁷ The homogenous submission of subjects overruled any political (but not social) characteristics that might have distinguished them in a corporatist society.

Although the transition from an imperial concept of government to the modern idea of sovereignty gradually evolved throughout most of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Switzerland, this evolution was most conspicuous in the last thirty years of the seventeenth century. Internal conflicts during this period stimulated the publication of more or less sophisticated pamphlets, but also led to the first constitutional analyses of the Swiss forms of government. This included Johann Rudolph Gatschet's *Dissertatio politica de inclyta republica Bernensi* (1676), which listed the functions of the magistrate's office in the same way as Bodin had done in chapter 10 of book 1 in his *République*, and in agreement with the aforementioned edicts of 1682. Gatschet also stated that the Bernese magistrate could only claim '*summa & absoluta potestas, nullam agnoscens praeter*

Deum superiorem' as a total entity (i.e. including the Great Council).²⁸ Simultaneously, female allegories who personified the state began serving as representations of this concept of a sovereign republic. Again in 1682, when the government of Berne redefined the members of the republic, the Great Council's hall (*Bürgerstube*) was redecorated, and Joseph Werner's allegory of a dominant *Berna* replaced Humbert Mareschet's depiction of thirteen confederates swearing an oath of (feudal) allegiance. *Basilea*, *Lucerna*, *Tigurina*, and *Geneva* also made their first appearance in the following years to represent external sovereignty against foreign states and internal sovereignty against the canton's subjects.²⁹

The sovereignty of the Confederation

In the 1670s, *Helvetia* emerged as well: the personification of the entire Confederation, on paintings and frontispieces, in poetry and drama.³⁰ Because the Diet had almost no domestic powers, these representations referred to the Confederation not as a state superior to the cantons, but as a subject of the law of nations, a sovereign member of the international community of states. Again, it was not the Swiss themselves who had looked for international recognition of their archaic league as a sovereign state. When Basel's mayor, Johann Rudolf Wettstein, left for the Westphalian negotiations in late 1646, he barely knew what sovereignty was. He essentially wanted to abolish the case that litigants appealed to the imperial chamber after a judge at the local court of Basel had given his verdict. Therefore Wettstein planned to refer to the status of the ten older cantons which had already acquired privilege of exemption from the imperial chamber in 1499. But the French ambassador in Switzerland implored him to do like the Dutch and to cite the liberty acquired by the force of their own arms, rather than the privileges conceded by the Empire. This was an argument of a sovereign within international law and implied that the Swiss did not belong to the Empire. In Münster, the eminent legal scholar Théodore Godefroy, a member of the French delegation, similarly advised Wettstein to refer only to the effective possession of rights and not to their historical origin – precisely what the French were practising in the provinces conquered from the Empire. When the French used the language of sovereignty in Westphalia, they came with a hidden agenda because if members of

the Empire adopted sovereignty for themselves, they were inevitably emancipated from the grip of imperial power, where the Emperor was the unique sovereign. The ultimate effect of this discourse on sovereignty was that the Empire would fall apart, but this only happened during the Napoleonic era. The Emperor's negotiators anticipated the strategies meant to weaken the Empire and cautiously avoided the use of the word 'sovereign' during the negotiations, as well as in the drafting of the treaty.

Wettstein, however, insisted that the Confederation was a free and independent state that did not accept judges it had not itself appointed.³¹ In his so called *Recharge*, Wettstein no longer requested a mere confirmation or extension of privileges, but demanded that the Empire leave the Confederation undisturbed to pursue its free, sovereign status.³² By employing the word 'sovereign' as one of the first in the German-speaking areas, Wettstein created a case of international law out of an issue that until then had belonged to imperial public law. The Emperor, who did not want to drive the Swiss into the French camp, found a solution in an 'exemption' – a title that originated in traditional imperial law and that even Wettstein himself did not clearly distinguish from sovereignty. Most of his compatriots, who were completely ignorant of these subtle distinctions, saw no real reason to oppose the Emperor's solution; they considered the Westphalian treaty a confirmation of existing privileges which were merely extended to the three most recent members of the Confederation.

It took the Swiss several decades and some serious learning to fully comprehend Bodin's message not only at the cantonal level, as Gatschet had, but also for the Confederation as a whole. In 1689, Fritz Michael Büeler from the Catholic canton of Schwyz, a chancellor and secretary of the Swiss Diet, published his *Tractatus von der Freyheit, Souverainitet und Independenz der Loblichen Dreyzehnen Orthen der Eydgnossschafft*. Büeler quoted Wettstein's *Recharge* to demonstrate that the Westphalian treaties merely confirmed that, for 150 years, the Swiss had not paid homage to the Emperor and were abiding their own laws. Unlike the aforementioned Johann Caspar Steiner, Büeler repudiated the two-headed eagles on Swiss armorial bearings as an old, obsolete custom. But the assertion that both the individual cantons and the Confederation as a whole were free, sovereign and independent ignored Bodin's tricky question (and answer) where sovereignty resided in Switzerland. Büeler's position was again

contrary to Bodin, because he did not consider legislation the main quality of sovereignty – which was no surprise, since the Diet had no real legislative powers. Instead, Büeler stressed the right to wage war and the related right to form alliances as criteria for sovereignty; they belong to the realm of foreign politics, the only sphere where the Confederation as a whole could be perceived as a – sovereign – entity.³³

In his *Compendium des gemeinen eidgenössischen Rechts* from 1696, Büeler altered his focus and began placing sovereignty within the cantons themselves. This sovereignty, like the supreme power of a prince, was absolute, in the sense that the sovereign was allowed to ignore existing laws and privileges in the name of the common good, according to the Roman maxim ‘*Salus populi suprema lex esto*’. This interpretation of absolutism may not have been the most sophisticated in the eyes of a French legal scholar, but it was quite surprising to hear it coming from the chancellor of a rural canton like Schwyz with a democratically elected popular assembly.³⁴ If Büeler can be considered the founder of modern Swiss constitutional law, Isaak Iselin, in his *Tentamen iuris publici Helvetici* (1751), was the first to systematically discuss the problems of Swiss sovereignty. It was not based on common positive laws, Iselin pointed out, but on diplomatic exchanges and foreign recognition within the framework of international law. It actually was external, not internal sovereignty.

After all, it was not so much the theory of international law that taught the Swiss what a sovereign state was, but the diplomatic practise and ceremonies, especially when dealing with the *ius foederis*, the sovereign right to form alliances. Wettstein had already complained that the Diet had not provided for a suitable entrance for him into Münster, which had cost him considerable status compared to the Dutch, who spent more than four times as much money on their attendance.³⁵ The lessons learned from foreign powers went on after 1648: France and Venice taught the Swiss that it was a sign of subjugation when the Emperor continued to address them as ‘faithful’ (*‘Unsere und des Reichs Liebe und Getreue’*).³⁶ The Emperor only ceased addressing them in this way after another of Wettstein’s missions, this time to Vienna in 1651. But the essential problem soon changed from that of the imperial tradition to the condescension of the French king Louis XIV vis-à-vis other sovereigns and especially the republics. Official Swiss delegates already experienced how French ministers treated them with disdain and disputed their title as ambassadors in as early as 1650.³⁷ For France and other monarchies,

it was obvious that only one single ambassador corresponded to the one sovereign king, while the Swiss were used to send at least one envoy per canton. Such a large number of representatives did not symbolise power to the monarchists, but rather the vices typical for republics: individual lust for honours and the discord and the distrust that split the cantons.

In 1663, the Paris ceremony to celebrate the signature of the renewed alliance turned out to be an especially memorable humiliation.³⁸ The Swiss envoys, led by the mayors of Zurich and Berne, were seated on low benches, while the king mounted his throne. The Swiss had to take their hats off when the king entered while he kept his on – which was the privilege of sovereigns. Subsequent etchings, journals, and a tapestry Charles le Brun later designed to commemorate the event, all showed the Swiss as humble subordinates; in one depiction even the oath was interpreted as a vassal's vow of fidelity. The ambassadors from Venice and the Netherlands, who used to keep their hats on, were desperate because the humiliation applied to all republics. Rather than to listen to their advice, the Swiss had allowed themselves to be manipulated by the French officials in return for some nice gifts for each member of their delegation. The poor reputation of the Swiss at ceremonies would last for several more decades. Gregorio Leti, in 1685, spoke of an '*ambasciata vergognosa*', and in 1715, according to Gottfried Stieve, a student of ceremonies, everybody knew that the Swiss were always treated poorly at royal European ceremonies.³⁹

The Dutch model

Where could and where did the Swiss go to learn more about how a republic and republicans should behave? The obvious models, especially as far as the relationship with France was concerned, were the other European republics: Genoa, which Louis XIV bombarded into neutrality in 1684; the formerly mythical Venice that French authors like Amelot de la Houssaye regularly denigrated as a corrupt and arbitrary aristocracy of merchants who tyrannised their subjects;⁴⁰ and the States General that the Sun King in 1672 assaulted after criticising their alleged lack of respect. The Dutch had developed their good contacts with the reformed cantons from a theological basis to a political common ground, which highlighted the republican constitution and the antagonism toward absolute monarchy, especially the

French one.⁴¹ Of course, this position was not a question of pure idealism, or even ideology – the renowned Swiss mercenaries were at stake, who were traditionally almost always exclusively in the service of the French. The Dutch ambassador had already sounded out the possibility of a republican alliance with Venice and the Confederation during the aforementioned Swiss state visit in Paris in 1663. After Louis XIV had precipitated the Dutch War (1672-1678), an anonymous pamphlet, *L'affermissement des republicques de Hollande & de Suisse*, in 1675 advocated an alliance between republics, and especially between the Dutch and the Swiss. A common past of defending themselves against the Habsburgs could unite them; the patrons of the alliance would be Saint Nicholas of Flüe, William of Orange, 'le premier Libérateur de la Hollande', and William Tell, 'le fondateur le la liberté des Suisses'. The anonymous author, besides the historical communities, also pointed out that the two countries were even religiously similar – even though religion, according to him, no longer played a role in the building of alliances. The *Affermissement* proposed a secular pact against the threat of royal absolutism: 'Toute sorte de Couronnes absolües & Ministres souverains doivent estre suspectes aux Republicains' – republicans should not trust any kind of absolutist crowns and sovereign ministers.⁴²

The same message was repeated even more intensely during the War of the Grand Alliance (1688-1697), and this time, the Dutch spokesman was no longer some anonymous author, but the extraordinary envoy to Switzerland Petrus Valkenier, author of *Het Verwerd Europa* (1675, translated into German in 1677), a historiographic pamphlet attacking the Sun King because he had 'confused' Europe. Valkenier believed that historical and geographical similarities on the outskirts of the Empire could unite the two countries in their defence of liberty, because their shared republican form of government was despised by all potentates everywhere.⁴³ This was also the motto of Valkenier's addresses to the Swiss Diet where he fought rhetorical battles against the French ambassador Amelot in the early 1690s. Valkenier blamed Louis XIV for dealing with sovereign republics as if they were his subjects. He deliberately used the language of modern constitutional law in addressing the Confederation as an '*Absolute, Independente, Souveraine und zugleich auch Neutrale Republic*'.⁴⁴ These – at least to Swiss ears – rather exceptional words expressed the fact that the Confederation, as a sovereign state, was not unilaterally bound by its earlier alliances to France, but could also choose a

policy of neutrality if it so desired. That would mean hiring out mercenaries not only to the Sun King, but also to the United Provinces. Valkenier added several elements to the established list of geographic and historical similarities which included a similar constitution, a similar defence policy, no expansionism, a desire for justice, beneficial commerce and the development of factories. The harmony and sympathy the two republics shared should naturally lead to a security pact which was not only directed against France, but as a matter of principle against all monarchies, which resented the republics in general and would overthrow them as soon as they could if the free states did not protect themselves with prudent treaties.⁴⁵ On 15 May 1693, Valkenier's arguments won: Zurich signed a treaty and sent a battalion of mercenaries to the Dutch – thereby breaking the French monopoly on Swiss mercenaries.

It was only in these years that the fundamental difference between monarchies and republics became the main theme of Swiss statesmen. In 1706, Zurich's Johann Ludwig Hirzel feared that the Austrian envoys preferred submission to liberty if they were to follow their 'monarchic principles'.⁴⁶ That same year, Zurich's mayor Heinrich Escher, for a long time a pragmatic ally of France, told the Venetian ambassador that alliances between republics were always good and even more so when monarchies despised them.⁴⁷ Meanwhile, the ambassador Peter von Salis from the Grisons was convinced that the only real brotherhood between states was the one established between republics.⁴⁸

It is difficult to say how directly this 'Dutch moment' influenced artistic representation, but the impact is at least indirectly obvious. Since the late sixteenth century, the Dutch had turned the roman liberty cap, the *'pileus'*, into a hat with a wide brim, which the Swiss adopted later as well, for example in 1722, when it appeared on the cover of an edition of Simler's *Regiment* [figure 2]. The hat covering the Swiss cantons' coats of arms became a symbol of republican sovereignty, effectively replacing the imperial eagle (or the crown in monarchical iconography). Jahve's sun shining on the liberty hat symbolised the immediate relationship between the sovereign and God. This was a motif well-known to the Dutch; it was found on the frontispiece of Lieuwe van Aitzema's *Herstelde Leeuw* (1652), for example, where the *Leo belgicus* holds the hat aloft with a lance, surrounded by personifications of the seven provinces.⁴⁹

To represent the Netherlands as a whole, artists like Crispijn van

probably from the 1660s, shows a wonderful Swiss virgin (*'wunder Schweizerland'*, an early allegory of *Helvetia*), placed among the male rulers of Spain, France, Venice and other states. They are all busy courting this virgin, because they desire her mercenaries, but she repudiates them and maintains her chastity as immaculately as Van der Passe's Dutch maiden had in her situation. Sixteenth-century Dutch artists had already placed their maiden in an enclosed garden together with the lion and besieged by the Spaniards and Catholic priests. This representation was an adaptation of the *hortus conclusus*, a motif that had served as a symbol for the Virgin Mary in the Middle Ages. Now it symbolised republican sovereignty conceived as virginity, immaculate from princely desire. As an expression of the need to protect the country's territory from foreign invaders, this political *hortus conclusus* could also be found in Swiss etchings.⁵⁰

A last example of artistic influences is the French artist Bernard Picart who combined the international style of political representation with the symbols of the two republics when he sketched the frontispiece for the two most important national historical works: Jean Le Clerc's *Histoire des Provinces-Unies des Pays Bas* (1723) [figure 3 and front cover of this book] and the first printed edition of Aegidius Tschudi's *Chronicon Helveticum* (1734) [figure 4]. Here *Helvetia* is seen sitting on a throne, with Fortune holding the crown over her head and Concord placed to the left of *Helvetia*. A Swiss artist, David Herrliberger, collaborated with Picart to design this allegory in Amsterdam, where Picart had emigrated to and converted from Catholicism to the Reformed faith.⁵¹

Herrliberger was not the only Swiss to go to the Netherlands and study Dutch ideas. Swiss political thought and Swiss republicanism owed a lot to the country of Grotius, De la Court, and Spinoza. Johann Heinrich Hottinger (1620-1667), a famous theologian and professor in Zurich and Heidelberg, who had studied in Leiden, introduced his students to authors like Grotius and Descartes who lived exiled in the Netherlands. In 1663, Johann Heinrich Rahn dedicated his *Theses politicae ex Hugonis Grotij de iure belli et pacis* to Hottinger. In 1667, Hottinger's friend and successor Johann Heinrich Heidegger encouraged Christoph Werdmüller to write the first Zurich thesis on constitutional law, *Quaestiones politicae de imperio et subjectione* – essentially copying Grotius's arguments on government from *De jure belli ac pacis*, book 1, chapter 3.⁵² Grotius's



Figure 3: Frontispiece of Jean le Clerc, *Histoire des Provinces unies des Pays-Bas* (Amsterdam 1723). Zentralbibliothek Zürich

handed in his thesis *De libertate populi*, openly written from a republican standpoint.⁵⁵ Escher condemned absolutism and defended the liberty of the people that originated in the state of nature and led to democracy, at least during the early stages of societal development. Escher thus combined recent theories regarding the social contract, probably following the Dutchman (of Swiss origin) Ulric Huber, and the older Calvinist right to resist, which was one of De Vries's favourite themes and was much debated after the Glorious Revolution.

Escher's friend and fellow member of the Zurich learned society called *Wohlgesinde* (Well-minded) was the famous natural scientist and palaeontologist Johann Jacob Scheuchzer (1672-1733), who, in 1694, received his doctorate (in medicine) in Utrecht. Scheuchzer was the most prolific member of Zurich's learned societies and his interests were not limited to science. In 1713, the physician became the leader of a revolt by the craft guilds, which were making claims to be included in the sovereign authority. This conflict involved the question of who was an integral part of the republic, similar to the debates already mentioned in Berne (1682) and Basel (1691). Scheuchzer justified the revolt of the guilds against Zurich's town council – which included most of his former colleagues from the learned societies – by invoking the principles of natural law such as natural equality by birth, or the right of resistance if tyrants violated one's fundamental rights. The original '*Jus ferendi leges et mutandi regiminis formam*', according to Scheuchzer, therefore belonged to the whole community, i.e., all of its citizens.⁵⁶ With an explicit reference to Grotius, the guild delegates distinguished between two kinds of sovereigns: the absolute ruler who pronounced himself to be immediate to God and therefore above the positive law and another kind of ruler who, although close to God, acknowledged himself being subject to the law. The latter type governed in Venice and Zurich where the sovereign was '*singulis major*', but '*universis minor*'.⁵⁷ Scheuchzer and the craft guilds successfully applied these arguments and reached the official declaration that the citizens were included among the true possessors of sovereignty. Little changed in reality, however, because most practical and urgent decisions were left to the councils. When Scheuchzer later, in his *Allgemeine Observationes über die Staats Reforme*, analysed what had happened in 1713, he reflected upon the original contract of Zurich's society and compared the present situation in his hometown to the freedom of the farmers in the Catholic,

democratic cantons, where sovereignty still resided in the people so that every poor farmer was interested in and knowledgeable about politics. Scheuchzer concluded that a rebellion like the one in Zurich was necessary every now and then to awaken the people who had remained ignorant over centuries and now, refusing blind obedience, had discovered their own liberties. Thus the common people not only mended their ways, but also learned to control the ruler's designs and vices; the ruler was going to improve, by way of virtue, or fear.⁵⁸

Conclusion

Re-inventing the Swiss Confederation within the framework of modern constitutional and international law as taught by Bodin, Grotius and others changed a league of imperial estates into sovereign states united in a sovereign federation. This multi-dimensional modification was mostly conceptual: the constitutions of both the cantons and the Confederation barely evolved during the Early Modern period. But the formal stability and the new political language of western law included the rise of a new, professionalised elite in the late seventeenth century, with at least some legal training and knowledge of the world and the languages abroad, where they sought out their republican models. In the increasingly secularised Swiss state, they gradually replaced the former aldermen who were characterised by theological education, confessional loyalties and a lasting affinity to the idea of Empire. The concept of sovereignty for its part contributed to the definition of hitherto unusual, clear frontiers between the rulers and the ruled. This distinction was usually accompanied by the establishment of a limited number of ruling families in the cities, an informal aristocracy. But cantons or allies like Zug, Valais, and the Grisons have shown that a kind of democratic absolutism existed as well, where rural communes (with their own local elites) ended up withdrawing jurisdiction from the formerly privileged towns or bishops. On another level, the arguments Escher and Scheuchzer employed prove that the language of natural law – equal rights for men born equally in a state of nature – inevitably implied the idea of political emancipation for all citizens, or even all of the inhabitants in a state, including its subjects. The lessons that the Swiss learnt abroad in the seventeenth century would thus make the Confederation a laboratory of revolutionary change in the eighteenth century that would

eventually inspire Rousseau when he momentarily combined unification and the rule of law, popular sovereignty, and republican legitimacy.

Notes

1 This article relies on material I developed in *Die Geburt der Republic: Staatsverständnis und Repräsentation in der frühneuzeitlichen Eidgenossenschaft* (Göttingen 2006).

2 Sallustius, *Bellum Jugurthinum*, 10, 6; see also Martin van Gelderen, *The Political Thought of the Dutch Revolt 1555–1590 Ideas in Context* vol. 23 (Cambridge 1992) 193–95.

3 Waldemar Deonna, ‘Les Fresques de la Maison de Ville in Genève’, *Zeitschrift für Schweizerische Archäologie und Kunstgeschichte* 13 (1952), 145; Ulrich Zwingli, *Handlung der Versammlung in der Stadt Zürich auf den 29. Jan. 1523*, in: id., *Sämtliche Werke* vol. 1 *Corpus Reformatorum* vol. 88 (Berlin 1905), 510.

4 Jean Bodin, *Les six livres de la République* *Corpus des oeuvres de philosophie en langue française* vol. 1–6 (Paris 1986) vol. 1, 163–67 (1, 7).

5 See Martin van Gelderen, Quentin Skinner (eds), *Republicanism: A Shared European Heritage*, vol. 1: *Republicanism and Constitutionalism in Early Modern Europe*; vol. 2: *The Values of Republicanism in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge 2002).

6 Niccolò Machiavelli, *Il principe*, in: id., *Opere*, ed. by Corrado Vivanti (Turin 1997), 151 (cap. 12); see also id., *Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio*, in: ibid. 234 (1, 12), 310 (1, 55). Volker Reinhardt, ‘Machiavellis helvetische Projektion: Neue Überlegungen zu einem alten Thema’, *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Geschichte* 45 (1995) on p. 302 mentions the relevant texts of Swiss scholars.

7 See Thomas Maissen, ‘Frühneuzeitlicher Republikanismus und Machiavellismus. Zur Rezeption von Machiavelli in der Eidgenossenschaft’, in: Annette Meyer and Cornel Zwielerlein (eds), *Machiavellismus in Deutschland* *Historische Zeitschrift. Beiheft, Neue Folge* (Munich 2009) (forthcoming).

8 Even the Wikipedia entries on Swiss history persist in the ‘de facto independence’ of 1499 and the ‘legal independence’ of 1648. For a critical assessment, see Peter Niederhäuser, ‘“Kriegs“-Geschichte im Wandel’, in: id., Werner Fischer (eds), *Vom „Freiheitskrieg“ zum Geschichtsmythos: 500 Jahre Schweizer- oder Schwabenkrieg* (Zurich 2000) 155–79.

9 Josias Simler, *Regiment gemeiner loblicher Eydgnoschafft* (Zurich 1577)

- (orig. 1576), 4; id., *De republica Helvetiorum libri duo* (Zurich 1576) 3*verso (Introduction).
- 10 Ibid., *Regiment*, 166^v.
- 11 See Maissen, *Geburt der Republic*, 60–62.
- 12 Karl Mommsen, *Auf dem Wege zur Staatssouveränität. Staatliche Grundbegriffe in Basler juristischen Doktordisputationen des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts* (Berne 1970).
- 13 For a critical assessment, see Marco Jorio (ed.), 1648: *Die Schweiz und Europa: Aussenpolitik zur Zeit des Westfälischen Friedens* (Zurich 1999), especially 202–03.
- 14 The first article of the treaty of Münster, 30 January 1648 can be found in Johann Jakob Schmauß, *Corpus Juris Gentium* vol. 1 (Leipzig 1730), 614; see also Volker Jarren, ‘Die Vereinigten Niederlande und das Haus Österreich 1648–1748. Fremdbildwahrnehmung und politisches Handeln kaiserlicher Gesandter und Minister’, in: Helmut Gabel (ed.) *Kaufleute und Fürsten: Außenpolitik und politisch-kulturelle Perzeption im Spiegel niederländisch-deutscher Beziehungen 1648–1748* *Niederlande-Studien* vol. 18 (Münster 1998), 69, 117.
- 15 Art. VI Instrumentum Pacis Osnabrugensis = § 61 Instrumentum Pacis Monasteriensis; see *Die Friedensverträge mit Frankreich und Schweden, 1st part: Urkunden*, ed. by Antje Oschmann. *Acta Pacis Westphalicae*, ser. III, section B: Verhandlungsakten, vol. 1/1 (Münster 1998), 19, 128.
- 16 Theodor Reinking, *Tractatus de regimine seculari et ecclesiastico* (Basel, 1622), 94 (I, 2, 9, § 52–56).
- 17 Ludwig Friedrich von Jan, *Staatsrechtliches Verhältnis der Schweiz zu dem deutschen Reiche* vol. 1–3 (Nürnberg and Altdorf 1801–1803).
- 18 Johann Caspar Steiner, *Kurtz deutliche Grund-Zeichnung deß Alt-teutschen Spartier-Lands, das ist Schweitzerland* (Rottweil 1684), 74–75.
- 19 *Schweitzerisches Kriegs-Recht, wie selbiges von denen loblichen Cantonen in alle Fürsten-Dienste den Herren Officierern mitgegeben und allezeit practicirt wird* (Frankfurt 1704), 230.
- 20 For examples see Maissen, *Geburt der Republic*, 383–400, 431–567; see also the illustrations in some of my articles mentioned on 640–642.
- 21 Ibid., 528.
- 22 Staatsarchiv Bern, A I 494, 69–71 (17 March 1730); Staatsarchiv Luzern, cod 4295, 33: *Libell oder Ordnung eines jeweiligen Raths Richters*, 27 August 1717 (inc. ammendments).
- 23 Bodin, *République*, vol. 1, 179 (1, 8).
- 24 Ibid., 191–192, 198–199 (1, 8), 229 (1, 9).
- 25 For details on the following cases see Maissen, *Geburt der Republic*,

- 434–39 (Geneva), 452–53 (Neuchâtel), 444–49 (Valais), and my studies mentioned on 640–42.
- 26 See *Ibid.*, 511–13 (Zug); 498–509 (Grisons); 494–95 (Schaffhausen); 482–86 (Basel); 459–62 (Berne).
- 27 Wolfgang Mager, ‘Genossenschaft, Republikanismus und konsensgestütztes Ratsregiment. Zur Konzeptionalisierung der politischen Ordnung in der mittelalterlichen und frühneuzeitlichen deutschen Stadt’, in: Luise Schorn-Schütte (ed.), *Aspekte der politischen Kommunikation im Europa des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts. Politische Theologie – Res Publica-Verständnis – konsensgestützte Herrschaft* Historische Zeitschrift. Beiheft, Neue Folge vol. 39 (Munich 2004), 105–106.
- 28 Johann Rudolph Gatschet, *Dissertatio politica de inelyta republica Bernensi* (Berne 1676) B-B2; C3^v.
- 29 See Maissen, *Geburt der Republic*, 410–21, 440–41, 460–66, 485–86, 517–22.
- 30 *Ibid.*, 253–77.
- 31 For the documents of the mission, see Johann Rudolf Wettstein, *Acta und Handlungen betreffend gemeiner Eydgnosschafft Exemption* (Basel, 1651).
- 32 *Ibid.*, 28: ‘bey ihrem freyen, souverainen Stand und Herkommen fürbaß ruhig und ohnturbirt zu lassen’.
- 33 Franz Michael Büeler, *Tractatus von der Freyheit, Souverainitet und Independenz der Loblichen Dreyzehen Orthen der Eydgnosschafft...* (Baden 1689) 17–19, 55.
- 34 Franz Michael Büeler, ‘Compendium des gemeinen eidgenössischen Rechts’, *Zeitschrift für schweizerisches Recht* 16 (1869), 11 [= 53].
- 35 Johann Rudolf Wettstein, *Diarium 1646/47 Quellen zur Schweizer Geschichte*, N. F. III: *Briefe und Denkwürdigkeiten*, vol. 8, ed. by Julia Gauss (Basel 1962), 129–30.
- 36 See Maissen, *Geburt der Republic*, 231–32.
- 37 Amtliche Sammlung der Eidgenössischen Abschiede (Luzern, 1858–1886) 6, 1, 41 (9 November 1650), 52 (April 1651).
- 38 See the sources mentioned in Maissen, *Geburt der Republic*, 230–42.
- 39 Gregorio Leti, *Il ceremoniale historico, e politico* vol. 6 (Amsterdam 1685), 463; Gottfried Stieve, *Europaeisches Hoff-Ceremoniel* (Leipzig 1715), 252.
- 40 See Maissen, *Geburt der Republic*, 108–14.
- 41 For the Dutch as a political model see also Jonathan I. Israel (ed.), *The Anglo-Dutch Moment: Essays on the Glorious Revolution and Its World Impact* (Cambridge 1991).

- 42 *L'affermissement des republiques de Hollande & de Suisse* (s. l. 1675), 20–21, 35, 45.
- 43 Petrus Valkenier, *Das verwirrte Europa* (Amsterdam 1677), 56.
- 44 Idem, *Ansprach an die Dreyzehen wie auch Zugewandete Ort der Lobl. Eydgnößschafft in Baden versamlet, gethan den 31. Oct./10. Nov. 1690* (s. l. 1690). 4.
- 45 Idem, Copia des Schreibens an Bürgermeister, Klein- und Grossrath, 19./29. April 1693, Staatsarchiv Zurich, B1 329, 147.
- 46 Amtliche Sammlung der Eidgenössischen Abschiede, 6, 2, 1486 (9 November 1708).
- 47 Quoted in Hans Camille Huber, *Bürgermeister Johann Heinrich Escher von Zürich (1626–1710) und die eidgenössische Politik im Zeitalter Ludwig [sic] XIV* (Zurich 1936), 5n6.
- 48 Quoted in Conradin von Mohr, *Geschichte der bündnerischen Kriege und Unruhen*, ed. by Fortunat Sprecher von Bernegg (Chur 1857), 82–83.
- 49 Jonathan Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness and Fall 1477–1806* (Oxford 1995), image 19, also XXI.
- 50 Thomas Maissen, ‘Von wackeren alten Eidgenossen und souveränen Jungfrauen: Zu Datierung und Deutung der frühesten „Helvetia“-Darstellungen’, *Zeitschrift für schweizerische Archäologie und Kunstgeschichte* 56 (1999), 280–82.
- 51 Maissen, *Geburt der Republic*, 276–77.
- 52 Christoph Werdmüller, *Quaestiones politicae de imperio et subiectione* (Zurich 1668) C1; Hugo Grotius, *De iure belli ac pacis libri tres*: Editio nova (Amsterdam 1646), Reprint: *The Classics of International Law* (Washington, DC 1913), 52 (1, 3, 6).
- 53 Johann Heinrich Schweizer, *Jus Belli et Pacis in Compendio* (Zurich 1689); id., *Jus Naturae et Gentium, ex Hugonis Grotii Opere* (Zurich 1694); id., *Kriegs- und Fridens-Recht* (Zurich 1718); see Claudio Soliva, ‘Der kleine Grotius von Zürich: Zum Studienbuch des Johann Heinrich Schweizer über des Hugo Grotius De Jure Belli ac Pacis’, in: Louis Carlen (ed.), *Festschrift für Ferdinand Elsener zum 65. Geburtstag* (Sigmaringen 1977), 233–243, quote 242.
- 54 See Michael Kempe, Thomas Maissen, *Die Collegia der Insulaner, Vertraulichen und Wohlgesinnten in Zürich, 1679–1709: Die ersten deutschsprachigen Aufklärungsgesellschaften zwischen Naturwissenschaften, Bibelkritik, Geschichte und Politik* (Zurich 2002).
- 55 See Maissen, *Geburt der Republic*, 402–03; an edition and German translation of *De libertate populi*, established by Werner Widmer, will be published in 2008 in *Daphnis*.

- 56 Zentralbibliothek Zurich MS v 119, 62–64; see Ernst Saxer, *Die zürcherische Verfassungsreform vom Jahre 1713 mit besonderer Berücksichtigung ihres ideengeschichtlichen Inhalts* (Zurich 1938), 54n76.
- 57 Staatsarchiv Zurich B III 14f, 322–323, see also 298.
- 58 Zentralbibliothek Zurich MS v 119, 5^v; Maissen, Kempe (eds), *Collegia*, 276–78.

6 Turning Swiss? Discord in Dutch Debates

Martin van Gelderen

Jean Baptiste Stoupe had an adventurous and troublesome life. Born in the Swiss Grisons, he studied theology at the university of Leiden and at Geneva's Calvinist academy. On 26 February 1652, Stoupe – also known as Giovanni Battista Stoppa – was elected pastor of the Threadneedle Street congregation, the gathering place in London of protestant refugees from Savoy. He was enlisted by the governing circles of the new English Republic to try and stir up Protestant revolts in France. The Restoration of the monarchy led to Stoupe's dismissal, as 'a notorious meddler in matters not of his calling'.¹ Stoupe changed countries, sides and profession, and started making a career as an officer in the French army. In this capacity he participated in the highly successful French invasion of the Dutch Republic in 1672, serving under the Prince of Condé. Stoupe's position was controversial. In the spring of 1673 he published his pamphlet *La Religion des Hollandais*, a series of letters to an unnamed Bernese theologian, arguing that it was fully acceptable for Swiss Protestants to serve the French Catholic, 'Most Christian King' in his attack on the Dutch Republic. The main thrust of the pamphlet, translated and published in 1680 in London as *The Religion of the Dutch*, was that any Swiss sense of Calvinist solidarity with the Dutch was misplaced. The United Provinces were by no means, Stoupe asserted, a 'Sanctif'd Republick'. Stoupe's aim was to convince Swiss Calvinists, that whilst the Dutch 'make an external Profession of the same Religion with yours, yet their Conduct and Deportment do evidently demonstrate, that they make not any account of it, or that they believe it not at all'.² It had been so from the very beginning of the Dutch Revolt, where the various parts of Dutch socie-

ty – noble ‘Grandees’, ‘Ecclesiasticks’, town ‘Magistrates’ and the ‘People’ – not only pursued their own political goals, but also united in ‘an extreme horror for the *Inquisition*, which had been establish’d amongst them; out of a Fear, that under the pretence of *Religion*, some design might be carried on, against the Liberties and Estates of all’.³ Calvinism had been established as ‘publick Religion...out of pure interest of State’.⁴ So, unlike the Swiss, the Dutch were no sincere Calvinists. In reality, Liberty of Conscience ruled supreme in the Dutch Republic. As Stoupe put it, ‘the *United Provinces* did not only permit the exercise of all sorts of Religions, but did also reject as Tyrannical, all the Laws, whereby there was any prescription made for Uniformity of Sentiments’.⁵

Stoupe indulged in presenting what he called ‘a short Catalogue of the Religions’ in the Dutch Republic, which, so he claimed, ‘have an uncontrollable liberty of celebrating their Mysteries, and serving God, as they themselves think fit’. To begin with, Dutch Calvinists quarrelled amongst themselves, with eminent theologians such as Voetius and Cocceius leading the bickering. Then there were the Arminians, who ‘very earnestly press the Toleration of all the Opinions of those who profess *Christian* religion, maintaining, that all Christians agree in the most important, and, such as they call, the most Essential and Fundamental Points of Religion’.⁶ Worse was to follow. Mennonites, Brownists, Quakers, Libertines and Seekers, all had ‘a manner, the freedom of Exercising the Religions they profess’. The Dutch provinces were full of ‘Sectaries’, who, by Stoupe’s estimate, made up a third of the population.

According to Stoupe, the contrast between the Netherlands and Switzerland could not be bigger. Whilst Swiss cantons maintain religious uniformity, not even condoning ‘Habitation, for those who profess a Religion different from ours’, the ‘very Province of Holland’ has more ‘Sects, than there are in all the other Parts of Europe’.⁷ In the cantons⁸ and in the republic of Geneva Socinians such as Michael Servetus and Scipio Gentilis were ‘burnt alive’, because the Swiss ‘would have thought themselves guilty of a great Crime against God, if they had not, by death, taken off these two *Hereticks*’. In strong contrast the Dutch States General ‘would think they had committed a great Sin against God, if they should put any one of the *Socinians* to death, whatever their Errours may be’.⁹ Likewise, whilst the Swiss persecuted Jews, in the Dutch provinces Jews enjoyed ‘an absolute liberty’.

Perhaps worst of all the Dutch tolerated the philosophy of, as Stoupe described him, 'an illustrious and learned man... who was born Jewish, whose name is Spinoza', the author of the *Tractatus Theologo-Politicus*. Spinoza's 'principal design' was, as Stoupe saw it in 1673, 'to destroy all Religions, and particularly the *Jewish* and the *Christian*, and to introduce *Atheisme*, *Libertinisme*, and the free Toleration of all Religions'. The Dutch not only tolerated Spinoza, he had 'a great number of Followers', he was 'visited by the *Virtuosi*', even by 'some young Ladies of Quality, who pride themselves in being more ingenious then is requisite for their Sex'.¹⁰

There was no excuse for the extravaganza of Dutch toleration. Forcefully, Stoupe dismissed 'that strange Maxim of some Politicians, who accommodate Religion to the Interest of State', arguing that those 'who do so', have no religion 'at all'. Moreover, as Stoupe saw it, not Reason of State but the 'Idolatri' of 'Mammon' was the driving force behind Dutch toleration. The Dutch 'are addicted to *Commerce*'; indeed 'the only design they seem to have, is to grow rich, and heap up Money'. This was most manifest in Dutch practices of colonialism and commerce with the 'infidels'. Whilst all Christians, Catholics and Protestants alike, did 'not spare any thing, for the advancement of the *Christian Religion*, and the conversion of Infidels', the Dutch 'out of a detestable impiety, are absolutely neglectful of all the Interests of Religion, in the *Indies*, in the *Levant*, and other Places, where they have great Colonies'. The principal Dutch priority was to 'do nothing prejudicial to the Interests of their *Commerce*'.¹¹

Stoupe's diagnosis was far from unique. In the eyes of many European observers, Holland was, in the words of the English poet Andrew Marvell, a 'Staple of Sects', a 'Mint of Schisme', a 'Bank of Conscience, where not one so strange Opinion but finds Credit, and Exchange'.¹² Marvell's lines, written in 1653, were echoed in 1665 by the poet of *Bellum Belgicum Secundum*, who saw Holland as a land where 'spiders and sects doth swarm, / only those poisonous creatures do less harm'.¹³ All of these commentators linked Dutch religious toleration, and the sectarianism and moral laxity it entailed in their eyes, with the Republic's commercial success. Stoupe's analysis merely stood out in playing off two Protestant, confederate republics against each other, contrasting, the sectarian, ambitious, money making Dutch with the diligent, pious Swiss.

The prevalence of Dutch discord seemed to defy the dogma that religious unity was the precondition of civic concord. The emphasis on the necessity of concord had a long tradition in European political thought, not just in the monarchies but also, and perhaps most strikingly, in the republics of late medieval and early modern Europe. *Concordia* is most eminently present in the famous fresco *il buon governo*, which Ambrogio Lorenzetti painted around 1338 in the *Sala dei Nove* of the *Palazzo Pubblico* in Siena. Lorenzetti, celebrated by his contemporaries as a *pictor doctus*, offers a splendid visual representation of a set of key republican ideas.¹⁴ The left side of his fresco features, at mid-level, Justice, *Justitia*, on her throne, looking upwards to *Sapientia*, who resides in celestial blue skies – the colour of the Sienese sky on a beautiful late summer evening – and is holding the book of wisdom. So justice has to stem from wisdom, thus becoming the very first foundation of the well-ordered commonwealth. In terms of eminence, wisdom and justice are immediately followed by concord. *Justitia* hands a double rope – one strand red, the other grey – to Concord, who twists it around, winds it into a *vinculum concordiae*, a double rope that was often used as her symbol, and hands it over to the citizens. On her lap she holds a carpenter’s plane, a *runcina*, reminding the spectators that once, as citizens, we start to hold the rope of our commonwealth and govern ourselves it is vital to level out roughness and to smooth out our differences.

So justice and concord are seen as the foundations of the commonwealth and its good self-government. This fundamental maxim of republican thought finds its origins in two of the most influential classical works, Cicero’s *De Officiis* and Sallust’s *Bellum Iugurthinum*. In *De Officiis* Cicero argues that *concordia* and *aequitas* are the two *fundamenta* of public life; *Bellum Iugurthinum* contains Sallust’s most widely known formulation of the classical proverb that ‘it is by way of concord that small commonwealths rise to greatness’: ‘*Nam concordia res parvae crescunt*’. The proverb remained popular throughout the history of European republics, appealing, obviously, in particular to the small ones. Dutch revolutionaries, rising against the tyranny of Philip II and his government in the 1560s, were particularly enchanted. They adopted the proverb as their leading motto and adorned the coins that were minted on the occasion of the Union of Utrecht in 1579 with Sallust’s famous phrase.

Dutch pamphleteers, poets and painters rehearsed the proverb in rich and sheer endless variations.¹⁵ Even radical republicans such as the brothers De La Court explicitly featured ‘*Concordia re parvae crescut, discordia maximae dilabuntur*’ in their own plea for concord in the wonderful *Sinryke Fabulen*, published in 1685.¹⁶ Emblem 88 tells the story of ‘a farmer and seven quarrelling sons’. The farmer holds fasces with seven arrows – a standard image to refer to the unity of the seven united provinces. The father then breaks each of the arrows, warning his sons that each of them can easily be deluded and destroyed by discord. Telling a number of the fables the brothers De La Court loved so much, the father urges his sons not to behave like ‘stupid oxes’ and ‘innocent sheep’, which in the fables are easily fooled by a wolf and a butcher, representing ‘a tyrant or a head of republic, who under the pretext of the liberty of the republic and the promotion of common welfare, throws all wisest, most virtuous and most prosperous inhabitants out of the government, and kills them or chases them out of the country’, thus establishing his own arbitrary rule.¹⁷ To buttress his plea the De La Courts refer to Sallust’s classic story in *De Bello Iugurthinum*, to *Phaeton*, a play of one of Holland’s finest poets, Joost van den Vondel, and to Dutch history itself, arguing that discord during the 1570s amongst the *grandi* of the Dutch Revolt had enabled the Spaniards to re-conquer most of the southern provinces, thus splitting the Low Countries most painfully into two parts.

Amongst painters Ludolf Backhuysen appealed to concord in his highly popular seascapes. His work reached dramatic heights during the 1670s, in the very years that Stoupe wrote his *Religion of the Dutch* and served Louis XIV’s forces invading the United Provinces by land, whilst the English fleet attacked from the North Sea. Backhuysen’s seascapes of the 1670s are moral tales of the Dutch provinces in great peril. Many pictures employ the classical metaphor of the ship of state which requires vigilance and virtue. In one painting the ship in the foreground, so proudly waving an abundance of dapper flags, is called *Eendracht*; it is one of the flagships of the Dutch navy, for which ‘concord’ was a popular name to use. Here ‘Concord’ is in full swing, proudly riding the waves. Its presence, right in the center of the painting, hammers home the message that in tempestuous days, such as those of the 1670s, full of war and peril, the Dutch ship of state needs vigilance, virtue and, most of all, concord.¹⁸

Abroad the Dutch preoccupation with concord was also well known. Even publications such as the somewhat obscure *Subsidium Peregrinantibus*, a guide for a ‘princely traveler’, written by Balthazar Gerbier, Master of Ceremonies at the court of Charles I, felt that it was essential for the visitor to Holland to know, that ‘every inhabitant ... tending to settled point, to wit, Preservation, and Melioration’ was required to follow the Maxim, *Concordia res parvae crescunt*.¹⁹

To call for concord was fairly easy, to establish it turned out to be very hard. All across Europe republicans struggled to find *The Readie and Easie Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth*, as John Milton put it in the title of one of his most important republican pamphlets.²⁰ As so often republicans turned to Cicero, who teaches in *De Officiis* that the key to overcome internal factionalism, discord and sedition – and thus to reach concord – is to give absolute priority to the ideal of the common good, the *bonum commune* over and above any considerations of selfish or factional interest and advantage. Cicero offers two precepts to republican magistrates. ‘First’, he writes, ‘they must look after the welfare of every citizen to such a degree that, in everything they do, they make this their highest priority, without any consideration for their own advantage. And secondly, they must look after the welfare of the whole body politic, never allowing themselves to care only for one part of the citizens while betraying the rest’.²¹

Following the Swiss?

Cicero’s precepts wanted to teach magistrates how to cope with division and factionalism, as the interests of the *grandi* of the commonwealth clash, in their search for money, power and, above all, glory, with those of the people. Around 1580, on the eve of the Abjuration of Philip II as overlord of the Low Countries, pondering the problems of discord a number of Dutch pamphleteers argued that the United Provinces should adopt the model of the Swiss republic.²² There were various motives for the urge to follow the Helvetian Confederation. A *Discourse* elucidating ‘what form and manner of government’ would be best for ‘the Netherlands’ wanted to follow the Swiss because in the view of the anonymous author the best form of government was a mixture of aristocracy and democracy. More specifically

the *Discourse* favoured ‘the government of the best nobles and the wisest citizens in which the most competent and able inhabitants and citizens are elected to the government by their fellow citizens for a specified period and on certain conditions’.²³ The crucial point here was that under all circumstances citizens should retain the ‘power and liberty’ to dispose of the government, they had elected, if government officials turned out to be incompetent or forsook their duties. In the eyes of the author of the *Discourse* the republic of Rome and especially Switzerland exemplified this kind of model. The debate here was whether the Dutch were virtuous enough to follow the Swiss. In the dialogue *Emanuel-Erneste*, published in 1580, Emanuel recognised crucial similarities between the Dutch and the Swiss. Like the new Dutch commonwealth, he argued, the Swiss Republic consisted of a number of provinces, with high levels of self-government, cooperating in the resolution of affairs that regard them all, most notably the defence of the country. But looking at ‘the habits, courage and discipline’ of both nations, Emanuel’s counterpart Erneste raised serious doubts about whether the Dutch could really successfully emulate the Swiss. In his view, ‘the state of the one will be the ruin of the other’.²⁴ There was, Erneste claimed, a decisive difference between Swiss and Dutch *moeurs*. The Swiss were a hard-working people, uncorrupted by the pleasures of life and full of love for their liberty, which they valued higher than their own goods and life. In addition they were unique amongst the Christian nations in having maintained ‘ancient military discipline’. Thus the Swiss possessed those very virtues that are necessary to uphold a popular republic, having ‘a constant, virtuous, united people, who do not care for riches, who, both with regard to the choice of magistrates and administration of justice, obey neither lords nor relatives, and do not seek favours’.²⁵ The Dutch, according to Erneste, lacked all of these virtues; they abounded in riches and indulged in the pleasures of life, due to which they had become ‘effeminate and corrupt’. Reading these lines, the author of the 1583 *Discours* was deeply upset. Erneste should be deeply ashamed of himself ‘to despise all inhabitants of our Fatherland as drunkards, boozers and misers’, he claimed.²⁶ But the point had been made and it stuck. Those who doubted the Dutch capacity to attain a true republican government, such as Lieuwe van Aitzema, were keen to highlight how the Dutch fell short of Swiss virtues. These doubts persisted throughout the seventeenth century, and not just amongst Dutch commentators. Gilbert Burnet travelled to

Switzerland after his flight from England, before he settled down in Holland in 1686, where he became a confidant of William III – and even more of Mary – played a significant role during the Glorious Revolution and ended up as Archbishop of Salisbury. Burnet's travelogue contains lengthy descriptions and acute observations of the Swiss cantons. His view of Swiss virtue was pleasantly Protestant. Burnet praised Swiss men as 'robust and strong, and capable of great hardship, and of good Discipline' and he was happy to repeat the commonplace that the Swiss had 'an extreme sense of Liberty'.²⁷ Burnet was full of praise for 'the true ancient Simplicity of the *Switzers*, not corrupted with Luxury or Vanity'.²⁸ Burnet's main commentator was keen to draw the contrast with the Dutch. Noting that, whilst 'Luxury and Expence were wicked things even in Monarchys', but absolutely 'fatal and destructive when they got into Commonwealths', the author argued that 'the Dutch had lost more of their real Strength' by their 'Emulation and Expence', and their 'Vanity in Clothes, Furniture' and 'Entertainments'.²⁹

The lines of Dutch-Swiss comparisons, set out in the 1580s, retained some of their main characteristics until the end of the seventeenth century. Debates focused on whether, from a constitutional perspective, the confederation of the Swiss cantons should serve as a model for the Dutch provinces and/or on whether the Dutch and the Swiss had the virtues that were required for a republic to prosper. The constitutional comparison was especially pertinent to the endless debates about what kind of unity the United Provinces should pursue. The strength and weakness of central and federal institutions, such as the States-General, the provincial States and the stadholderate, and the power and independence of constitutive units, the proud towns and provinces were of crucial importance to the debates of seventeenth century Dutch political thought. When Hugo Grotius assessed the unity of the United Provinces, he controversially – and influentially – proposed that they composed a 'confederation, which is a contract between different sovereigns'.³⁰ Referring to the analyses of Simler and Bodin,³¹ Grotius used the Swiss model as exemplifying the concept of confederation, meaning 'that each Canton is sovereign, but that the Cantons are tied together by a strong League or Confederation'.³² Amongst Europe's republicans it soon became common to note that both Dutch provinces and Swiss cantons were, what James Harrington referred to as 'equal leagues' – a model he then dismissed as 'useless to the world and dangerous unto themselves'.³³

Algernon Sidney, in more positive tones, also recognised a distinct Swiss and Dutch confederate model, with ‘every province, city or canton making a distinct body independent from any other, and exercising the sovereign power within itself’, looking ‘upon the rest as allies, with whom they are bound only by such acts as they themselves have made’.³⁴ Slingsby Bethel, like Sidney, was an English republican who sought refuge in Holland but also travelled to ‘Switzerland’. Writing in 1662 and 1663 Bethel devoted a small chapter of *The Interest of the Princes & States of Europe* to the Helvetian confederation. He described ‘Switzerland’ as a united country of cantons, ‘each being a Republick and absolute Sovereigns’, and he noted the ‘affinity’ with the ‘United Netherlands ... both in Religion and Government’.³⁵

Whilst this suggested the pertinence of Swiss-Dutch comparisons, on the whole, it seems Dutch republicans preferred to indulge in comparing the United Provinces with what were seen as the more lofty republics of past and present, with, as in the case of the brothers De La Court, Athens, Rome and Sparta, Venice and Genoa. Like many Dutch authors the De La Courts occasionally referred to Switzerland, presenting the Swiss cantons as examples of the constitutional mixture of aristocratic and democratic elements. Highlighting the clear preponderance of the power of the ‘common Citizenry’, the brothers were happy to recognise, in one of their main works, *Political Balance*, that even the ‘crude Swiss Cantons’ knew the seminal importance of balloting as the way to select their officials.³⁶ The De La Courts then went on to indulge themselves, at considerable length, in the delights of Venetian history.

Religious Discord

Most strikingly perhaps, there seemed to be little attention, if at all, for the way the Swiss cantons had dealt with the dangers of religious discord. In its early decades the Dutch Republic was torn apart by that peculiar mix of political and religious conflicts, euphemistically described as the ‘Arminian troubles’. In Holland the coalition of Dutch Calvinists and leading magistrates such as Johan van Oldenbarnevelt had always been frail and uneasy.³⁷ Whilst clearly sympathising and agreeing with the main precepts of Reformed Protestantism, Oldenbarnevelt and his political allies were unwilling to re-

place the ‘popery of Rome’ with the ‘popery of Geneva’. The Arminian disputes on free will and predestination were a fatal test for the fragile relationship between ecclesiastical and secular authority. Oldenbarnevelt was not so much troubled by the theological debate itself; he probably was not really interested. But when the church split between the followers of Arminius and his Leiden counterpart Franciscus Gomarus, it became imperative to resolve the theological controversy. Vital questions needed to be answered. Should theological questions be settled by a national synod of the church or should diversity be accepted, as long as the fundamentals of Protestantism are not at stake? Who should ultimately decide? Was it the church itself, the States General as the highest federal institution, or was each province sovereign in decreeing its own solution? The Arminian troubles entailed fundamental debates about the nature of the church, its position in and relation to the commonwealth and the location of sovereignty within the Dutch Republic. From the beginning of the Dutch Revolt these issues had been looming. Between 1610 and 1619 Dutch concord was put to its most tempestuous test.

In the early debates about how to cope with religious discord two proposals stand out in terms of intellectual boldness and innovation. First there is Dirck Volckertsz Coornhert, one of Holland’s most gifted, eloquent and stubborn humanists. Coornhert’s leading theme was the fight for freedom of conscience, freedom of expression, freedom of printing and freedom of public worship, all of which he considered to be inseparably intertwined. Coornhert’s final and most famous dispute was with Justus Lipsius, the leading humanist in the revival and actualization of Stoic and Tacitist teachings, turning them into a more or less distinct and coherent moral and political philosophy.³⁸ One of his main works, the *Six Books of Politics*, first published in 1589, contains what Friedrich Meinecke later called the ‘essence and spirit’ of the doctrine of ‘reason of state’, the idea that for reasons of political necessity and utility moral and legal rules should be discarded.³⁹ Following Tacitus, Lipsius’s aim was to teach the prudent politician how to deal with the realities of power politics. In this context, Lipsius discussed what he saw as the most pressing problem of his days, civil war caused by religious sedition. At times, he argued, the persecution of public acts of heresy might be necessary. The argument was based on the assumption that, as Lipsius puts it, ‘one religion is the author of unity; and from a confused religion there always grows dissension’. Therefore, although Lipsius,

who himself was affiliated with the sect the Family of Love, fully respected freedom of conscience, allowing people to think and believe as they thought best in private, he judged it a matter of civil prudence – and here Lipsius quotes Cicero's *Philippics* – to 'burn' and 'saw asunder' public heresy, for it is 'better that one member be cast away, than that the whole body runs to ruin'.⁴⁰ Only if the prince is too weak to 'check and control', he should let 'the matter slip for a time' and thus tolerate the exercise of more than one religion for the sake of the preservation of his power.

This Tacitist plea to apply reason of state principles to matters of faith and public worship and to regard the persecution of heretics primarily as a political instrument infuriated Coornhert. He responded with a bulky publication called the *Trial of the killing of heresy and the constraint of conscience*.⁴¹ Coornhert accused Lipsius repeatedly of following Machiavelli. Like the Florentine, Lipsius saw religion basically as a political instrument serving the 'body's comfort and peace', and fully neglected the truthfulness of religious views and the blessedness of man. In strong terms Coornhert rejected this kind of cynical submission of religious truth to the demands of political expediency.⁴²

With blazing rhetorical guns, Coornhert went on to attack Lipsius's argument that religious unity is a precondition for political unity and that therefore public acts of heresy should be punished. In response, Coornhert defended religious toleration as a supreme moral value and as an untouchable political principle.⁴³ In dramatic contrast to Lipsius, Coornhert emphasised the disastrous social and political consequences of the persecution of heresy, arguing it was the 'weed of discord'. Coornhert repeatedly makes the claim, a *topos* amongst the proponents of toleration, that persecution has never succeeded in exterminating heresy, for ultimately, physical violence is incapable of touching the soul. The only result of religious persecution is gruesome bloodshed, mutiny, rebellion and thus, above all, civic discord. In his last work – significantly called the *Root of the Dutch wars with instruction to indigenous concord* – Coornhert described 'faction and injustice' as the principal problem of the United Provinces.⁴⁴ In his view the only solution to discord is toleration. Endorsing Cicero's claim that concord is the foundation of the *res publica*, and arguing that the terror of persecution can not touch the souls of heretics and is therefore incapable of creating union, Coornhert insists that only toleration can pave the way for what he describes as

‘amiable concord, which is a mother of peace, wealth and power, which makes small things big, ties divided hearts together, and unites man with God’.⁴⁵

In other words, whereas Lipsius reaffirmed the conventional notion that unity in religion is essential for political unity and that religious factionalism is the principal cause of civic discord, Coornhert boldly started to argue that religious diversity is an existential state of being and that toleration is the true mother of concord. When the freedom of the community is at stake – indeed besieged by the Spanish – its individual members will quickly realise that freedom of conscience, the essence of their individual liberty, is threatened directly and they will therefore be much more willing to act as dutiful patriots.⁴⁶ Coornhert insisted that *au fond* his arguments were in line with Cicero’s teachings, and he strongly attacked Lipsius for taking a quotation from Cicero out of its proper context to justify the persecution of public heresy. Lipsius, so Coornhert argued, had failed to grasp the essence of the moral philosophy of both Cicero and Sallust, the classical heroes of the Dutch.⁴⁷

In other works Coornhert addressed the thorny issue of the relationship between ecclesiastical and secular authority, the issue that moved the pens of so many Dutch theologians, lawyers and pamphleteers throughout the seventeenth century. From 1610 Hugo Grotius, ‘the [humanist] miracle of Holland’, started to play a leading role in these debates. Grotius was Oldenbarnevelt’s main political and intellectual confidant. On the most important political issues, from the construction of Holland’s classical identity up to the debates with the English over the freedom of the seas, it was Grotius, who framed the language of politics and law, that gave public and intellectual credence to the political position of Oldenbarnevelt’s party. Grotius was to Oldenbarnevelt what, later in the century, John Locke was to Shaftesbury.

Grotius’s approach to the ‘Arminian troubles’ was typical for his entire work. He embedded the issue of the relationship between ecclesiastical and secular authority in a comprehensive theory of commonwealth, church, sovereignty and toleration. Grotius developed his theory of the formation of the commonwealth and of the location of sovereignty in one of his earliest, unpublished works, *De Iure Praedae*.⁴⁸ As he explained for reasons of demographic growth, better protection and greater economic convenience, individuals in the state of natural freedom create smaller societies, which are ‘formed

by general consent for the sake of the common good'.⁴⁹ The *respublica* refers to a multitude of private persons who have come together to improve their individual protection through mutual aid and to assist each other in acquiring the necessities of life. At their own free will these individuals unite by way of civil contract – Grotius uses the term *foedus* – in a 'unified and permanent body' with its own set of laws. From *singuli* they turn themselves into *cives*, citizens.

The laws of the commonwealth emanate from its will as a unified body based on consent. Grotius argues that 'civil power, manifesting itself in laws and judgements, resides primarily and essentially in the bosom of the commonwealth itself'.⁵⁰ Of course not everybody has the time to devote himself to the administration of civil affairs. The exercise of lawful power is therefore entrusted to a number of magistrates, who act for the common good. By mandate the magistrates have the authority to make laws for the *respublica*, which bind all citizens. Grotius uses the concept of *magistratus* to emphasise that those who exercise civil power – be they kings, princes, counts, state assemblies or town councils – are administrators. Arguing that 'just as every right of the magistrate comes from the commonwealth, so every right of the commonwealth comes from private persons', Grotius reaffirms later in *De Iure Praedae* that 'public power is constituted by collective consent'.⁵¹

Addressing the relationship between secular and ecclesiastical authority Grotius's seminal move was to argue that the public church is part of the commonwealth. As public office, as public institution, the church stands under the authority of the magistrate, who holds and administers civil power on behalf of the citizens who together make up the commonwealth. This conception of the position of the public church in the commonwealth implies, to quote Grotius, that 'nobody has the right to decide on the faith of the Church inasmuch as it is public, except for him in whose hand and power all public bodies lie'.⁵² Given the public status of the Church, it is part of the commonwealth; hence its oversight lies with the supreme magistrate, whose civil powers are derived from the unified body of citizens that make up the commonwealth. Grotius is keen to point out 'that the form of government, [be it] *regia* or *optimatum*, does not make any difference'.⁵³ The Grotian theory of church and commonwealth applies as much to Holland as it does to England, and perhaps to other European countries as well.

Indeed Grotius was keen to point out the similarities between the

churches of Holland and England. According to Grotius the Dutch Reformed church was not primarily Lutheran or Calvinist; it was above all Erasmian. In a bold move he argued that as far as the debates on predestination and free will were concerned, the tradition going from Erasmus to Anastasius Veluanus and then, most notably, to Coornhert, was actually the true foundation of the Dutch church.⁵⁴ The hallmarks of the Erasmian church are concord, ‘peace and unanimity’, which requires, as Grotius argued with direct quotes from Erasmus, ‘that each party adapts itself somewhat to the other’. Concord calls for unanimous agreement on the ‘absolute minimum’, the few fundamentals of Christianity, ‘leaving to each his own free judgement on many questions, because many things are very obscure’.⁵⁵

As in his moral and political philosophy Grotius sought to solve conflicts in theology by emphasising the shared foundations of the churches. In order to guarantee their universal acceptance these shared foundations have to be derived by way of rational argument, thus guaranteeing their universal acceptance. Grotius identifies this approach with the Stoic teachings of Seneca and Cicero that ‘all voluntary actions are preceded by the understanding [*intellectus*] that necessarily consists of two parts: the one theoretical, the other practical’.⁵⁶ The theoretical part should be based on a number of dogmas, *decreta*, from which fundamental ethical precepts, *praecepta*, must be derived. As far as religious debates are concerned, this stoic approach had been favoured by Christian humanists in particular, starting with Erasmus himself. It became the basis of Grotius’s irenicism, finding its culmination in *De Veritate Religionis Christianae*, which Grotius himself probably regarded as his most important work in his life long quest for peace and concord.⁵⁷

Grotian irenicism and Coornhert’s plea for toleration as the implication of the necessity of concord were miles away from the Swiss adoption of the *cuius regio, eius religio* principle, which meant that, with a few exceptions, cantons were either Catholic or Protestant. Neither Coornhert’s nor Grotius’s proposals were explicitly put into Dutch practice, but Jean Baptiste Stoupe was keen to emphasise their importance. In doing so he wanted to highlight the clash between Dutch and Swiss ways of coping with problems of religious pluralism. Stoupe readily subsumed the basic ideas of Grotian irenicism under the heading of Arminianism, arguing irenicism implied that ‘all may be mutually united, to make up one and the same Body

or Church'.⁵⁸ And he scolded Dutch freedom of print and press that went so far as to allow the publication of 'so pernicious a Book' as Spinoza's *Tractatus*. Given how far Dutch toleration went, Stoupe asserted, 'it can not be affirmed, that this State is of the Reformed Religion'. Hence, Stoupe argued, it was wrong for Swiss Calvinists to tie themselves to the Dutch as religious brethren and, furthermore, Swiss soldiers could happily serve the 'most Christian king' Louis XIV in his war against the United Provinces. In the long run, Stoupe's pamphlet failed to turn the tide, which was due mainly to the energetic activities of Petrus Valkenier, from 1690 Dutch *Envoyé extraordinaire* in Zurich. As Thomas Maissen has pointed out, Valkenier not only succeeded in forging new alliances between the Dutch and the Swiss, he did so by employing a distinct political language, that highlighted Swiss-Dutch similarities as free Protestant republics, both much hated by despots such as Louis XIV.⁵⁹

Perhaps Stoupe undermined his own case by falling himself for the temptations of Dutch toleration. In May 1673 Stoupe still denounced Spinoza as 'a most wicked Jew', whose *Tractatus* was indeed 'pernicious', but less than two months later he was escorting Spinoza to Condé's headquarters in Utrecht. Indeed the initiative for this intellectual visit, that caused Spinoza such great problems, raising the accusation of betrayal, may have been taken by Stoupe himself. As Stoupe's critics were fond to note, the irony of the situation was conspicuous.⁶⁰

Notes

1 Timothy Venning, 'Stoupe, Jean-Baptiste (fl. 1651–1673)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford 2004; <http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.bibliosun.iue.it:80/view/article/71950>).

2 Jean Baptiste Stoupe, *The Religion of the Dutch. Represented in several Letters from a Protestant Officer in the French Army to a Pastor and Professor of Divinity, at Berne to Switzerland* (London 1680), 3. The original French version was *La Religion des Hollandais representee en plusieurs lettres ecrites par un Officier de l'Armee du Roy a un Pasteur et Professeur en Theologie de Berne* (Paris 1673).

3 *Ibid.*, 4.

4 *Ibid.*, 6.

5 *Ibid.*, 10.

6 Ibid., 19.

7 Ibid., 34-35.

8 Writing to a Bernese theologian Stoupe here – and on many other occasions – refers to ‘your cantons’. Hence he could be referring to Berne and its territories, but the suggestion that the reference is to all Swiss Protestant cantons is conveniently left open.

9 Ibid., 37.

10 Ibid., 29.

11 Ibid., 46.

12 Andrew Marvell, ‘The Character of Holland’, in: *The poems and letters of Andrew Marvell* (Oxford 1971), 101. For an analysis, see Warren L. Chernaik, *The Poet’s Time: Politics and Religion in the Work of Andrew Marvell* (Cambridge 1983), 160-65.

13 See Steven Pincus, *Protestantism and Patriotism: Ideologies and the Making of English Foreign Policy, 1650-1668* (Cambridge 1996), 309, a seminal study offering marvelous insights into how the English saw the Dutch.

14 See Quentin Skinner, ‘Ambrogio Lorenzetti: The Artist as Political Philosopher’, *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 72 (1986), 1-56 and Quentin Skinner, ‘Ambrogio Lorenzetti’s Buon Governo Frescoes: Two old questions, two new answers’, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 62 (1999), 1-28.

15 See Martin van Gelderen, ‘The Low Countries’, in: Howell A. Lloyd, Glenn Burgess and Simon Hodson (eds), *European Political Thought, 1450-1700: Religion, Law and Philosophy*, (Yale 2007), 376-415.

16 De La Court, *Sinryke Fabulen*, (Fables moral and political) (Amsterdam 1685), 599-608.

17 Ibid., 603.

18 For the role of concord in Dutch marine painting, see Lawrence Goedde, *Tempest and Shipwreck in Dutch and Flemish Art: Convention, Rhetoric and Interpretation* (University Park, PA 1989); George S. Keyes (ed.), *Mirror of Empire: Dutch Marine Art of the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge 1990); Jeroen Giltaij et al., *Praise of Ships and the Sea: The Dutch Marine Painters of the 17th Century* (Rotterdam and Berlin 1996).

19 Balthazar Gerbier, *Subsidium Peregrinantibus, or An Assistance to a Traveller* (Oxford 1665), 18.

20 John Milton, ‘The Readie and Easie Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth (1660)’, in: John Milton, *Political Writings*, ed. Martin Dzelzainis (Cambridge 1991).

21 Cicero, *De officiis*, I.XXV.85.

- 22 See A.A. Van Schelven, 'De staatsvorm van het Zwitsersche Eedgenootschap den Nederlanden ter navolging aanbevolen', in: *Miscellanea Historica in honorem Leonis van der Essen*, vol. 2 (Brussels and Paris 1947), 747-56 and Martin van Gelderen, *The Political Thought of the Dutch Revolt, 1555-1590* (Cambridge 1992), 171-72 and 187-91.
- 23 *Discours verclaerende wat forme ende manier van regeringhe dat die Nederlanden voor die alderbeste ende zekerste tot desen tyden aenstellen mochten* (1583), fol. B2.
- 24 Gerard Prouinck van Deventer, *Emanuel-Erneste. Dialogue des deux personages sur l'Estat du Pais Bas* (Antwerp 1580), 11.
- 25 *Ibid.*, 21.
- 26 *Discours*, 1583, fol. B2.
- 27 Gilbert Burnet, *Some Letters containing an Account of what seemed most Remarkable in Travelling through Switzerland, Italy, some parts of Germany, &c.* (Amsterdam 1688), 15.
- 28 *Ibid.*, 35.
- 29 Anon., *Three Letters concerning the Present State of Italy... being a Supplement to Dr. Burnets Letters* (1688), 165.
- 30 Hugo Grotius, *Verantwoordinghe van de wettelijcke Regieringh van Hollandt* (Paris 1622), 5.
- 31 Josias Simler, *De Republica Helvetiorum* (Zurich 1576; Dutch translation: Delft 1613), and Jean Bodin, *Les Six Livres de la République* (1583, repr. Aalen 1961).
- 32 Grotius, *Verantwoordinghe*, 2.
- 33 James Harrington, *The Commonwealth of Oceana* (1656), ed. J.G.A. Pocock (Cambridge 1992), 222.
- 34 Algernon Sidney, *Discourses on Government* (1698), ed. Thomas G. West (Indianapolis 1990), ch. 3, Section 42, p 564-65.
- 35 Slingsby Bethel, *The Interest of the Princes & States of Europe* (London 1694, 4th enlarged ed.), 171, 176.
- 36 Johan and Pieter De La Court, *Consideration van Staat, ofte Politieke Weeg-schaal* (Amsterdam 1661), 275 and 312.
- 37 See Martin van Gelderen, 'Rebels und Royalists: Gewissen, Kirche und Freiheit in England und Holland (1585-1645)', in: Georg Schmidt, Martin van Gelderen and Christopher Snigula (eds), *Kollektive Freiheitsvorstellungen im frühneuzeitlichen Europa (1400 bis 1800)*, Jenaer Beiträge zur Geschichte, Band 8 (Frankfurt am Main 2006), 353-362.
- 38 For Lipsius, see, amongst others, Gerhard Oestreich, *Neostoicism and the Early Modern State* (Cambridge 1982) and Gerhard Oestreich, *Antiker Geist und moderner Staat bei Justus Lipsius (1547-1606)* (Göttingen

1989). See also Mark Morford, *Stoics and Neostoics: Rubens and the circle of Lipsius* (Princeton 1991) and Martin van Gelderen, 'Holland und das Preußentum: Justus Lipsius zwischen niederländischem Aufstand und brandenburg-preußischem Absolutismus', *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung* 23 (1996), 29-56; reprinted in Horst Lademacher (ed.), *Onder den Oranjeboom. Niederländische Kunst und Kultur im 17. Und 18. Jahrhundert an deutschen Fürstenhöfen* (Munich 1999) 203-13, 449-51.

39 Friedrich Meinecke, *Die Idee der Staatsräson in der neueren Geschichte*, ed. Walter Hofer. *Werke* vol. 1, 4th ed. (Munich and Vienna 1976), 14.

40 Lipsius, *Politics*, 64. The reference was to Cicero, *Philippics*, 8.v.15

41 D.v. Coornhert, 'Proces van't ketterdooden ende dwangh der Consci-entien; Tusschen Justum Lipsium...ende Dirck Coornhert. Het eerste deel politijck', in Coornhert, *Wercken*, vol. 2 (Amsterdam 1630), fols. 42-109.

42 Coornhert, 'Proces van't ketterdooden', fols. 67-68. See also Richard Tuck, 'Skepticism and toleration in the seventeenth century', in: Susan Mendes (ed.) *Justifying toleration: conceptual and historical perspectives* (Cambridge 1988), 21-30.

43 For a fuller account of Coornhert's views, see Van Gelderen, *Political thought*, 243-56. For the debate with Lipsius, see also H. Bonger, *Leven en werk van D.V. Coornhert* (Amsterdam 1978), 140ff, and G. Güldner, *Das Toleranzproblem in den Niederlanden im Ausgang des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Hamburg and Lübeck 1968), 65-158.

44 D.v. Coornhert, 'Wortel der Nederlantsche oorloghen met aenwijsinghe tot inlantsche eendracht', in: Coornhert, *Wercken*, vol. 2, fol. 180.

45 Ibid.

46 Coornhert, 'Proces van't ketterdooden', fol. 83.

47 Ibid., fol. 85-86.

48 Hugo Grotius, *De Iure Praedae Commentarius*, ed. H.G. Hamaker (The Hague 1868), abbreviated as DIP. I will also give references to the English translation *De Iure Praedae Commentarius: Commentary on the Law of Prize and Booty*, vol. 1, eds. Gwladys L. Williams and Walther H. Zeyde (Oxford and London 1950); for what follows, see in more detail, Martin van Gelderen, 'Aristotelians, Monarchomachs and Republicans: Sovereignty and Respublica Mixta in Dutch and German Political Thought, 1580-1650', in: Martin van Gelderen, Quentin Skinner (eds), *Republicanism: A Shared European Heritage*, vol. 1: *Republicanism and Constitutionalism in early modern Europe* (Cambridge 2002), 202-04, and Martin van Gelderen, 'The Low Countries: The Quest for Concord', in: Glenn Burgess, Howell Lloyd and Simon Hodson (eds) *European Political Thought 1450-1700: Religion, Law and Philosophy* (New Haven, CT and London 2007).

- 49 Grotius, DIP, 19/20; Commentary, 20.
- 50 Grotius, DIP, 25; Commentary, 25.
- 51 Grotius, DIP, 91; Commentary, 92.
- 52 Hugo Grotius, *Ordinum Hollandiae ac Westfrisiae Pietas* (1613), ed. Edwin Rabbie (Leiden, New York and Cologne 1995), 188-89.
- 53 Ibid., 174-75.
- 54 Ibid., 150-51. The reference is to Anastasius Veluanus, *The layman's guide*, published in 1554 and one of the earliest works of the Dutch Reformation. See Van Gelderen, *Political thought*, 69-70.
- 55 Grotius, *Ordinum*, 168-69. The quotes were taken from Erasmus, *De amabili ecclesiae Concordia*.
- 56 See Hugo Grotius, *Meletius de iis quae inter Christianos conveniunt epistola*, ed. H.M. Posthumus Meyjes (Leiden 1988), 111, 19, 80 and 109. For Grotius's theology, see Henk Nellen and Edwin Rabbie (eds), *Hugo Grotius Theologian: Essays in Honour of G.H.M. Posthumus Meyjes* (Leiden, New York and Cologne 1994).
- 57 For an English edition, see Hugo Grotius, *The Truth of the Christian Religion*, ed. Jean Le Clerc, transl. John Clarke (London 1800).
- 58 Stoupe, *The Religion of the Dutch*, 19.
- 59 See Thomas Maissen, *Die Geburt der Republic. Staatsverständnis und Repräsentation in der frühneuzeitlichen Eidgenossenschaft* (Göttingen 2006), 356-65 and Thomas Maissen, "Par un motif de religion et en qualité de Republicain". Der aussenpolitische Republikanismus der Niederlande und seine Aufnahme in der Eidgenossenschaft (ca. 1670-1710)', in: Luise Schorn-Schütte (ed.), *Aspekte der politischen Kommunikation im Europa des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts*, Historische Zeitschrift, Beiheft 39, (Munich 2004), 233-82.
- 60 See Steven Nadler, *Spinoza: A Life* (Cambridge 1999), 314-19.

7 The Content, Form and Function of Swiss and Dutch Images of History¹

Olaf Mörke

It is widely acknowledged nowadays that historical images – or more accurately, a whole range of images – play a central role in the formation of a collective, national identity. An awareness of history is of great importance ‘for the justification and the preservation of societal norms and values, institutional and constitutional order’.² The perception of the peculiarity and uniqueness of a collective, and its socio-political organisation, is shaped by references to the history of its origins, not just single events, but rather an ensemble of narratives which, bound together, explain the genesis of that collective as a community of norms and values. This cultural and historical memory helps to provide coherence to the present state of this collective and to explain its actions. ‘It is not the actual, but instead the remembered history that matters for cultural memory. One could also put it this way: cultural memory transforms the actual into remembered history and, in so doing, into a myth. A myth is a foundation narrative, a narrative which is told in order to enlighten the present from its origins’.³

This mythological reference to the past was an ideal method of collective self-reassurance, not just for the Swiss Confederation and the Dutch Republic, but for most of the nations in early modern Europe. Together with the localisation of a nation’s own past, present and future within the context of a Christian teleological continuity – as can be seen in the ‘New Zion’ or ‘Elect Nation’ concepts – the mythological reference is related to the standards of identity-creating patterns, independent of a particular political culture.⁴

In spite of the general agreement about the importance of remembered history as a central element in the creation of a collective identi-

ty throughout Europe questions remain regarding the differences in content and form of specific historical images and their functions in various socio-political contexts. Comparing early modern Switzerland and the Dutch Republic can help clarify some of these issues. On the one hand, both republics had to assert themselves against the mainstream of European monarchies, while, on the other hand, Swiss and Dutch contemporaries repeatedly pointed out the similarities and the differences between the two republics in their respective environments.⁵ This chapter discusses four aspects of this issue. First, we have the issue of time: which period of the past is addressed by historical memory; is it the distant past, or a more recent period of time in relation to those doing the remembering? Secondly, how are historical models, static almost by definition, justified by the inevitably dynamic process of history itself? Thirdly, what geographical areas are included in this remembered history: regions, nations, or is a regional history imposed on the nation as a whole? And finally, what conflicts are highlighted, or perhaps indulged in, via these historical images? Unfortunately, we cannot address these complex problems in great detail here. Therefore, this chapter will concentrate on presenting first impressions and providing material for further discussion.

Time

Does history that is collectively remembered originate in particular events or from people who existed in a distant past, who may be fictitious but are considered real and exist beyond our contemporary experience and influence? Or does collectively remembered history operate within constructs that are closer to the then-contemporary present, which enable them to define themselves as subjects of both history and a dynamic design of the political culture's catalogue of norms and values? Since the late-fifteenth and early-sixteenth centuries, we discover myths both in the Netherlands and Switzerland that refer to a distant past and deal with the origins of the Batavians and the Helvetians, respectively.⁶ In Dutch and Swiss humanistic discourse, the reference to an endogenous ancient tradition, existing independent of the role model that was ancient Roman culture, but still interacting with it, aimed at the construction of a republican identity that was pictured as equal, perhaps even superior to the monarchical form of government that dominated the political discourse of the era.

This act of differentiation was a necessary condition for establishing new polities within an antagonistic socio-cultural environment. At the same time, it was also an instrument that could be used to create internal coherence within the political constructs of distinct regional and local singularities and political privileges. By focussing on the terms of liberty and unity in their argumentation, the Batavian and Helvetian myths helped create the Dutch Republic and Swiss Confederation as individual communities of values. Having said this, there are, nonetheless, significant differences in the meaning of those ancient origin myths for the historical discourse in the early modern Netherlands and Switzerland. These differences are a result of how the humanistic discourse on antiquity was disseminated from the inner circle of the elite into the political culture of everyday life and how they were perceived by the masses.

In the Netherlands, the Batavians assimilated via the humanistic reception of Tacitus in the first two decades of the sixteenth century – not as opponents, but as allies of Rome.⁷ The aim of the humanists was to promote the national ancestors as companions of the ideal, i.e., the Roman nation. It was only at the end of the sixteenth century, that the traditional balance between the monarch and the representatives of regional independence was disrupted irreparably by the reign of Philip II. Meanwhile, the Batavians were reinterpreted as the protagonists of resistance and of a liberty that asserted itself against tyranny. In circa 1580, the rebellion of the Batavians and their leader Claudius Civilis against Rome attracted the interest of the anti-Spanish pamphlet writers. Comparisons of William of Orange and his son Maurice to the heroes of the Batavian struggle for liberty in poems and illustrations ensured an update and a popularisation of the history of the Batavian origins beyond the small circle of humanistic scholars.⁸ From then on, the Batavians played a major role in the Dutch Republic's collective image of history. This became manifest in literature and architecture, the fine arts and the celebratory culture of the seventeenth century. During the Golden Age, references to the Batavians not only included the justification of the struggle against the Spanish, but also helped stabilise the Republic's inner political structure. For instance, Hugo Grotius's *Liber de Antiquitate Reipublicae Batavorum* (or *Tractaet vande Oudtheyt vande Batavische nu Hollandsghe Republique*⁹) developed the political concept of an aristocratic republic in which the estates played a chief role, flanked by a subordinate monarchical element that was represented by the stadt-

holders of the Republic's House of Orange. Grotius discovered the roots of the Republic's political culture in what he considered the key elements of ancient Batavian liberty.¹⁰

The Batavian motif was taken up almost simultaneously in a different literary genre. The Amsterdam politician and playwright Pieter Corneliszoon Hooft finished his drama *Baeto* in 1617; it was named after the legendary founder of the Batavian nation. In doing so, Hooft's play joined the political debate about the relationship between the provincial estates and the Orange stadtholder, albeit in a thinly disguised way. *Baeto* – and Maurice of Orange, stadtholder of Holland, who is alluded to – was transformed into a wise, peaceful prince. Although Hooft shifted the emphasis from the States to the monarchic element within the framework of a mixed constitution, the main pattern of the normative *topoi* of liberty and inner unity were left in place.¹¹ In a later work, popular poet Joost van den Vondel in his tragedy *De Batavische Gebroeders* (The Batavian Brothers), returned to the idea of a Batavian heritage in the Netherlands. He wanted to highlight the protection of estate liberty, and contrast it with the dangers of monarchic arbitrariness.¹² The dramatisation of the subject helped take the Batavian story from the intellectual elites to a much wider audience. The same can be seen in public celebrations. In 1648, the peace agreed upon by the Republic and Spain was celebrated in Amsterdam with a huge spectacle. The Batavian uprising against Rome and Claudius Civilis were among the *tableaux vivants* performances, organised around the themes of *libertas* and *pax*.¹³

The popularisation of Batavian history in the Dutch public was supported by numerous pamphlets incorporating the motif of Batavian liberty, not only in written texts, but also in historicising pictorial representations.¹⁴ From the end of the sixteenth century until the re-invention of the Dutch state as the purposefully named Batavian Republic during the French Revolution, the Batavian motif remained part of the normative canon of public discourse.¹⁵ In 1781, for example, Joan Derk van der Capellen put the reference to the Batavians at the beginning of his programmatic reforming treatise *Aan het Volk van Nederland* (To the People of the Netherlands). His work provided the basis for the idea of a united Dutch nation based on the sovereignty of the people.¹⁶

Although the experienced history of constituting and defending *vrijheid* (liberty) by means of war, first against Spain and later

against the France of Louis XIV also belongs to the Dutch Republics's stable canon of historical images, its anchorage within the ancient timeframe of the Batavian tradition remained untouched. The Spanish siege of Leiden and its eventual liberation in 1574 form just one example. This event was one of the most important referential marks for the collective memory of the Dutch Revolt.¹⁷ The creation of an analogy between the stadtholders and the hero Claudius Civilis in contemporary praise of the House of Orange – as well as the fact that the name of the besieged city was already latinised as *Lugdunum Batavorum* in 1575 in order to construct a line of tradition between the heroic resistance of contemporary Leiden and the ancient Batavians' struggle for freedom¹⁸ – reveals the direct connection of ancient tradition with the contemporary historical narrative.

The distinct reference to antiquity and, closely connected to that, the sometimes abstract self-stylisation of the Dutch into a people who followed the principles of unity and liberty, might have been the reasons for the neglect of the community's internal conflicts in Dutch history. These internal conflicts shook the Dutch Republic in 1618–19, just prior to 1650, in 1672, 1747–48 and again in the 1780s and were fought out in fierce public debate. But, in the end, these were problems that had to be resolved practically and not just theoretically.¹⁹ The conflict with the external enemies against whom the central norm of liberty had to be eked out and preserved – be it the Romans of antiquity or the Spanish in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries – remained the focus of Dutch collective memorial culture.

This proved to be somewhat different in the Swiss Confederation. The reference to the ancient Helvetians also appeared in the humanistic historiography at the beginning of the sixteenth century.²⁰ The motivation for a foundational history and narration of origins rooted in antiquity was generally the same in Switzerland as it had been in the Netherlands. It originated in the necessity of establishing the newly founded Confederation as in all respects equal with its neighbouring polities. In view of the frictions with the Holy Roman Empire and its emperor around 1500, the Confederation felt the need to align itself with an innate political-normative tradition: a genuine Helvetian liberty.²¹

It seems that the Helvetian discourse was for a long time confined to the relatively small group of humanistic scholars and the political oligarchy. The Helvetia figure only began to play a role as a symbol representing the political norms of liberty and unity for the whole of

the Confederation in the last quarter of the seventeenth century.²² The enlightened patriotic tendencies to install a new political system under the symbol of Helvetia, which took effect in the late eighteenth century, culminated in the foundation of a Helvetic Republic (1798) and attempts to create a constitution for the whole of Switzerland.²³ Until the eighteenth century, the elements oriented towards the Confederation's late-thirteenth and early-fourteenth-century genesis were much more prominent in the collective image of early modern Swiss history, than recourse to the Helvetians. The focuses of interest were the oath of Rütli, the legend of William Tell, the military conflicts of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries against rulers who – from the House of Habsburg to the House of Burgundy – were regarded as foreigners, but the focus was also on those narratives that strove to overcome Swiss inner conflicts, such as the story of the *Stanser Verkommnis* of 1481.²⁴

This clearly emerges from the pamphlets published in Switzerland between 1531 and 1712, insofar as they contain statements about Swiss history.²⁵ As the new mass media of Early Modern times, pamphlets were particularly suited for communicating an impression of public historical discourse. Their catalogue of motives 'is in some respect a copy of the historical stream of tradition'.²⁶ Daniel Guggisberg's analysis of their contents reveals no distinctive reference to ancient Helvetic tradition.²⁷ In fact, the pamphlets were for the most part about the political norms of unity and liberty as the main features of the Swiss Confederation. If particular historical examples were used, they were taken from that epoch, especially from the period of the Confederation's foundation between the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries.²⁸

This assessment is further supported by evidence of official public images. The sequence of paintings created in the 1580s to embellish the 'Burgerstube' of Berne's town hall, embodies the basic norms of *concordia* and *pax*.²⁹ The tradition of the confederate system of alliances takes centre stage in the iconographic programme. Allusions to the conflicting character of that system are included; the sequence contains an illustration of the confederate oath of Stans in 1481, which was enacted to overcome the conflicts between rural communities in central Switzerland and the major urban communities. The oath of Stans was the result of a political practice that was to become basic to the confederate appreciation of politics and justice. The amicable arrangement, and its ratification by a confederate oath, ranked

above the *oktroi*. Formulating and reconciling interests by bargaining and negotiating should ideally dominate this practice of political decision making.

Swiss inner conflicts as threats to *concordia*, which together with *pax* and *libertas* was perceived as a precondition for the success of the Swiss Confederation, were also among the recurring topics in the pamphlets.³⁰ They were brought up in historical narratives such as the *Alten und Jungen Eidgenossen* (old and young confederates) and the *Kappeler Milchsuppe* (Kappel milk soup) of 1529, a reconciliation meal among combatants from Catholic and Protestant communities in the early stages of the confessional conflicts.³¹ In the face of its immanent centrifugal tendencies, the Confederation had to permanently reinvent itself in various reconciliation myths whose practicality were substantiated by the country's own late medieval and early modern history.³²

Let me draw an early conclusion: the crucial historical images and narratives of Switzerland are less fixed on antiquity than the Dutch, and instead focus more on the recent events of the late Middle Ages. These were more concrete and, moreover, dealt with the accomplishment of intra-Swiss threats to the self-imposed political and social norms much more intensely than the historical images of the Dutch Republic did. How can these differences be explained? One possible line of argument is that of a difference in chronological time gaps between the emergence of the Confederation and the Republic. The Confederation went through its establishment, formation, and consolidation phases in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Swiss communities began developing identity-creating images related to their own history prior to the rise of the humanistic discourses. However, this discourse was already in motion during the earliest phases of the Dutch Republic, at the end of the sixteenth century. Perhaps even more significantly, the slow growth of the Swiss Confederation between the first federations of 1291 and 1315, and when Basel and other cities joined at the start of the sixteenth century, directed the focus almost inevitably toward the genesis of the Confederation and the need to overcome its inbred conflicts, which were the result of, on the one hand, the complex union of full members, *zugewandte Orte* (loosely associated communities), subject areas of cities, and finally 'common territories', and, on the other hand, a political system without a well-defined centralised political structure. In the face of the weak articulation of institutions above cantonal level, the resolution

of conflicts and the making of decisions could only be accomplished by an informal mediation process.³³ Since the fifteenth century at the very latest, this informal mediation process was part of a permanent repertoire of political tools. The essential techniques of informal mediation included appeals for the shared political norms of *concordia* and *pax*, as preconditions for Swiss *libertas*, and, in particular, the recourse to earlier successful attempts at reconstituting *pax* and *concordia*. These examples helped underpin the legitimacy, and indeed demonstrated the effectiveness of a political framework, which basically remained unchanged between the late Middle Ages and the dissolution of the old Swiss Confederation at the end of the eighteenth century.

The Dutch Republic emerged in 1579 with the Union of Utrecht, and the 1581 'Plakkaat van Verlatinge' (Act of Secession) as quasi coherent acts of foundation, whereas the Swiss Confederation came along in a much more gradual process that took centuries to complete. The Dutch Republic was established within an institutional framework which was, like the Swiss system, federal in its general outlines, but much more solid in its institutional structure, especially with regard to organising the relations between local, provincial and national authorities.³⁴ Moreover, the Dutch Republic had an undisputed regional core, that was Holland. Because of its evident political and economic leadership, this core could not, and did not have to be challenged, as long as the other regions benefited from its prosperity.³⁵

Internal conflicts were also part of the political history of the Dutch Republic. However, they did not have a place in the publicly propagated image of Dutch history. The normative framework of *libertas* and internal *concordia* were seen as given, i.e., since the emancipation from Spanish rule. The Batavians, who emanated from a distant past, became fixed aspects of the Dutch self-image. In Switzerland, the central norms of *pax*, *libertas* and *concordia* appeared much more as a challenge for the then-contemporary generation. To this end, the past had to be a constituent element of that present, and images of history were almost by definition also images of the present.

History as process

This brings us to a second aspect of our topic: the issue of the function of historical images as static *exempla*, on the one hand, and as indicators of a dynamic process, that needs to be permanently re-designed in the present, on the other. Indeed, both Swiss and Dutch images of history utilised exemplary features; history was *magistra vitae*. In the Netherlands, however, the static character of those examples was much more evident than in Switzerland.

The construction of a Batavian history was only superficially shaped by the republicans of the sixteenth century. It did provide a normative model for the then current period of the early Dutch Republic, and an example of the collective virtues and values of the Dutch, but then strictly as an *exemplum*.³⁶ As Schöffers observes in his seminal article on the ‘Batavian myth’ with reference to one of the first works on the topic, the 1517 *Divisiiekroniek* by Cornelius Aurelius: ‘What strikes us first is the rather static view. Aurelius clearly preferred to write about situations and characteristics, rather than about events and developments’.³⁷ A century after Aurelius, Grotius made ‘full use of the Batavian past as the exciting *exemplum* for what he regarded as the best possible government, which had been there in Holland from the beginning’.³⁸

Other historical narratives in the Republic were likewise only superficially integrated into the narrative of current developments, like the central events of the war against Spain from the 1570s to the truce of 1609 – including the relief of Leiden during the Spanish siege in 1574, or the heroic deeds of William of Orange, the patriarchal hero of the Republic’s early days. There was certainly a literature of controversy about the correct make-up of the Republic, and the interpretation of the central norm *vrijheid* (liberty) in the Netherlands, especially during the stadtholderless period between 1650 and 1672 and at the end of the eighteenth century.³⁹ But the dynamic role of conflict for the unfolding of Dutch history was not seen as a structural element of the Republic’s political culture. The debate was about how different positions confronted each other, rather than conflict as a constituent element of the polity.

The references to the *exempla* of a ‘heroic’ past also dominated Dutch public manifestations of the image of history. This ‘heroic’ past became most evident in the glorification of William of Orange as ‘*vader des vaderlands*’ (*pater patriae*). With only one or two excep-

tions, his contribution to the foundation of the Republic was never fundamentally questioned, not even by opponents from within the Republic. As a charismatic figure, William was almost sacrosanct.⁴⁰ The same heroism typical of the Batavian myth was again manifested from within the panegyric of William of Orange, which focussed on this eminent individual. With the liberation from Spain by William, the process of history seemed to have been accomplished. It did not require any more dynamic details. Even Johan de Witt, the leading politician of the republican, 'stadtholderless' period from 1650 to 1672, did not question this historical narrative. In his *Deductie* from 1654, the central republican manifesto of the time, he states that – in principle – he also saw the ideal of liberty fulfilled by the successful struggle against Spain. He leaves his readers in no doubt about William of Orange's merits and his heroic contributions. But then De Witt conjures up the provincial States as the collective heroes who finished William's work, and built the '*fondamenten vande vryheyd*' (foundations of liberty).⁴¹ The government of the provincial States, in De Witt's post-1650 argument, became the trustee of the state of liberty that had been achieved at the end of the sixteenth century. Thus, this republican regime required no further basic development, other than a system of defence against the threat of tyranny. How liberty was elevated into an undisputable sphere of the numinous, and consequently deprived of any dynamic, was also elaborated by Johan Uytenhage de Mist, a jurist from The Hague and an anti-Orange fundamentalist, who, in his *De stadthouderlijke regeeringe in Hollandt en West-Vrieslant* (1662) (The stadtholder government in Holland and West-Friesland), asserted that the Dutch ultimately owe their liberty to the grace of God.⁴²

The historical images of the Swiss Confederates were much more dynamic. The Swiss were well aware of the conflicting nature of their Confederation, which had to enter a permanent state of modification, and this sometimes even meant a redefinition of the obligations of *concordia* and *libertas* and then applied these changes to the current political situation.⁴³ This is clearly evident in several public discussions regarding the relationship between the *Old and Young Confederate*, which had been published with some short gaps since the sixteenth century.⁴⁴ These discussions broached the issue of the discrepancy between norm and reality with regard to the '*Reislaufen*', the mercenary services of the Swiss abroad, as well as confessional conflict. The *Young Confederate* was faced with the example of

virtue as represented by the *Old Confederate* of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The latter was portrayed as the embodiment of piety, loyalty, humility and modesty – values the *New Confederate* was allegedly trampling on. The *Young Confederate* was now challenged by the *Old Confederate* to recollect and return to the original *libertas* and *concordia*, and consequently to the *proprium* of the original confederates which since the sixteenth century was threatened by the Swiss involvement in European power politics.⁴⁵

The reinterpretation of the William Tell legend is again significant in the context of the struggle between Swiss authorities and their citizens and subjects for the appropriation of historical images during Swiss internal conflicts of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.⁴⁶ Tell became the legitimating icon for the citizenry's active resistance against political actions regarded as an abuse of power by the governing elites, as Andreas Suter has recently pointed out in regard to the Peasants' War of 1653. Suter analyses the recourse to the Tell tradition as an element of agitation and escalation in this insurrection, as it ignited in the valley community of Entlebuch, which was under Luzern's jurisdiction, an insurrection that spread far beyond this local dispute to affect the politics of the entire Confederation.⁴⁷ Activating the Tell figure as an instrument for the legitimisation of controversial political acts was not limited to the events of 1653. Tell again made an enormous comeback in the pamphlet literature during the first (1656) and second Villmergen Wars (1712), and more examples would not be difficult to find.⁴⁸ This small selection already illustrates how, for the early modern Swiss, conflict was a fixed constituent of their polity and collective experience. The mental presence of conflict was set-off against the ability to resolve these conflicts, an ability that could not be derived from some sort of central institution, and was therefore dependent upon a general willingness to reach a consensus through 'negotiations, submissions to arbitration and, if necessary, governmental punishments'.⁴⁹ Putting *concordia* in motion, a norm shared by all of the parties involved in the conflict, as a reasonable way of dealing with this situation, significantly contributed to accomplishing a consensus, albeit temporarily. *Concordia* was also communicated by historical images like the oath of Rütli, the federal oath of Stans and, since the end of the eighteenth century, the tale of the *Kappeler Milchsuppe*.

Regional, or national identity?

A third observation relates to the validity of historical images within the political-geographical space of the nation. In this respect, the Dutch Republic and the Swiss Confederation shared a common challenge of reconciling local, regional and national identities. Historical images in both countries can be considered as functionally equivalent for the creation of collective identities. In the Netherlands, the Batavian myth as well as their recourse to the Revolt against Spain, pictured as a war of liberation, were aimed at the entire territory of the Republic, although with a clear focus on Holland. This was a result of the leading political and economic role this province played, which could, therefore, also define itself as the cultural centre of the Republic.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, there are no indications of a fundamental rivalry between Holland and the other provinces about historical images. On the contrary, the other provinces seemed eager to present themselves as equal partners in the struggle and, to that end, drew upon the same historical heritage.⁵¹ The political practices of the Republic also suggest an ambition to cement the provinces together into one single entity, capable of acting in unison.⁵²

In the Dutch Republic as well as in Switzerland, historical images were used in an attempt to create a normative community beyond local, or regional borders. These images were supposedly common property – from the Batavian myth to the war of liberation against Spanish tyranny, from the oath of Rütli to the *Stanser Verkommnis*, from Tell to the moral discourse of the *Old and the Young Confederaate*.⁵³ However, a complete functional identity that operated in all of the geographical reaches of the nations, where these historical images were valid, was out of the question. In Switzerland, where the necessity of overcoming the inner conflicts of the confederation was felt more strongly, a regional dialogue was more in evidence than in the Netherlands. In the ongoing efforts to activate the common norms of the socio-political system, the *Stanser Verkommnis* of 1481 remained of central concern. Clear evidence of the necessity for dialogue among the cantons and various locations within the confederation is provided by the aforementioned images, that showed the oath of Stans, and the standard bearers of the thirteen places in the ‘Burgerstube’ in Berne, dating from the 1580s. Even though the citizens of Berne did not have to be reminded of their own role in these events, they were apparently also aware of the need to draw the other mem-

bers of the Confederation into the context of this representation, to avoid being regarded as violators of the confederate order.⁵⁴ Equivalents of these images cannot be found among the historical depictions inside Dutch town halls. The artistic programme of Amsterdam's city hall, created in the middle of the seventeenth century, glorifies the city in a cosmopolitan setting, but without engaging in any dialogue with the political construct of the Republic, or its history.⁵⁵ We see a much stronger focus on the local in the iconography of other Dutch town halls than was the case in Switzerland, in general displaying a disregard for the overall republican discourse.

We can only speculate on the reasons for this difference. They might be explained by the fact that the Netherlands had a permanent national assembly in the States-General, which allowed local, regional and national interests to be negotiated and reconciled. The Swiss *Tagsatzung* was never in permanent session and its decisions were not binding. Instead, it served as a platform for the exchange of opinions and not as an institution where decisions were made. Historical images in the Dutch cities, and first and foremost in the powerful urban communities of Holland, helped sustain local autonomy within the wider institutional framework created by the provincial estates and the States-General. In contrast, Switzerland was much more dependent on making confederate coherence into a topic of informal self-reassurance, through historical images in the public sphere.

History and conflict

As a fourth and final point, we briefly examine the meaning of historical images in connection with the conflicts between political elites and the common people, between the authorities and their citizens and subjects. In Switzerland, as in the Netherlands, the three united values of liberty, peace and unity were always referred to in the pamphlet literature, especially when the inner stability of the community was threatened in times of conflict.⁵⁶ Rival groups tried to promote their own interpretations of the canon of political values. They did not question it on a fundamental level, but instead denounced one another as violators of these ancient values. But they certainly did so in different ways. Swiss pamphlets that appeared during the Peasants War of 1653 and the first Villmergen War of 1656 referred to the con-

federate oaths, Swiss legal traditions and its documented history, such as the *Landfrieden* of 1531.⁵⁷ ‘Historical memories in terms of historical consciousness played an important role in the Peasants War of 1653’, Suter emphasises.⁵⁸ In the Dutch Republic, on the other hand, the reference to the canon of values and the history of Dutch political culture in the pamphlets was much more abstract. History was only referred to in metaphorical references to the role of the Estates and the House of Orange in the past. Precise references to earlier events and legal actions were mostly absent.⁵⁹ This difference may also have been influenced by the fact that the Dutch pool of constitutional documents, besides the Union of Utrecht from 1579, was small in comparison to Switzerland, with its numerous federal charters and their later updates. It is also possible that the reference to the *Altes Recht* (ancient law) and related historical narratives were less necessary in the Netherlands than they were in Switzerland due to its constitutional construction. The two countries do, however, resemble one another insofar as the argumentative patterns, used by the authorities and the citizens and subjects, tried to locate common ground in a shared system of historical values, aimed at the resolution of conflict and the restoration of stability. This discourse of consensus provided a foundation for the communication between the government and the governed. At the same time, the differences in both form and content of these historical images in the political debate indicate substantial differences between Swiss and Dutch political cultures, which looked only vaguely the same when placed against the background of a monarchical counter-model

Notes

1 Thanks are due to Maarten Prak and Björn Riecken for their help with the translation of the original German version.

2 I. Schmidt-Voges, *De antiqua claritate et clara antiquitate Gothorum. Gotizismus als Identitätsmodell im frühneuzeitlichen Schweden* (Frankfurt am Main 2004), 21-2.

3 J. Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen* (Munich 2000, 3rd ed.), 52. Translation by O. Mörke.

4 Examples include H. Grabes, ‘Elect Nation: Der Fundierungsmythos englischer Identität in der frühen Neuzeit, in: H. Berding (ed.), *Mythos und Nation* (Frankfurt am Main 1996), 84-103; O. Mörke, ‘Bataver, Eid-

genossen und Goten. Gründungs- und Begründungsmythen in den Niederlanden, der Schweiz und Schweden in der Frühen Neuzeit', in: *ibid.*, 104-32; H. Schilling, 'Nationale Identität und Konfession in der europäischen Neuzeit', in: B. Giesen (ed.), *Nationale und kulturelle Identität*, (Frankfurt am Main 1991), 192-252.

5 A.A. van Schelven, 'De Staatsvorm van het Zwitschersche Eedgenootschap den Nederlanden ter navolging aanbevolen', in: *Miscellanea Historica in honorem Leonis van der Essen*, vol. 2 (Brussels and Paris 1947), 747-56; M. van Gelderen, *The Political Thought of the Dutch Revolt, 1555-1590* (Cambridge 1992), 171-8, 187-91; Th. Maissen, 'Petrus Valkeniers republikanische Sendung: Die niederländische Prägung des neuzeitlichen schweizerischen Staatsverständnisses', *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Geschichte* 48 (1998), 149-76.

6 For the Batavian myth, see: I. Schöffner, 'The Batavian Myth during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', in: J.S. Bromley and E.H. Kossmann (eds), *Some Political Mythologies Britain and the Netherlands* vol. 5, (The Hague 1975), 78-101; S. Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (London 1987), 75-81; Mörke, 'Bataver', 122-30. For the Helvertian myth, see: Th. Maissen, 'Weshalb die Eidgenossen Helvetier wurden: Die humanistische Definition einer *natio*', in: J. Helmuth et al. (eds), *Diffusion des Humanismus. Studien zur nationalen Geschichtsschreibung europäischer Humanisten* (Göttingen 2002), 210-49.

7 K. Tilmans, 'Dutch National Consciousness in Early Humanist Historiography', in: Th. Hermans, R. Salverda (eds), *From Revolt to Riches: Culture and History of the Low Countries (1500-1700)* (London 1993), 30-39; H. Kampinga, *Opvattingen over onze Vaderlandse Geschiedenis bij de Hollandsche historici der 16e en 17e eeuw* (The Hague 1917; reprint Utrecht 1980), 56-65.

8 Schöffner, 'Batavian Myth', 89.

9 Published in 1610 in both Latin and Dutch.

10 Van Gelderen, *Political Thought*, 206-07; M. van Gelderen, 'De Nederlandse Opstand (1555-1610): van "vrijheden" naar "oude vrijheid" en de "vrijheid der conscientien"', in: E.O.G. Haitsma Mulier and W.R.E. Velema (eds), *Vrijheid: Een geschiedenis van de vijftiende tot de twintigste eeuw*, (Amsterdam 1999), 41-42.

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PART IV

Republican Art

8 Republican Art? Dutch and Swiss Art and Art-Production Compared

Michael North

Each political system, it is said, has its own works of art.¹ When we investigate the emergence of the modern nation-state, we discover a link between the nation-state and the rise of the national museum and a body of artworks that praise its representatives.² For the monarchies, the collecting and production of art functioned to glorify the ruler or the dynasty and its splendour, or it asserted a prince's rank in both his homeland and among the other European monarchs. Thus the Spanish kings, Emperor Rudolf II, Charles I of England, Gustavus Adolphus and Christina of Sweden, Louis XIV, the Electors of Saxonia, the kings August II and August III of Poland, and the Russian Tsar Peter the Great and Tzarina Catherine II all founded collections and hired court artists. This obsession with self-imaging reached its apogee during the reign of Louis XIV of France, when the *Académie Française* (founded in 1634-35), and the *Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture* (founded in 1648, reorganised in 1663) were created solely for the glorification of the king.³

In this chapter, I would like to take the European republic as an example of early modern government and its influence on the arts. The key question would be: Is there a republican art, and if so in which respects does art production and art consumption in republics differ from that in monarchies? To test the hypothesis that art found in republics differed from that found in monarchies, I shall examine the Dutch Republic and the Swiss *Eidgenossenschaft* with respect to the art market, art production, patterns of collecting, and self imaging.

The art market

During the seventeenth century, the Dutch art market expanded vigorously and provided an income for numerous artists. Paintings were in great demand; it has been estimated that 70,000 paintings were painted on average every year; cheap works were readily available, which a large majority of the Dutch could afford.⁴ One of the most striking features of the emerging art market was the fact that the majority of painters were not painting for private patrons. Instead, they painted for an anonymous public market. The necessary preconditions for this were low production costs, a steady market demand, and prices high enough to cover material expenses and the artist's cost of living. All of these conditions appear to have been present in the seventeenth-century Netherlands.

Product innovation, which was characteristic of the Dutch economy as a whole, generated new demand, while specialisation lowered the costs of producing paintings. Since so many master painters were available, most of them could, to a large degree, specialise in different themes, ranging from portraits to '*drolls*' and still lifes. These were even subdivided into different categories, and some painters specialised in different types of still life, like fruits, flowers or fish. These genres could be painted either originally or as copies. Innovations in technique were connected to these various specialisations. For example, the introduction of the so-called tonal style reduced the time necessary to produce a painting, thus increasing the painters' productivity. This innovation in tonal technique, pioneered by Esaias van de Velde and Jan Porcellis with their land- and seascapes, became widespread in the Northern Netherlands in the 1640s especially in the landscape paintings of artists like Jan van Goyen and Pieter Molijn. The tonal style also reduced the cost of a painting because material costs for canvas and paint were low. The consumer thus gained by paying lower prices for landscapes, and this reduction contributed in turn to the growing number of landscapes in Dutch collections.⁵

Since copies and paintings were available for as little as five to ten guilders, or even less, many seventeenth-century Dutch citizens could have afforded a painting, or at least a copy – perhaps several.⁶ The expanding art market also generated a new profession, the art dealer. Although most painters bought and sold the artworks of their colleagues from time to time, professional art dealers became much more common in the 1630s and 1640s, when printers, engravers,

frame makers and unsuccessful painters, like Gerrit Uylenburgh, Crijn Volmarijn and Abraham de Cooge, began specialising in the art trade, which also developed its own areas of specialisation, ranging from second-hand dealers (*uitdraagsters*) to international art dealers.

While most painters painted for the public market, others worked at least temporarily for patrons. There were different kinds of patronage in the Dutch Republic. City governments commissioned the decoration of their town halls with allegoric paintings, to symbolise the omnipotent and righteous city government. Moreover, various social groups such as the *schutters* (civic militias), the wardens of the guilds and the directors of charitable foundations commissioned group portraits (*regenten-portretten*).⁷

During the eighteenth century, the situation changed only gradually. In Venice, collectors of paintings, drawings, engravings and antiquities acquired their desired items in the traditional art market, whereby artists often played the role of seller, expert or intermediary. In the later eighteenth century, professional dealers who often combined collecting and connoisseurship with dealing began to appear. Because the supply was not as large as it was in Amsterdam or the new art markets in Paris and London, the turnover of paintings was much slower, as most of the Venetian collections were passed from generation to generation. However, new middle-class collectors emerged, and the acquisitions by European princes and the Grand Tourists for their new galleries and collections stimulated the market beyond its traditional boundaries.⁸

Compared to the Dutch Republic, the marketing of art began very slowly in Switzerland. During the period under consideration, art was usually commissioned, and even these commissions often failed to stimulate lively artistic production. The most famous Swiss-born artists, such as Hans Holbein the Younger, Jean-Francois Liotard, and Johann Heinrich Fuessli, found their patrons abroad. Other Swiss artists returned and settled in the *Eidgenossenschaft* as did several foreign artists. Urban and bourgeois patronage did enable Samuel Hofmann, Albrecht Kauw and Joseph Plepp to introduce new subjects, such as the still life and the landscape from Holland. The marketing of art became more important in the eighteenth century, when a collecting culture emerged. Moreover, tourism and enthusiasm for the Alps and Switzerland led to an upswing in landscape painting and especially in graphic reproductions of Swiss landscapes.

Most famous in this respect was Caspar Wolf (1735-1783), who painted not only seascapes and landscapes of rocks and trees for the Luzern collector Joseph Anton Felix Balthasar, but also more than two hundred paintings of the Alps, ordered for graphic reproduction by the Berne printer-publisher Abraham Wagner. Wagner exhibited the paintings publicly in his gallery without putting them up for sale; these paintings provided the originals for the print series 'Merkwuerdigen Prospekte aus den Schweizer Gebuergen' (Berne 1777-78). In 1779, Wagner moved his gallery (the *Kabinett Wagner*) to Paris and produced a French edition with colored aquatints.⁹

In Berne, other painters, especially the so-called *Kleinmeister* (small masters) Johann Ludwig Aberli (1723-86), Balthasar Anton Dunker (1746-1807), Heinrich Rieter (1751-1808), Johann Jacob Biedermann (1763-1830) and Sigmund Freudenberger (1745-1801) satisfied the growing tourist demand for Swiss landscape and genre souvenirs with *veduten* (views), colored etchings, watercolours and panoramas. Among this group of artists, the painter, draughtsman and engraver Aberli was the most successful. Besides specialising in Swiss landscapes, he invented a technique, the 'Aberli style', which consisted of watercolour washes combined with engraving. Aberli's prints became so popular that he had to produce them in the studio with the help of several assistants who did the coloration.¹⁰ Thus *veduten* production developed into an economic factor, with Johann Ulrich Schellenberg (1709-1795), active in Winterthur, and Joahn Jakob Schmann (1747-1809) and Ludwig Hess (1760-1800) in Zurich.¹¹ Besides this market production, auctions and lotteries in Basel and Zurich recycled private collections and contributed to the adaptation of Western European patterns of collecting in Switzerland.¹²

Art production

In pre-industrial Europe, art was generally produced in towns and not in the countryside. In the Netherlands, painters were organised in craft guilds of St. Luke, their patron saint. Thirty-eight such guilds are known to have existed in the Northern Netherlands, mostly in larger cities. Only in Utrecht, Middelburg, Leiden, Haarlem and Delft did local schools maintain a strong local presence, and only Amsterdam at the time of Rembrandt had a marked external influ-

ence.¹³ The apprenticeship of painters, like most other aspects of art production, followed the rules of the Guilds of St. Luke. Dating from the Middle Ages, the Guilds of St. Luke enjoyed a revival in the sixteenth and especially seventeenth centuries, when local guilds were (re)established or re-invigorated in Amsterdam (1609), Delft (1611), Leiden (1615 and 1648), Alkmaar (1631?) and Hoorn (1651),¹⁴ probably due to the immigration and settlement of painters from the South. It also seems that ‘there was a significant temporal coincidence between the establishment of specific guilds for the fine art during the 1610s, and the rise of the so-called Dutch school of painting in the early seventeenth century’.¹⁵

The guilds included ‘all those earning their living here by the art of painting, be it with fine brushes or otherwise’ according to the Delft guild letter.¹⁶ The guilds regulated the craft occupation, requiring status of master in the guild; it enforced guild membership; it regulated the conditions of apprenticeship and set the qualifications necessary to become a master. It also governed relations between masters, journeymen (*knechts*) and apprentices, and it tried to regulate the local art market. Whether the guilds were successful as a cartel on the art market depended on local conditions. Whereas membership and guild rules were enforced in communities like Delft, Haarlem and most other cities throughout the seventeenth century, they were far less rigorously enforced in the open city of Amsterdam.¹⁷ Although the Amsterdam Guild of St. Luke tried in the first half of the seventeenth century to prevent particular auctions of cheap paintings from outside, it was not very successful.¹⁸

The regulation of the art market in the smaller towns was difficult at times, but in towns like Delft and Dordrecht, products by local artists were significantly over-represented in probate inventories, compared with what might be expected in a free open market (if such a market even existed in the early modern period).¹⁹ Nevertheless, the guilds contributed their expertise – in interaction with potential consumers – to the transparency of the art market.

The majority of the artists remained craftsmen, but they distinguished themselves from members of other crafts by their higher incomes and their larger houses; the average master painter earned three times as much as a master carpenter. Some, like Rembrandt, may even have considered themselves to be members of the liberal professions. But it is telling that there was little place in the corporate Dutch art industry for academies of the Italian model or the ideal of the ‘free artist’, as put forth by Karel van Mander.

The Swiss *Eidgenossenschaft* also followed the pattern of artistic craft production. If the painters did not stay behind in their own hometowns during their apprenticeships, they travelled (*Wanderschaft*) and only later returned home or settled elsewhere. Even though the opportunities for artistic production were not overwhelming, we do see continuous settlements of “foreign” painters in Swiss cities (especially in Basel and Berne). Basel’s attraction for artists and its emergence as an artistic centre coincided with a concentration of humanist scholarship and publishing, on the one hand, and the heyday of political and military power of the *Eidgenossenschaft*, on the other. With the decline of Swiss military power came a decline in Reformation-related artistic production. Ecclesiastical and public commissions became scarce. In the late fifteenth century, a custom arose in the Swiss cantons, where the nobility, the cities, guilds, fraternities, and monasteries gave one another and their subjects small-scale stained-glass paintings, containing heraldic panels, so-called *Wappenscheiben*, which were integrated into pictorial compositions. During the sixteenth century, the cantons exchanged similar stained-glass paintings with their coats of arms, so-called *Standesscheiben*, as symbols of confederate solidarity for newly constructed town halls. Swiss artists often specialised in stained glass painting and could not compensate for their losses for over a century.²⁰ Painters and guilds also competed for municipal and private portrait commissions. For example, the Berne painter Wilhelm Stettler lamented upon his return to the city in the second half of the seventeenth century that Berne only had a demand for peasants, craftsmen, soldiers and magistrates, and no artists. However, Stettler had probably forgotten about the craft-guilds tradition in his hometown while he was abroad, and he was unsuccessful in Paris, Padova and Amsterdam. Others who returned, like Samuel Hofmann, and newcomers such as Albrecht Kauw, were much more successful. They, along with the Berne painter Joseph Plepp succeeded in adapting and introducing new subjects such as the still life and later on, topographical landscapes from Holland into the households of Berne patricians and burgers.²¹ With respect to openness, Swiss cities seem to have differed quite significantly. While smaller communities like Winterthur or Schaffhausen, but also Zurich, closed their guilds to foreigners, Berne always remained very open and allowed painters from other parts of Switzerland and abroad to settle there after their travels abroad. Thus many of the major accomplishments in Berne’s

art production in the seventeenth and especially in the eighteenth centuries were achieved by painters who had not been born in Berne.

Collecting art

We can distinguish three groups of collectors, active on the art market in the seventeenth century Netherlands: 1. Royal collectors, including foreign and Dutch princes such as Christian IV of Denmark-Norway, Emperor Rudolph, Charles II of England and some of the princes of Orange; 2. the so-called *liefhebbers* or connoisseurs, who were the elites from the larger cities, town governments and craft guilds, and 3. the general public. For the first two categories, purchase on commission was the rule; in the case of the general public, which consisted of the lower upper class and the middle classes, paintings were purchased in an anonymous art market, either by direct sales from the painter himself, or via art dealers or auction.

John Michael Montias has examined the paintings collected in Amsterdam's and Delft's inventories, categorising the subjects by *histories* (including religious paintings), *landscapes*, *portraits*, *still-lives* and *genre*. He noticed significant changes in the importance of the different subjects over time. He was able to show two major trends: the decline of histories and the rise of landscapes in seventeenth-century Dutch paintings.

The shift from history painting to the landscape in the seventeenth-century collections reveals the changing attitudes towards paintings in Dutch society. Montias explains this phenomenon with reference to reductions in production costs and the prices of landscape paintings, which increased the market share of landscapes as well as their proportion in private households. However, this seems to be a secondary cause. More fundamental was the change in the function of paintings in the Dutch Republic. Until the sixteenth century, the devotional function was dominant in paintings; people preferred paintings with religious subjects to be used as private tabernacles. In the seventeenth century, the aesthetic function came to dominate. A large proportion of the population no longer wanted paintings of the Virgin Mary or the saints, and, instead, bought paintings chiefly to decorate their homes and enjoy as objects of art. The secularisation of consumer tastes was not confined to the Dutch Republic. Everywhere in Western and Central Europe, the Reformation inspired a fundamental change in the function of paintings.²²

In sixteenth-century Switzerland, the university town of Basel became a centre for the collecting of art. Here Bonifacius Amerbach (1495-1562), a lawyer at Basel University, established a cabinet for Erasmus's legacy and his paternal inheritance in 1539. The collector and founder of the so-called 'Amerbach cabinet' was his son, Basilius (1533-91), professor and chancellor of Basel University. He augmented the inheritance significantly. An inventory from 1586 lists 67 paintings, 1,900 drawings, 3,900 woodcuts and engravings, over 2,000 coins and medals and a rich library. For his collection, Amerbach had attached a special humanist *studiolo* designed by the famous architect Daniel Heintz to the back of his house. The walls of the *studiolo* were decorated with 49 paintings, among them Hans Holbein the Younger's 'Family Portrait' of 1528 and Altdorfer's 'Resurrection' of 1527. The excellence of his collection was further documented by 160 drawings by Urs Graf, 56 drawings and two sketchbooks by Hans Holbein the Elder, 104 drawings by Hans Holbein the Younger, and 84 drawings and two sketchbooks by Manuel Deutsch. Precious Italian Renaissance medals and all kinds of antiquities completed the humanist collection. Other famous contemporary collectors in the same vein were the physician Felix Platter (1536-1614), the professor Theodor Zwinger (1532-88), and the silk merchant and politician Andreas Ryff (1550-1603).²³

In 1661, the Amerbach Cabinet, which had since been inherited by the Iselin family, was in danger of being moved abroad. In this situation the collector and lawyer Remigius Faesch and the mayor Johann Rudolf Wettstein opted to have the city of Basel purchase the collection. The Amerbach cabinet was transferred to the university, where it became accessible to the public and thus one of the earliest public collections of non-princely origin. The Faesch collection, mainly paintings, graphic and decorative arts, and coins, became a museum as a *monumentum aere perennius* (according to Faesch's will) and was only finally united with the Amerbach cabinet in 1817, when the family name died out.²⁴ There are few examples of large painting collections in other Swiss cities, however, the collection of Vincenz Wagner (1606-58) was outstanding in both quantity and quality. Wagner began his career in foreign (military) service during the Thirty Years War and later represented Berne on various diplomatic missions. Of his 320 paintings 68 were portraits, 44 still lifes, 39 landscapes (including seascapes and battle scenes), 38 religious histories, 23 genre, 15 mythologies, 8 heraldic works and 85 unknown sub-

jects. All of the subjects also popular in the Low Countries at the time were represented.²⁵

In the eighteenth century, collecting paintings became increasingly fashionable in Swiss cities. Travelling and personal acquaintances stimulated the collecting of Dutch paintings in particular. In the town of Schaffhausen, the physician Johann Conrad Ammann (1724-1811), who had – as other members of his family – studied in Leiden, collected paintings, and moreover *naturalia*, especially shells (about which he corresponded with collectors and scholars across Europe). Thus, smaller cities joined in this communication process, which opened up the world for artists and intellectuals. Therefore, it is no wonder that another Schaffhausener, Lorenz Spengler, became director of the Royal Danish collections and the Basel publisher and art dealer Christian von Mechel reorganised the Imperial Gallery in Vienna.²⁶

In Geneva, Liotard and others mediated Dutch taste into a gradually awakening collectors' scene. Liotard, who had been successful as a portrait painter in Holland, built up a collection of 200 old masters paintings, nearly half of them Dutch. Encouraged by Liotard, the banker Francois Tronchin (1704-98) started collecting paintings that he bought in Holland, Paris and London. Ultimately, his collection comprised of 352 paintings, among them 213 Dutch masters. A portion of this collection was purchased by Catherine the Great and is now in the Hermitage in St. Petersburg. Among the collectors of Dutch and Flemish paintings Tronchin's younger brother Jean Robert (1710-17930), Horace Jean-Louis Turettini (1746-1829), the animal painter Louis-Auguste Brun (1758-1815), and the merchant Gabriel-Antoine Eynard (1734-1814) also appear. Dutch landscape were by far the most desired objects in these collections.²⁷

Dutch paintings also found their way into various private collections in Basel, Berne and Zurich. In Zurich, the collections of Heidegger (father and son) and Ludwig Lavater included several Dutch and Flemish paintings. These paintings and the Dutch landscape paintings of the Frankfurt *Hollandists*, like Christian Georg Schuetz, were acquired for these collections where they may have influenced and encouraged a Swiss tradition of landscape painting led by Caspar Wolf and the Berne *Kleinmeister*.²⁸

Self-imaging

In the Dutch Republic, cities often commissioned painters to decorate their city halls with allegoric paintings, that hint back to the time of the Batavians and Claudius Civilis or others that symbolise the omnipotent and righteous city government. The most important example in this respect was Amsterdam's Town Hall, which served both as a symbol of Amsterdam's glory and as a memorial to it. The *Exempla virtutis* of Roman history (Fabius Maximus and Hannibal, the Justice of Brutus) and Greek mythology (Apollo and Diana) were endorsed. Several of these subjects had already been rendered in the celebration of the Peace of Westphalia, and so the Dutch were probably familiar with them. For example, a relief above the entrance to the burgomasters' chambers represents Argus and Mercury, which refers to a scene in a theatre play: 'Whoever owns the cow, catches her by the horns', shows Argus as a symbol of the watchful provinces of Holland and West-Friesland, while the cow represented the fatherland (United Provinces). In the town hall, however, the cow rendered in the city represents the rich city of Amsterdam, guarded by the Burgomasters with Argus's eyes, and might it have further have served as a reminder for the latter themselves.²⁹

Moreover, the burgomasters' chamber contains a frieze that represents the 'Triumph of Fabius Maximus, Burgomaster of Rome', a tale that is continued in another painting by Lievens in the same room. The scene is told in verse by Joost van den Vondel: 'The son of Fabius bids his own father to dismount his horse before the honour and dignity of the city, which recognises no obligations because of birth and demands that he approach him respectfully. Thus, a statesman honours the office which is presented to him'.³⁰ Other paintings in the Burgomasters' council room show the virtues of the Roman consuls Gaius Fabricius and Curius Denatus, who are not distracted from their duties by the temptation of bribes or the threat of intimidation.³¹

There were also other spaces and media besides just these town halls involved in the process of self-imaging in the Dutch Republic. The assembly hall of the States-General in the *Binnenhof* in The Hague, for example, was decorated with flags and banners seized from the enemy, thus commemorating the glory of the Republic. This was certainly also the case with the tombs of 'national' heroes located in the churches of each city. Moreover, the city magistrates com-

missioned group portraits of themselves, thus joining various other social groups, such as the *schutters* (civic militias), the deans of the guilds, and the directors of charitable foundations, in gestures of self-representation. We should, however, not forget the print media, which contributed to the development of a Dutch identity, which was based on peace and freedom (leading to agricultural bounty and flourishing trade), if one takes the symbolic historical prints of artists Hendrick Hondius, David Vinckboons or Claes Jansz. Visscher as examples.³²

We also find group portraits of the city functionaries in the *Eidgenossenschaft*, but these are much smaller in scale. In Berne, for example, the reception of foreign ambassadors was documented, as was the traditional procession of the magistrates on Easter Monday. Moreover, a painting by David Dick depicting a pay-day in a Berne building office, shows the magistrates in charge paying out the wages of the architects (*Werkmeister*) and craftsmen who are all mentioned by name in the caption.³³

Building projects that included the construction of town halls and their (interior) decoration became a major aspect of self-imaging among the Swiss city-republic states. For instance, Basel's magistrates had decided to build a new town hall two years after the city's entry into the *Eidgenossenschaft* (1501). They commissioned Holbein the Younger to decorate the *Grossratssaal*. The subject matter was mostly classical and related to Old Testament histories, virtues, Old Testament prophets and kings, the latter especially esteemed after the Reformation. From the classical history Charondas and Zaleucus, the lawgivers in the Greek colonies of Sicily and Southern Italy were depicted in paintings, as well as Curius Dentatus, who was later considered one of the heroes of the Dutch Republic. Impartial and just regiment were propagated, whilst other inscriptions warned the magistrates of pride and misuse of power by these pictures.³⁴

Berne's Town Hall dates back to the fifteenth century, but underwent renovations during the second half of the sixteenth century. Upon this occasion, Berne commissioned a series of paintings by Humbert Mareschet in 1584, which depicted the flagmen (*Bannertraeger*) of the 13 founding members of the *Eidgenossenschaft* and other themes from Swiss and Berne history, such as the myth of the foundation of Berne. In the seventeenth century, Joseph Werner painted several *exempla virtutis* that range from a more abstract 'Apotheosis of Justicia' (on a throne decorated with the Bear of

Berne) to a 'Berna with allegories of Felicitas and Fides'.³⁵ In the second half of the eighteenth century, Jean Sablet continued with this theme but took it in another direction. In his 'Allegory of the art-loving Republic of Berne' he depicted Berna as being introduced into the temple by Minerva; here the artists greet and admire her. Sablet produced this painting not on commission, but on spec and only after some discussion did the magistrates acquire the painting in exchange for which Sablet received another study grant and a military promotion.³⁶

Zurich built a new town hall (1694-1700) and decorated it thoroughly. The façades were embellished with numerous depictions of important characters from Greek (Miltiades, Themistocles, Epaminondas), Roman (Lucius Junus Brutus; Mucius Scaevola, Curius Denatus, Scipio Africanus) and Swiss (Wilhelm Tell, Werner Stauffacher, Arnold Winkelriet, Adrian von Bubenberg) history. The interior's ceilings in the various halls were also lavishly decorated. This was especially true of the great hall (*Festsaal*) which featured a female figure, symbolising the *Respublica Touricensis*, surrounded by the virtues. Opulently decorated, tiled stoves also contributed to Zurich's and Swiss identity. One of the stove tiles depicted the clever Swiss fox, which symbolises Swiss neutrality, while lions, symbolising the various large European powers, are seen fighting each other.³⁷

In the eighteenth century, however, the Swiss myth began to take on different forms and utilise newer media. Nature – and especially the Alps – became the symbol of freedom and the core of Swiss (republican) identity. Like other Swiss poets, Albrecht von Haller celebrated the Alps and many foreigners joined in that celebration.³⁸ That is why Swiss, but also foreign, philosophers, writers, poets, painters, publishers and even musicians helped create a Swiss identity. Painters and publishers began to market these idealised depictions of Swiss identity in landscapes and through costumes, thus satisfying a Swiss demand for a distinguishable identity, which would be recognisable in Switzerland, Europe and all over the world. This identity became so strong that it even survived the destruction of the Swiss city republics by Napoleon, only to be resurrected again by the Swiss tourist industry in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Conclusion

In summary, we can state that the two republics differed fundamentally from European monarchies with respect to art production, patterns of collecting and self-imaging. In the monarchies, art production and collecting fulfilled the task of glorifying the ruler or the dynasty and the splendour of their legacy. These motives were totally absent in both the Dutch Republic and the *Eidgenossenschaft*. This can be confirmed when we compare them to the city-state of Venice. In Venice we see that corporate forces were also influential. Here the painters' guild, the *Arte dei Dipentori*, which was founded back in 1271, as well as the other specialisations, such as furniture painters, textile designers, embroiderers, playing card makers, mask makers or the sign painters, were over time also included in this guild. The guild regulated an artist's career from the period of apprenticeship to his acceptance as a master. Thus it maintained professional standards, controlled working conditions and schedules of the apprentices and assistants.³⁹ The aim of these regulations was to uphold the integrity of the individual workshops, so that a family workshop remained the standard production unit for painters in Venice throughout the centuries. This, however, did not mean that the workshops produced art only on commission. Moreover, Richard Mackenney's research in this area has denied the notion that the Venetian guilds were obsolete medieval institutions, which hampered innovation and individual initiative. According to Mackenney, the Venetian guilds promoted the entrepreneurial activities of their members in the retail, wholesale and manufacturing sectors, and advertised works by guild members during festivities and holidays in the Venetian Republic.⁴⁰ Advertising and marketing thus played an important role in the careers of individual artists.⁴¹ Foreign visitors during the course of the early modern period were very impressed by the opulent displays of Venetian works on sale in and around San Marco Square and the Rialto.

Nevertheless the painters were regarded as craftsmen belonging to the *popolano* social class. Unlike Florence's Accademia del Disegno, founded by Cosimo de Medici in 1563 (at the suggestion of Giorgio Vassari), or Rome's Accademia di San Luca, founded by Cardinal Federico Borromeo in 1593, Venice did not have an art academy during the early modern period. Not until 1679, did Venetian painters make any attempt to separate themselves from their fellow painterly professionals in the guild.

Moreover, the Republic of Venice shaped the visual imagination of political thought more than any other republican state (and sometimes even more than monarchies) in the early modern period. Over the centuries, La Serenissima refined a portrait of itself, and even during periods of decline the Venetian myth influenced and fascinated Europe and areas beyond Europe (i.e., Venice's colonies and the United States of America). The personified Venetia represented in a single figure the virtues of the Republic and thus an abstract concept of the state. This allowed the notion of the ideal republican state as the best system of government to become a myth as well. Foreign visitors and writers, above all the English, but also the Dutch, proliferated the image (and its half-truths) throughout Europe.⁴² The Ducal palace with its pictorial cycles, painted after the fire of 1577, became the primary manifestation of this myth.

By comparing the republics, however, we begin to notice the differences with respect to art market, art production, patterns of collecting and self-imaging. The most striking of these comparisons were similarities among the corporate style of art production organisations that did not leave much room for the establishment of art academies, which were closely connected to the royal courts. Guild structures, on the other hand, did not hamper a flourishing artistic life, as the Dutch Golden Age demonstrated.

Differences in the patterns of collecting were determined by the divergent functions of paintings in households. Although the secularisation of taste gradually took hold almost everywhere, the aesthetic function of paintings dominated the Dutch household in the seventeenth-century Netherlands. This, however, undermines the common thesis, presented by many Swiss art historians, that it was the Reformation that caused a decline in Swiss art production. Why did art flourish in the Calvinist Netherlands and simultaneously decline in the *Eidgenossenschaft*? This was probably due to both the relative openness of mercantile cities and to the existence of merchant communities (standing apart from the patrician elite), which further enabled communications between art consumers and art producers and stimulated a demand for art on a larger scale than in the Swiss cities. Only in the eighteenth century, when a European harmonisation of taste took place – due to the export of Dutch paintings and the emergence of collecting – were the Swiss territories included in the process and, with their visualisation of the Alps, gave it a specific content. This leads us to the notion of self-imaging, which seems to be quite

similar in all of the republics. Self-imaging tends to reflect and allegorise society's leaders as opposed to glorifying royal families. Freedom and both personal and national peace also played an important role. Thus, it was only in Switzerland (which was not occupied by any monarchical forces during the nineteenth century) that the myth of liberty and peace, as represented by the Alps, not only survived but actually stimulated increased artistic production by Swiss and foreign painters.⁴³

Notes

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9 The Dassier Workshop in Geneva and the Netherlands: Two Calvinist Republics Expressed in Medallion Form, 1695-1748

William Eisler

The works of Jean Dassier (1676-1763) and his two sons, Jacques-Antoine (1715-1759) and Antoine (1718-1780), celebrated medalists and coin engravers at the Geneva Mint, are historic and artistic milestones.² Their medals treating Geneva's historical events and personages produced during the 1730s and 1740s were more than just reflections of a troubled period. They also served as political and diplomatic instruments. In 1738, Jean Dassier was elected, along with others from the bourgeoisie, to serve on the expanded Conseil des Deux-Cents (Council of Two Hundred) which, together with the Petit Conseil (Small Council) and the syndics, basically constituted the government of the Republic. It is logical then to assume that the medals produced by his atelier after 1738 were consonant with official policies. These works include the final and most ambitious of several series executed by the family atelier, the *Histoire de la République romaine*, which consists of sixty small medals in silver and bronze dealing with Roman history from Romulus to the reign of Augustus (fig. 1).³ A prospectus for the sale of collection by subscription was printed on 1 August 1746, and its completion was announced in September 1750 in Paris in the pages of the *Mercure de France*.⁴ In all probability, however, work had been terminated two years earlier. A medal now apparently lost but formerly held by the Koninklijk Penningkabinet of the Netherlands bore a bust of the Dutch stadtholder William IV (1711-1751) and the following inscription on the reverse: 'L'histoire de la république Romaine dédiée à S.A.S. Monseigneur le Prince d'Orange et de Nassau Stadhouder ses très humbles et très obéissans serviteurs Jean Dassier & fils 1748'.⁵

The existence of this medal is never mentioned by scholars or col-



Fig. 1: Jean Dassier and sons: *Brutus / Death of Caesar* ('Last efforts at Liberty'), reverse, silver, 31.6 mm, from the series *Histoire de la République romaine*, ca. 1748. Cabinet de numismatique, Musée d'art et d'histoire, Geneva. Photos © MAH, Bettina Jacot-Descombes.

lectors, who assume that the set was issued without a dedication. Its absence would be difficult to explain, however, as each of the workshop's large series – the *Métamorphoses d'Ovide* (1717),⁶ the *Hommes illustres du siècle de Louis XIV* (1723),⁷ the *Réformateurs de l'Eglise* (1725),⁸ and the *Rois d'Angleterre* (1731)⁹ – was dedicated to a prominent person. We may suppose that a set of the *Histoire de la République romaine* was given privately to William IV and his English consort, Princess Anne of Hanover (1712-1759), daughter of George II and Queen Caroline, and that subsequently the dedication was withdrawn when the series was announced publicly in France. We can comprehend the motivation behind such an act, unprecedented in the history of the Dassier workshop. The prince of Orange was a logical recipient for a work glorifying the ancient

‘predecessor’ of the Dutch nation for which he served as head of state. The gesture would have been wholly inappropriate for an absolute monarch like Louis xv, however. Moreover, the French monarch had recently opposed William of Orange in a bitter conflict, and it would be difficult to imagine the publication of a series lauding his enemy in the pages of the *Mercure de France*, the semi-official journal of the crown.

An explanation for this apparent subterfuge can be found within the context of the multifaceted connections between the Dassiers and the Dutch medal-making and collecting world, which in turn should be viewed against the backdrop of relations between the Republics of Geneva and the Netherlands from the 1690s to the 1740s. From the moment the Dutch Republic was created, strong commercial and religious ties had linked it to the Protestant cities of Switzerland. In the late 1690s, Petrus Valkenier (1641-1712), ambassador of the United Provinces in Zurich, sought to enlist the Confederation in an anti-monarchical common front against his country’s principal enemy, France. According to Thomas Maissen, Valkenier’s speeches and writings were decisive factors in the moulding of a republican consciousness in the Swiss city-cantons of Berne and Zurich, whose ambassadors had suffered humiliating affronts in matters of protocol at the hands of the French during the seventeenth century.¹⁰ Reacting favourably to the Dutch envoy’s rhetoric, they developed new self-images as free republics. Valkenier’s efforts were designed to break the long-established French monopoly on the recruitment of Swiss mercenaries in favour of his country.

The envoy hoped that a Dutch-Swiss alliance could be extended to include Geneva, which he described as the last bulwark against French aggression. Such a proposal would have found support within the city. Sympathy for William III of Orange, stadtholder of the Netherlands, king of England and France’s staunchest opponent (1650-1702), ran high among Genevans at the time. News of his capture of Namur in 1695 had produced joyful demonstrations of support.¹¹ A brass plaque by Jean Dassier provides clear evidence of these sentiments (fig. 2).¹² The central medallion, depicting William besieging a city, is derived from a medal by the Dutch artist Jacob van Dishoecke celebrating the king-stadtholder’s triumph at Namur.¹³ The proud signature – DASSIER GENEVENSIS. F. – placed under the image, indicates that the artist’s political sympathies in favour of the House of Orange conformed to those of many of his fellow citizens.



Fig. 2: Jean Dassier, *William III on horseback*, ca. 1695-1700, brass, 71.5 x 60 mm, Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Photo © Victoria and Albert Museum.

The expressions of support embodied in this object incurred the wrath of Louis XIV's government, which promptly suspended commercial ties with Geneva and demanded excise taxes on the goods of its citizens residing in the kingdom. These punitive acts were annulled only after a Genevan embassy led by the *premier syndic* Ami Le Fort offered its apologies to the king in person. Although Valkenier succeeded in facilitating the city's effort to be included in the Treaty of Rijswijk (1697), in spite of Louis XIV's opposition, his projected republican alliance foundered in the face of the reality of Geneva's vulnerability.¹⁴

During the initial decades of the eighteenth century, French influence over Geneva continued to intensify. The city evolved into what was in effect a protectorate of France, while its bankers reaped profits from their privileged status within that country. Nevertheless, ties with the Netherlands, a principal enemy of the Bourbons and, like Geneva, an important refuge for French Calvinists seeking asylum after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, were not severed. In 1712, the Dutch facilitated Geneva's inclusion in another major

European treaty, the Peace of Utrecht, which was signed the following year. The warm sentiments linking the two states are evident from the extremely cordial tone of the letter sent to Geneva by the States General on this occasion.¹⁵ Twenty-four years later, the pastor of the Walloon Church in The Hague, Charles Chais (1700-1785), a native of Geneva and a graduate of its Academy, worked in close association with the powerful *greffier* (registrar) of the States General, François Fagel (1659-1746), to negotiate the incorporation of his homeland within the terms of the Treaty of Vienna, which ended the War of the Polish Succession.¹⁶

The same period witnessed the emergence of Dassier's medallic enterprise on the international scene. Although his initial collections, the *Métamorphoses d'Ovide* (1717) and the *Hommes illustres du siècle de Louis XIV* (1723) were dedicated to the French regent, Philippe d'Orléans, subsequent series were designed to appeal to Protestant Europe: the *Réformateurs de l'Eglise*, twenty-four medals of the leading Reformation heroes dedicated to William Wake, Archbishop of Canterbury, in 1725, and the *Rois d'Angleterre*, offered to George II in 1731. These works prompted a positive reaction in the Netherlands. Medals from both series were reproduced for the very first time anywhere by the Leiden painter and historian Frans van Mieris the Younger in his monumental work, the *Historie der Nederlandsche vorsten*, published between 1732 and 1735.¹⁷

The Genevan master's success in the Netherlands was no doubt related to his interest in the medallic arts of that country. Dutch influence is clearly visible in the group of medals engraved by Dassier between 1734 and 1737 during the Genevan political crisis which was terminated by the French-dominated mediation of 1738. The turmoil was provoked by complaints on the part of the bourgeois faction, including prosperous artisans such as Dassier, against its exclusion from the decision-making process in the Republic. Matters came to a head in early March 1734 with the launching of a large-scale protest against the introduction of taxes to finance the construction of costly fortifications.¹⁸ As a member of one of the city's sixteen militia companies, Dassier participated in the presentation of collective complaints or *répresentations* to the syndics, whose membership consisted exclusively of wealthy patricians from a restricted circle of prominent families. Both the bourgeois faction and their opponents, the '*aristo-démocrates*' who ruled the Republic, claimed to be the true champions of liberty and justice.



Fig. 3: Jean Dassier, *Louis Le Fort*, 1734, gilt bronze, 54.6 mm, Cabinet de numismatique, Musée d'art et d'histoire, Geneva. Photos © MAH, Bettina Jacot-Descombes.

In November 1734, Jean Dassier engraved a medal honouring Louis Le Fort, chief architect of the truce between the warring sides (fig. 3).¹⁹ The obverse presents a new sort of medallion hero. With his benign, calm expression and his open vest with its casually turned-up edge, Dassier's Le Fort is the direct antithesis of the absolutist demigod. The linkage with the portraits of Dutch officials of the Golden Age is evident. On the reverse, the visual discourse in defence of republican liberty is likewise predicated on Dutch prototypes. On the left, under the watchful eye of Providence, Liberty rests her arm upon the shield of Geneva, next to which lies a cornucopia. In her right hand, she holds the Liberty pole surmounted by the traditional cap or *pileus*; with her left she supports a Bible. At right are four genii. The first, symbolising Union, holds a fasces in his right hand and a heart in the left. The second, emblematic of the Sciences, stands behind a lectern reading a book; a globe is placed at the right. The fourth, depicted painting Liberty's portrait, exemplifies the Arts. The exergue reads: JURA CIVIUM ASSERTA. | ANNO 1734. (The rights of the citizens affirmed in 1734).

The imagery can be compared with the obverse of a medal by Reginer Arrondeaux struck by the province of Friesland in commemoration of the Treaty of Rijswijk in 1697 (fig. 4).²⁰ Here Friesland in the guise of a female figure seated on the fasces rests her arm on the shield of the province and holds the Liberty pole surmounted by the *pileus*. She sits before the Temple of Janus with its doors opened to indicate a



Fig. 4: After Regnier Arrondeaux, *Commemorative medal of the Treaty of Rijswijk (1697)*, obverse, engraving from Gérard van Loon, *Histoire métallique des XVII provinces des Pays-Bas, depuis l'abdication de Charles-Quint, jusqu'à la paix de Bade en MDCCXVI*, 5 vols., The Hague, 1732-1737, IV (1736), p. 271, n. 25. Photos © Bibliothèque d'art et d'archéologie, Geneva (Jonathan Delachaux).

state of war. The legend *APERTO DIGNA TIMERI* signifies: 'She [Friesland] is to be feared when it [the temple] is open'. Both the fasces, an ancient Roman symbol of civic unity, and the Liberty pole and cap were frequently employed in art associated with the Dutch Republic.

Two years later, Dassier turned once again to Dutch republican imagery in a medal whose message was more ambiguous. The circumstances centred on an unsuccessful attempt on the part of the exiled military engineer, Jacques-Barthélémy Micheli du Crest, to re-enter Geneva.²¹ The latter had been banished for his harsh critique of the fortification scheme. The arrest of one of Micheli's young supporters



Fig. 5: Jean Dassier, *Concord Restored in Geneva (Justice and Liberty)*, 1736, reverse, silver, 55 mm, Cabinet de numismatique, Musée d'art et d'histoire, Geneva. Photos © МАН, Andreia

led to a bourgeois rally which was promptly disrupted by the government. A truce was arranged on 18 February, after which the regime granted legal representation to the accused, a minor concession in view of the fact that such rights were an integral part of the edict of 1734. Dassier's medal (fig. 5)²² therefore celebrates an event which could hardly be viewed as a victory for his own faction. The legend engraved in the exergue on the reverse, *CONCORDIA GENEVÆ RESTITUTA*, distorts its meaning and exaggerates its importance. The work's production can best be viewed as the expression of a desire for peace and reconciliation

On the obverse, the arms of Geneva are flanked by Religion and a winged genius accompanied by attributes of art and industry. The female figures on the reverse recall another Dutch work commemorating the Peace of Rijswijk (fig. 6).²³ On its reverse, a graceful Justice embraced by Peace offers a cornucopia to the enthroned Europe.



Fig. 6: Unknown artist, *Commemorative medal of the Treaty of Rijswijk (1697)*, reverse, engraving from Van Loon, IV, 1736, p. 266, n. 24. Photo © Bibliothèque d'art et d'archéologie, Geneva (Jonathan Delachaux).

Dassier's Liberty appears to have been inspired by yet another Dutch medal, celebrating the partial demilitarisation of the Netherlands following the Peace of Aachen in 1668, in which the United Provinces are represented by a standing female figure holding a pole surmounted by a Liberty cap.²⁴ In contrast to its cold reception of the Le Fort medal, the government's reaction to Dassier's latest venture was positive. The Conseil thanked the artist and offered two *louis d'or* to his assistants. The favourable response suggested that the government may have considered appropriating the medal for its own political purposes.

In August 1737, the Genevan dispute degenerated into armed conflict, with a number of deaths on both sides.²⁵ With the Town Hall under siege a truce was arranged under the auspices of the French consul or *résident*, Pierre de La Closure. The beleaguered govern-



Fig. 7: Jean Dassier, *Cardinal de Fleury*, 1736-1737, reverse, silver, 54.7 mm. Photos © МАН, Bettina Jacot-Descombes and Andreia Gomes (reverse).

ment wrote to its allies in Berne and Zurich, who promptly sent delegations to the city. At the same moment Dassier produced a portrait medal of Cardinal Fleury, which he offered to the latter as a diplomatic gesture (fig. 7).²⁶ It is conceivable that the minister's reaction to the crisis was tempered, in part at least, by Dassier's initiative, for the ambassador chosen to negotiate the peace, the Comte de Lautrec, was a conciliatory figure admired by all parties. In November, Fleury generously rewarded the medallist with a gold snuffbox, the quintessential diplomatic gift, whereupon the latter wrote a letter expressing his gratitude to Louis XIV, stating that:

La bourgeoisie de Geneve, dont je suis membre, auroit infailliblement succombé sous le poids des revolutions qui l'ont agitée, si la bienveillance de ce grande monarque ne s'étoit manifestée comme un secours du Ciel, dans l'état le plus perilleux où un peuple puisse jamais se trouver.²⁷



Fig. 8: After Jean Drappentier, *Commemorative medal of the Peace of Utrecht (1713)*, reverse, engraving from Van Loon, v, 1737, p.227, n. 1. Photo © Bibliothèque d'art et d'archéologie, Geneva (Jonathan Delachaux).

The obverse is a rather free rendition of the standard portrait by the French painter Hyacinthe Rigaud; the rigid formality of the picture is broken by the vivacious expression and dishevelled hair of the medallion bust. Once again, Dassier's model for the reverse was Dutch. Both text and image were based upon a work executed for Friesland by Jan Drappentier commemorating the Peace of Utrecht (1713) marking the victory of the Netherlands and its allies over the ageing Louis XIV (fig. 8).²⁸ The Dutch medallist designed a trophy composed of the instruments of all manner of art (painting, sculpture, architecture, navigation, etc.) with a caduceus as the central motif. Dassier merely inserted Hercules's club within Mercury's attribute and modified the original legend *HAEC MVNERA PACIS.* (Such are the fruits of peace) into a text paying tribute to Fleury's sagacious policies which reversed the failures of the Sun King's declining years.

It seems likely that the cardinal was cognisant and appreciative of Dassier's adroit transformation of an object celebrating a Dutch triumph into a work praising his own prudent actions on behalf of France. No doubt he also recognised the importance of medallic art in the Netherlands, for in his letter thanking Dassier for his gift he advised the engraver to seek clients in that country.²⁹ The aptness of his suggestion is borne out by the presence of the Fleury medal in the important collection of Cornelius Ascanius van Sypestyn (1694-1744), former *Burgermeester* of Haarlem and a distinguished antiquarian.³⁰

One of the strongest supporters of Geneva in the Netherlands was the *greffier* François Fagel. After the signing of the peace agreement in May 1738, he wrote a letter to the Conseil indicating that he would do his best to maintain the positive dispositions of his government. An important figure in political circles, Fagel was also one of the most discerning medal collectors in Europe. His vast collection inevitably must have included a number of Dassier's works associated with Geneva's political crisis. However, we know from his correspondence with his friend, the celebrated gem connoisseur Baron Philipp von Stosch (1691-1757), that he did not care for the Genevan's works, at least not those executed prior to ca. 1738, or for that matter, the medals of his own countrymen, all of which were imbued with what he called 'German' bad taste. His preferences lay not with Dutch realism, but with the more idealised Italian or Italian-inspired works derived from what he deemed the only legitimate artistic forms, those of the Antique. Furthermore, he condemned Dassier's employment of inauthentic visual source material for the initial proofs of a number of portraits in his series on English kings. These were corrected only after prodding by the print engraver and historian George Vertue.³¹ Fagel expressed the hope that the medalist's son Jacques-Antoine, currently studying in Italy, would improve on his father's manner through a proper study of ancient art.³²

Ironically, Jean Dassier had more sympathy for the realism endemic to traditional Dutch visual culture than the *greffier*. He employed it in early sketches for one of his most important works: the commemorative medal of the Mediation of 1738, struck in May of that year (fig. 9).³³ This endeavour was undertaken entirely under French auspices with the Comte de Lautrec, Louis xv's envoy, as supervisor. The initial project has not been identified but is known through a contemporary description.³⁴ It included a bust of the ambassador on the ob-



Fig. 9: Jean Dassier, *Medal of the Genevan Mediation*, 1738, reverse, gilt bronze, 54.7 mm, Cabinet de numismatique, Musée d'art et d'histoire, Geneva.

Photos © МАИ, Bettina Jacot-Descombes.

verse, later replaced by a commemorative inscription in the completed medal. The design for the reverse included the same personage depicted as seated in a chair under a canopy in front of a table, around which were placed the representatives of France, Zurich, Berne and Geneva, dressed in mantles with collars, with the legend *LE PACIFICATION ET LA REUNION DES CŒURS* appearing under the image. The schema has nothing in common with contemporary French medals, and would seem to conform more closely to a seventeenth-century Dutch work celebrating four naval heroes – Maarten Harpertzoon Tromp, Pieter Pieterszoon Heyn, Jacob van Heemskerck and Jan van Galen – who are represented seated around a table.³⁵ Dassier's sketch was scornfully rejected by Claude Gros de Boze (1680-1753), curator of the Cabinet des médailles and secre-

tary of the Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres, the *Petite académie* which oversaw the production of all royal medals in France, who remarked ‘*Ce projet n’a rien de noble. Cinq personnes en habit court qui travaillent autour d’une bureau, quel objet!*’³⁶ Alternative models were prepared under Gros de Boze’s supervision by Edme Bouchardon (1698-1762), the Italian-trained sculptor and chief designer for the official *Histoire métallique* of Louis xv, incorporating graceful Roman matrons symbolising Peace and Justice standing on either side of an altar à l’antique, trampling upon the prostrate figure of Discord.³⁷ The reverse of the medal struck in Geneva, based upon these studies, was far more classicising than anything previously engraved by Dassier. Its design conformed to the Franco-Italian taste in sculpture which prevailed among *érudits* internationally, whose ranks included Philipp von Stosch and his close friend François Fagel.

For the Geneva workshop the *Medal of the Mediation* represented a watershed – the first work wholly in the classical mould to emerge from the atelier. Its completion was followed within a year by the return of Jacques-Antoine Dassier from Italy where he had studied at the French Academy in Rome, acquiring the artistic education his father never had the opportunity to obtain. Shortly thereafter, Jean, Jacques-Antoine and Antoine began to channel their energies towards the creation of a new series of sixty small medals on Roman Republican history. The project was most certainly inspired by Jacques-Antoine’s Roman experiences, coupled with his father’s recent involuntary collaboration with Bouchardon, leading exponent of the Antique style among contemporary sculptors. It was decided to create a work in a classical style on a dignified ancient theme: the history of the Roman Republic, illustrating the selfless acts of its heroes and the tragic consequences engendered by excessive ambition and discord. The tumultuous events of the recent past in the Dassiers’ beloved Republic of Geneva, commemorated in their own works, provided further inspiration. Portraits of leading protagonists such as Cato, Hannibal, Scipio, Marius, Cicero, Brutus and Caesar were to be based upon ‘authentic’ renderings derived from ancient gems, thereby avoiding the charges of historical inaccuracy which had plagued the atelier’s series of English monarchs. To emphasise the seriousness of the endeavour, a booklet was to be published describing the episodes depicted and identifying the visual sources for the portraits.³⁸ In this manner, Fagel’s criticisms could be blunted.

According to a Dassier family memoir written decades later, the series was engraved between 1740 and 1743.³⁹ However, as stated earlier, a more likely date of completion is 1748, when the medals were dedicated in an almost clandestine manner to the stadtholder, William IV. The choice of the Prince of Orange as dedicatee would seem to have been predicated upon the need of Geneva to maintain good relations with the United Provinces. As a public servant and member of the Conseil des Deux-Cents, one would assume that Jean Dassier would have been cognisant of these concerns.

In the period following the Mediation, Dutch friendship would soon be tested. In the War of the Austrian Succession, which followed the death of Emperor Charles VI in 1740, the King of Sardinia, Charles-Emanuel III, took the side of the Austrian Habsburgs against Spain and France. In 1742, a Spanish army occupied Savoy, menacing Geneva. In order to counteract this threat, the Republic sought to secure Dutch mediation at the Spanish court. Thanks to the concerted efforts of Charles Chais and the active collaboration of François Fagel and his nephew Hendrik, these efforts bore fruit. On 13 September 1742, the States General of the United Provinces wrote to Geneva stating that they had ordered their ambassador in Madrid to request that the Spanish commanders refrain from any actions detrimental to the city's security. The Spanish envoy to The Hague would be given the same message.⁴⁰ The gesture was clear proof of the sincerity of Dutch expressions of friendship dating from the end of the previous century. Their intervention did not assuage Geneva's fears, however. Troops from the city's traditional allies in Berne and Zurich were requested and soon dispatched. The Spanish withdrew without incident, and the Swiss soldiers were rewarded with medals in gold and silver, engraved and struck by Dassier.⁴¹ During the second half of the decade, it was the Netherlands' turn to undergo a political crisis. Military defeats in the wake of a French invasion led to an irresistible movement in favour of the House of Orange, culminating in the nomination of Prince William IV as stadtholder of Holland on 3 May 1747, securing his control over the entire country. Although Geneva was firmly ensconced within the French sphere of influence, its citizens undoubtedly shared some of the sentiments of their fellow Calvinists in Holland upon the nomination of a leader who, they hoped, was heir to the military prowess of his ancestor William III. On June 13, Geneva sent a letter congratulating the prince upon his appointment. It praised him as a worthy successor to



Fig. 10: Jean Dassier and sons, *William IV, Prince of Orange, appointed stadtholder of Holland (second version)*, 1747, bronze, 54.7 mm, Cabinet de numismatique, Musée d'art et d'histoire, Geneva. Photos © MAH, Stéphane Rondelli.

his namesake as leader of the noble house of Orange, staunch defenders of a principal bastion of their common faith.⁴² William echoed these sentiments in his reply of 20 August, expressing the hope that he would succeed in advancing the cause of the Reformed religion while serving the interests of Geneva, an important asylum for its adherents.⁴³

As if to reinforce these sentiments, the Dassier workshop promptly created a medal expressing in visual form the aspirations for a revival of Dutch armed might under the leadership of their new champion (fig. 10).⁴⁴ The obverse, struck initially with a portrait of the prince as a young man, was subsequently re-engraved with a profile based on more recent images of the mature leader. Both versions were coupled with the identical reverse, in which William is depicted in Roman military attire. He strides forward to grasp the hand of the Netherlands, represented as a winged genius resting his right arm upon a shield decorated with the arms of the United Provinces, beckoning him to rise and grasp the lance at his feet. The legend, *MOVEBIT FORTIS IN ARMA VIROS*, derives from Anchises's vision of the future history of Rome leading up to the reign of Augustus, as recounted to his son Aeneas (*Aeneid* VI, 814-815): '*cui deinde subibit otia qui rumpet patriae residesque movebit Tullus in arma viros et iam desueta triumphis agmina*' (To him [Numa Pomilius, Rome's

second king], shall then succeed Tullus, who shall break his country's peace, and rouse to arms a slothful folk and ranks long unused to triumphs).⁴⁵ The reverse therefore alludes to the prince as a modern Tullus Hostilius, worthy successor to his illustrious namesake William III, the counterpart of Numa Pompilius in the Virgilian context. Its style corresponds to the medals of the Dassiers' *Histoire de la République romaine* which was then in the course of execution, notably the *Allegory of the Fall of Alba*, an event said to have occurred during the reign of Tullus.⁴⁶ By comparing William to the ancient Roman hero, the medallists paid tribute to a friend of their government while promoting their latest series at an important foreign court.

For the Dutch, however, kind words and medals were not sufficient; they sought more concrete signs of friendship in their hour of need. On 2 August, they requested permission to raise troops on Genevan soil to complement contingents of Swiss recruits, appealing to the Seigneurie on the basis of the '*affection que vous avez toujours porté à nôtre etat, et l'intérêt commun de nôtre religion et liberté*'.⁴⁷ The request stretched the bonds linking the two states beyond reasonable limits, as the government noted in a letter to its representative Charles Chais accompanying its official reply. It observed that, sandwiched as it was between France and the Spanish occupiers of Savoy, it absolutely could not accede to any such demand on the part of the Netherlands. Enlistment on behalf of any foreign power was in fact prohibited within the territorial limits of the Republic. And while it is true that private individuals had indeed unofficially recruited Genevan troops for France and Savoy, these had been assembled in the neighbouring territory of Versoix, a French possession, and in nearby Carouge, formerly under Savoyard rule. There was simply no suitable place to form a comparable contingent for Holland.⁴⁸ In his reply to the Seigneurie, Chais conveyed the excuses of the young *greffier* Hendrik Fagel, who explained that the Dutch had anticipated Geneva's response but that the Prince of Orange merely wished to place the city in the same category as the Swiss towns, to whom equivalent demands for troops had been made.⁴⁹

The birth of the stadtholder's son and heir in March 1748 and the peace negotiations of that year bringing an end to the War of the Austrian Succession occasioned renewed contact between Geneva and its medallist with the court at The Hague. A work by Dassier and sons celebrating the birth of the count of Buren and future William V (fig.



Fig. 11: Jean Dassier and sons, *Birth of William V, Prince of Orange*, 1748, bronze, 31.8 mm.

Photos © MAH, Bettina Jacot-Descombes.

11)⁵⁰ bears on its obverse a reduced image of the portrait of his father which had appeared on the second version of their medal of the previous year. On the reverse is a woman seated on the Netherlands lion, depicted grasping the sword and the bundle of arrows emblematic of that state. She supports a child in her lap while holding a cornucopia in her left hand. Whereas the legend, *HEROVM SOBOLES BATAV. SALVS* (The hero's offspring constitute the salvation of the Netherlands), pays homage to the young prince's father, the central motif of the mother and child is a tribute to his English descent. It derives from imagery on the reverse of the medal dedicated to his maternal grandmother, Caroline (1683-1737), consort of George II, in Jean Dassier's series *Les Rois d'Angleterre* of 1731, commemorating her charitable acts.⁵¹ The queen had played an important role in obtaining royal approval for Jean's medals on English themes.⁵² Through this subtle reference to their previous work, the engravers appealed directly to her daughter Princess Anne, doubtless in the hope of obtaining her support for future projects.

With the *Histoire de la République romaine* nearing completion, the Dassiers decided to further ingratiate themselves with the House of Orange by offering their new series to William IV. According to the old catalogue description cited previously, the obverse of its dedication was identical to that employed for the *Birth of William V*.⁵³ It must have been struck from the same die that had been used in the production of the latter piece.⁵⁴ The choice of William of Orange,

aristocratic head of a Calvinist republic, a logical decision from a political perspective, also made sense on artistic grounds. Dassier and sons must have realised that a collection inspired by antique Roman gemstones would appeal to the artistic tastes of the prince and his wife. The couple had acquired numerous gems and commissioned copies over time of ancient works as well as their own portraits from the most celebrated engraver and carver of the period, Lorenz Natter (1705-1763).⁵⁵

The presentation series was inherited by Princess Anne and is cited in the inventory of her possessions drawn up after her death in January 1759. The collection is cited as '*Een spaene doosje waerin 60 silvere medailles in papiertjes over de Romeynsche histori*'.⁵⁶ In the same document is a listing for '*Drie metale medailles op de vrede van Genève in 1734*',⁵⁷ referring to the medal of Louis Le Fort or other works by Jean Dassier produced during the crisis of the 1730s. Their presence in the princely collection attests to the multiple ties linking the Republic of Geneva and its medallic workshop with The Hague.

The Dassiers' 'medal diplomacy' complemented the efforts of their government to secure support of the Netherlands for the inclusion of Geneva in the peace treaty of Aachen on the same terms as the Swiss Confederation. Letters to this end were addressed on 26 July 1748 to the States General and the stadtholder. The missive to the Dutch government referred to the long-standing ties between the two states, as well as the Netherlands' previous interventions in the treaties of Rijswijk and Utrecht.⁵⁸ In their communication to William, the Genevans paid homage to his distinguished house, his wife and son. In regard to the young prince they noted⁵⁹

Sa naissance que fait la joye publique à laquelle nos cœurs
ont pris part, est un gage preceux des benedictions du Ciel
qui nous fait augerer selon nos desirs une suite de princes,
l'apuy de la religion et le bouclier de l'etat qui perpetueront
à jamais la gloire de la maison Nassau Orange.

By dedicating their newest and most ambitious work to the Prince of Orange, the Dassiers expressed their own hopes and those of Geneva for a long and successful reign. The transformation of the stadtholdership into a hereditary title provided reason for optimism. But hoped-for administrative reforms did not materialise, and William's military talents and leadership abilities did not equal those of his an-

cestors. The peace negotiations of 1748-1749, moreover, did not enhance his prestige.⁶⁰ It would appear that the Dassiers had little to gain by publicising their adherence to the Orange dynasty, hence it is no wonder that they did not retain the dedication when the series was officially presented in 1750. William's death in 1751 terminated any hopes they may have had to procure patronage in The Hague. Nevertheless, the legacy of their medals reflecting relationships with Dutch art and politics is extremely impressive. In an age when medallic art was generally at the service of absolutist regimes, these works enable us to broaden our understanding of the medium's capacity to define and express political and cultural relationships, while illuminating hitherto obscure links between two Calvinist republics during the Ancien Régime.

Notes

1 The author wishes to thank Thomas Maissen for his kind invitation to contribute to this publication.

2 See William Eisler, *The Dassiers of Geneva: 18th-century European medallists* Cahiers romands de numismatique 7-8, 2 vols. (Lausanne and Geneva 2002-2005), vol. I: *Jean Dassier, medal engraver: Geneva, Paris and London, 1700-1733*, vol. II: *Dassier and sons: an artistic enterprise in Geneva, Switzerland and Europe, 1733-1759*.

3 Eisler, *Dassier and sons*, ch. v.

4 *Ibid.*, 175-6.

5 Jacob Dirks, *Penningkundig repertorium. Mededeelingen ter aanvulling van de Penninggeschiedenis der Nederlanden*, vol. III (Aanteekeningen op de *Vervolgen op Van Loon I-V*, 1716-1768) (Leeuwarden 1891), 202, cat. 1091. The author wishes to thank Carolien Voightmann, curator of medals at the Koninklijk Penningkabinet, Utrecht, for undertaking a search for the medal in question in her collection.

6 Eisler, *Jean Dassier*, ch. II.

7 *Ibid.*, ch. III.

8 *Ibid.*, 178-203, 209-21.

9 *Ibid.*, 232-42, 252-64, 272-81.

10 Thomas Maissen, 'Petrus Valkeniers republikanische Sendung', *Revue suisse d'histoire* 48 (1998), 149-76.

11 On Geneva's reaction to William III's capture of Namur and its consequences, see Bernard Gagnebin, 'Le XVIII^e siècle – la politique extérieure',

- in: Paul -E. Martin (ed.), *Histoire de Genève dès origins à 1798* (Geneva 1951), 386.
- 12 Victoria and Albert Museum, London (Eisler, *Jean Dassier*, 22, 24, cat. I, 2; ill. p. 31). The same motif was employed by Dassier on watchcases engraved in his atelier (*ibid.*, cat. I, 3-4).
- 13 Edward Hawkins, *Medallic illustrations of the history of Great Britain and Ireland to the death of George II*, vol. II (London 1885), 130, no. 381.
- 14 Thomas Maissen, ‘Genf und Zurich von 1584 bis 1792 – eine Allianz von Republiken?’, in: Wolfgang Kaiser, Claudius Sieber-Lehmann, Christian Windler (eds), *Eidgenössische “Grenzfälle”: Mülhausen und Genf* (Basel 2001), 312ff.
- 15 Archives d’Etat de Genève, Pièces historiques (hereafter AEG PH) 4191, 9 June 1712.
- 16 Letters of Charles Chais to the Petit Conseil, 26 April, 4 May, 4 December 1736 (AEG PH 4634). On Chais and the portrait executed in The Hague some years later by Dassier’s famed compatriot, the Genevan painter Jean-Etienne Liotard, see Frans Grijzenhout, *Liotard in Nederland*, exh. cat., (Utrecht 1985), cat. 40. On Fagel, see Eisler, *Dassier and sons*, 157, 160-163, 175-7, 280, 376, 381, with further references.
- 17 These included *John Hus* and *Jerome of Prague* from the Reformers series and *Henry VIII*, *Edward VI* and *Mary I* from the English kings. See Eisler, *Dassier and sons*, 43.
- 18 Eisler, *Dassier and sons*, 38-41.
- 19 *Ibid.*, 41-48, cat. III, 1 (ill. p. 107).
- 20 Eisler, *Dassier and sons*, 42-43, fig. 3.
- 21 *Ibid.*, 55-56.
- 22 *Ibid.*, 56-59; cat. II, 5 (ill. p. 110).
- 23 *Ibid.*, 58, fig. 8.
- 24 *Ibid.*, 58-9, fig. 9.
- 25 See Eisler, *Dassier and sons*, 60-1.
- 26 *Ibid.*, 61-5; cat. II, 6 (ill. p. 111).
- 27 Dassier to Fleury, 13 November 1737; Archives du Ministère des Affaires étrangères, Paris, Correspondance politique: Genève 51, f. 87v.
- 28 Eisler, *Dassier and sons*, 63, fig. 10.
29. ‘[J]e sçais, que beaucoup de personnes desirent dans quelques pays etrangers et principalement en Hollande d’en avoir des medailles et que vous pourrés être en etat de les satisfaire’ : Fleury to Dassier, 7 November 1737 (draft); AMAE CP: Genève 51, f. 92r.
- 30 *Catalogus van het uitmunted cabinet met goude, zilvere, kopere en andere medailles, voor het grootste gedeelte behoorende tot de Nederlandsche*

historien ... Mr. Cornelis Ascanius van Sypensteyn, in zyn wel ed. leven Raad en Burgermeester der stad Haerlem, auction cat., Haarlem, 22 February 1745, no. 2089 (described as a medal of Cardinal Fleury with the club of Hercules on the reverse).

31 Concerning Vertue's critique of the *Rois d'Angleterre*, see Eisler, *Jean Dassier*, 234-41.

32 On Fagel's collection of medals and his correspondence with Stosch on that subject, see Eisler, *Dassier and sons*, pp. 160-162. The relevant letters concerning the Dassiers are preserved in the National Archives in The Hague (1737, 1740; Collectie Fagel 2060 and 2066). Fagel's collection of Italian medals can be reconstructed in part from indications in Van Mieris's *Historie der Nederlandsche vorsten*.

33 Eisler, *Dassier and sons*, 66-71, 88-9, 98-9 (cat. II, 8; ill. pp. 112-113).

34. 'Journal de Jean Perdriau', 26 January 1738: BPU, Manuscrits de la Société d'histoire et d'archéologie de Genève 6, f. 91r.

35 An engraving of the reverse is reproduced in Eisler, *Dassier and sons*, 68, fig. 12.

36 Gros de Boze to Lautrec, 21 March 1738: AMAE CP: Genève 52, f. 397r.

37 Two drawings by Bouchardon for this project are preserved in New York (Metropolitan Museum of Art and Pierpont Morgan Library; see Eisler, *Dassier and sons*, p. 69).

38 Printed with the title *Explication des médailles gravées par Jean Dassier & fils, représentant une suite de sujets tirés de l'histoire romaine*, [Geneva ca. 1750].

39 Antoine Dassier and Jean Dassier II, ['Mémoire abrégé de la vie de Jean Dassier et de Jacques-Antoine Dassier'], ms., [Geneva 1771]. Berne, Burgbibliothek, Mss. Hist. Helv. III 189, p. 134.

40 Letter from the States General to the Genevan government, 13 September 1742: AEG PH 4705. See also the letters from Charles Chais to the Seigneurie of 13 and 18 September and 16, 19 and 23 October 1742: AEG PH 4706.

41 For these medals, see Eisler, *Dassier and sons*, 83, 103-4 (cat. II, 18-19; ill. p. 119).

42 AEG Lettres du Conseil 1744-1749, CL 79, p. 403.

43 AEG Registres du Conseil 247, 1747, between 285-6.

44 Eisler, *Dassier and sons*, 322-4, 335, cat. VII, 5 (ill. pp. 341-342).

45 *Virgil*, transl. by H. Rushton Fairclough, (London and Cambridge, MA. 1965), I, 563.

46 Eisler, *Dassier and sons*, 189-90, cat. v, 4 reverse (ill. p. 228).

47 AEG RC 247, 1747, between pp. 271-2.

- 48 The Petit Conseil to Charles Chais, 18 August 1747: AEG Lettres du Conseil 1744-1749, CL 79, p. 416.
- 49 Charles Chais to the Petit Conseil, 8 September 1747: AEG RC 247, 1747, between pp. 296-7.
- 50 Eisler, *Dassier and sons*, 323, 335, cat. VII, 6 (ill. p. 343).
- 51 Eisler, *Jean Dassier*, 252, cat. v, B2 (ill. p. 272).
- 52 Concerning Caroline's impact upon the history of these works, see Eisler, *Jean Dassier*, 232, 241, 248-50, and *Dassier and sons*, 380-82.
- 53 Dirks, *Penningkundig repertorium*, 202.
- 54 Eisler, *Dassier and sons*, 335, cat. 6d (ill. p. 343).
- 55 See Elizabeth Nau, *Lorenz Natter 1705-1763. Gemmenschneider und Medailleur* (Biberbach an der Riss 1966), 40-4.
- 56 S.W.A. Drossaers and Th.H. Lunsingh Scheuleer, *Inventarissen van de inboedels in de verblijven van de Oranjes... 1567-1795*, II (The Hague 1974-1976), 778.
- 57 *Ibid.*
- 58 The Petit Conseil to the States General, 26 July 1748: AEG Lettres du Conseil 1744-1749, CL 79, p. 545.
- 59 The Petit Conseil to William IV, 26 July 1748: *ibid.*, pp. 545-6.
- 60 See Grijzenhout, 'Beeldvorming en verwachting: feestdecoraties bij de inhuldiging van Willem IV tot stadhouder van Holland, Zeeland en Utrecht in 1747', *Leids Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 4 (1985), 125.

PART V

Republican Economies

10 Exporting Mercenaries, Money, and Mennonites: A Swiss Diplomatic Mission to The Hague, 1710-1715¹

Stefan Altorfer-Ong

The 10th of April 1710 must have been a busy day at the residence of the Grand Pensionary Anthonie Heinsius, the highest-ranking official in the province of Holland. In his antechamber, a crowd of foreign ministers and Mennonite deputies were waiting for their meeting with the Bernese diplomat François Louis de Pesmes de Saint-Saphorin. On the agenda was the fate of several dozen Anabaptists, who had been expelled from the canton of Berne for their refusal to join its militia army. The government of Berne had, in its own words,

pour se défaire d'un bon nombre d'Anaptistes [sic!] que l'on tient enfermé depuis quelque temps ... pris la resolution de les remettre au Sr. Ritter et assoieés pour les transporter en Amerique, à l'occasion du voyage qu'ils font sans cela pour y emmener une colonie de toutes sortes de gens ramassés.²

The Dutch had intercepted this deportation and demanded an immediate release of the captured dissenters. Saphorin tried to convince them that Bernese national defence was more important than freedom of conscience – and he failed. A compromise was eventually reached, leaving the Anabaptists free to settle in the Netherlands with the promise that they never return to Switzerland. The next day, Samuel Ritter, the Bernese tradesman who was supposed to bring the Anabaptists to their final destination, arrived in The Hague and announced that he had freed the captives three days earlier in Nijmegen as the result of a popular protest.³

The document that recounts this incident bears the enigmatic title of *Livre contenant les négociations faites de la part de Leurs Ex^{ces}*

[*Excellences*: the government of Berne] *sur le sujet des Argents et des Anabaptistes*.⁴ It contains correspondence between the government of Berne and Saphorin from 1710 to 1715, when he was in The Hague for a peace conference following the War of the Spanish Succession, in which the Swiss had not directly taken part. During his mission, Saphorin had to deal with various issues affecting the bilateral relations between the Netherlands and Switzerland, or more precisely, between the canton of Berne and the province of Holland. I will use this historical episode to examine important structural differences between the two republics. As an economic historian, the story I relate is one of exports. It is, however, not an analysis of shiploads of cheese, clocks or clogs, but one of goods of a far less tangible nature: mercenaries, money and Mennonites. With respect to Saphorin's mission, each will be discussed in a separate section. I will conclude by drawing up a somewhat unorthodox trading balance.

Saphorin's Mission, or the Export of Mercenaries

François Louis de Pesmes de Saint Saphorin was a member of the local nobility of the Pays de Vaud, a French-speaking subject territory of the republic of Berne. Because all of the important government offices in the canton were exclusively reserved for a small oligarchy of patricians from the city of Berne, the only way to make a political career for a man with Saphorin's ambition was to go abroad. At the age of 17, he entered the service of Duke Ernst August of Calenburg and was posted to Maastricht in 1685. Saphorin later joined the Imperial army and climbed the ranks to become vice-admiral of the Danube fleet in 1696, which is a fairly remarkable achievement for the native of a landlocked country. At the same time, he frequented the imperial court and gained a reputation for intrigue and negotiation. The *Livre* is full of anecdotal evidence of his restlessness and diplomatic zeal, which also made Saphorin an ambiguous character. The English ambassador William Aglionby drew the portrait of a clever and busy man who was vain enough to prevent others from succeeding if he felt left out: 'Saint Saphorin is an ingenious and very busy man... he pretends to manage all the affairs and indeed all the ministers in Switzerland, he is one of those men who loves a bustle and rather than not have the honour of [carrying out] a busynesse will make it miscarrye'.⁵

Saphorin's diplomatic career was remarkably international. The Emperor, the King of Prussia and several minor princes sent him to Switzerland on their behalf. He also accomplished missions for Berne overseas, and later became a minister for Britain's Hanoverian King George I at the Imperial court in Vienna. Throughout all of these ventures, Saphorin was never a full-fledged ambassador with plenipotentiary power, but rather a 'freelance' diplomat without formal backing. His mission to the peace negotiations in The Hague from 1710 to 1715 was symptomatic: Though Saphorin had an official commission from the Emperor, he went there first and foremost as an agent for Berne, following secret instructions. These came from the *Peace Commission*, a government body that consisted of the inner circle of Bernese patricians. It was largely controlled by the leader of the Anti-French party at the time, Mayor Johann Friedrich Willading. Saphorin's hidden agenda for the peace negotiations consisted of four points. First, to 'neutralise' and thus wrest from French control the Franche Comté, Strasbourg and the Alsace. Second, to demolish the French fortress at Hüningen, which stood as a threat to Basel. Third, to buy the neighbouring Pays de Gex for Berne, or at least for allied Geneva. Fourth, to broker a defensive military alliance with the Protestant powers. It was only in this last area that Saphorin succeeded. As a result of his mission, the Alliance of 1712 between Berne and the Dutch regulated the number of mercenary troops that were allowed to serve in the United Provinces.⁶

Mercenaries were one of the main exports of the Bernese economy in the eighteenth century. The nature of military services had changed dramatically with the introduction of standing armies and improved firearms in the seventeenth century. Instead of being a relatively undisciplined lot motivated by profit and looting, armies were now expected to be disciplined. This could be seen in their uniforms and standardised equipment, and was experienced by the soldiers in their everyday activities of marching and drilling; only the attempts to limit the looting showed little success.⁷ The first modern *line regiment* from Berne was part of the standing army of Louis XIV after 1671, and its direct connection to the Netherlands was of an unfortunate nature. In 1672-1673, the French king invaded the United Provinces with his Swiss troops, who became an occupational force. This happened despite a contractual obligation not to employ the Bernese regiment against fellow Protestants. In Berne, the outcry at this *transgression* by Louis XIV was fuelled by those in favour of the

recruitment of mercenaries for the Dutch. They achieved the goal of levying troops for the Netherlands without interference from the canton's authorities, although there was no official permission granted. After 1693, two Bernese regiments were sent to Holland under a secret treaty, followed by a third after 1700.⁸

The providing of mercenaries to allies was consistent with an interpretation of neutrality where supporting foreign powers was acceptable, as long as all parties were treated equally. As a result, Switzerland had become a 'reservoir' for mercenaries.⁹ So-called *capitulation* treaties regulated the use of troops by foreign powers and stipulated that all regiments could be withdrawn in cases where a military emergency arose at home. As a consequence, those who were interested in mercenaries, notably the French kings, had a high interest in maintaining peace with the Swiss Confederation and moderating conflicts between the cantons. The resulting *Pax Helvetica* came at a high cost in individual lives. Swiss soldiers died on the battlefields of Europe while their country remained at peace. From a cynically geopolitical, and certainly a purely economic perspective, the cantons benefited in several ways from the export of mercenaries. The right to levy troops was usually sold for large amounts of cash ('pensions'), salt, and tax exemptions on Swiss export products. Members of ruling families were also offered the opportunity of a military career, which often included a good education abroad. When they returned from serving overseas, officers were integrated into the Bernese militia and thus improved its quality.¹⁰ Furthermore, those few patrician families who owned regiments as military entrepreneurs gained an opportunity to make vast profits in this high-risk business.

Richard Feller mentions the anecdote of fifty Bernese mercenaries who served as private guards for William III of Orange. They are said to have accompanied him to England in 1688 and marched into London to the sound of the Bernese national anthem.¹¹ At the onset of the War of the Spanish Succession, two battalions and three regiments from Berne served in Holland, alongside two battalions from Zurich and two other Swiss companies. At the same time, there were eleven Swiss regiments in France, one of which was Bernese. Within their contractual obligations, foreign powers had the option to recruit or discharge mercenaries according to their needs. The effective number of troops in the Bernese regiments in France and the United Provinces can be established from enrolment registers (see fig. 1).¹²

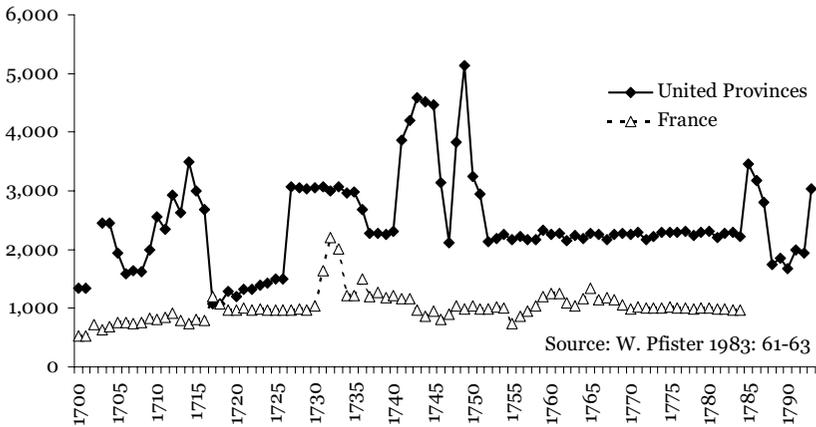


Figure 1: Effective Number of Bernese Mercenary Troops, 1700-1793

Compared to France, the Netherlands made more versatile use of their Swiss soldiers. In peacetime, the expensive foreign troops were reduced as much as possible and only increased when necessary. In this sense, the Dutch had a more demand-driven view of their mercenary army. The other difference was that the Dutch did not pay *pensions* for the sole right to levy troops. For the French king, such payments to governments or important families secured clientelistic relations. This technique was arguably less effective in Berne than in the Catholic part of Switzerland.¹³ Nevertheless, the Dutch ambassador to Protestant Switzerland, Peter Valkenier, complained in the 1690s that levying troops was so much easier for his French counterpart, who could ‘negotiate with money, whereas I have to negotiate with arguments’.¹⁴ He was shocked by the greedy Swiss who would, as one magistrate from Luzern put it, even provide troops to the devil if he only paid enough.¹⁵ Despite Valkenier’s indignation, the house of Orange had its subtle ways to influence foreign politicians as well (see fig. 2).

In 1690, William III offered a present to the *Äusserer Stand*, an assembly of young Bernese patricians. It was a drinking cup in the shape of a lion, holding the shield of England surrounded by oranges and the device of the order of the garter, *honi soit qui mal y pense*.¹⁶ It was not a coincidence that the cup was given to future government members while Berne was negotiating a military alliance with the Dutch and English. Such gifts were intended to foster good relations between fellow Protestants, or – *honi soit qui mal y pense* – as



Figure 2: Lion drinking cup, Emanuel Jenner, 1690. Historisches Museum Bern.

bribery to attain political goals. Despite all good intentions, no treaty was concluded in the late seventeenth century, however. Towards the end of the War of the Spanish Succession, there were new talks about a defensive treaty with the Netherlands, which finally materialised in the Alliance of June 1712. Saphorin played an important role in these negotiations. Berne eventually delivered 3,200 to 4,800 mercenaries during peacetime, and a further 4,000 in the event of war, whereas the Dutch would pay contributions to the equivalent of twenty-four mercenary companies should the canton be attacked. It was the first time that a Swiss canton accepted a formal alliance treaty without pension payment.¹⁷

Berne did not have a standing army for its own defence, preferring a militia in which one man per household had to serve for a few days every year.¹⁸ The soldiers had to buy or inherit their own equipment, and having military equipment was conditional for starting a family. With its mercenary regiments, however, Berne had a *virtual* standing army, positioned abroad and financed by other states. The militia, on the other hand, was very inexpensive. As a result, defence expenditures were limited, which allowed an exceptionally low tax burden. The yearly tax revenues per capita were the equivalent of four days' wages of a labourer in the eighteenth century.¹⁹ As a *surplus state*, Berne spent consistently less than its total revenues and thus managed to accumulate a considerable cash reserve throughout the seventeenth century. The absence of major wars was a *conditio sine qua non* for maintaining this virtuous cycle. The contrast to the Netherlands could not be more dramatic: There, warfare was almost constant, resulting in both public debt on an unprecedented scale and a tax burden that was arguably the highest in Europe.²⁰

Lessons in *Financial Revolution*, or the Export of Money

In the early eighteenth century, the legendary coffers of Berne were filled with gold and silver coins. The exact amount of this treasure was – and remains – unknown, as the government intentionally kept no detailed records. Bernese politicians gradually began to realise that keeping such large cash reserves reduced monetary circulation. This made little economic sense when the alternative was to invest and obtain a return. The fact that the government was not accountable to anyone for these revenues, especially not to taxpayers who could demand political participation, further enhanced the attractiveness of this option. As a result, the state of Berne started to invest in domestic mortgages in 1677, when it barred all foreign (i.e., non-Bernese) lenders from the market. The amount of money that could be absorbed by the already overcrowded local credit market was limited by the lack of productive investment opportunities. There was little commercial activity or demand for industrial capital. With both the state and its citizens accumulating fortunes, the result was an oversupply that materialised into massive capital exports from private investors. Their funds were mostly geared towards French government annuities, traded on the market of neighbouring Geneva.

On 15 November 1709, the Great Council decided to follow the example of Bernese private investors and spend money overseas. The 'considerable sum' of up to a million Taler had to be invested in 'a safe place'.²¹ For both financial and political reasons, England and Holland were chosen over France. The sum of a million Taler was indeed considerable for Berne, as it represented three to four times the yearly average revenue of the most important accounts of the canton.²² For a comparison, note that in 1712, the government took less than half this sum (437,500 Taler) from its cash reserve to pay the full expenses for a short civil war with the Catholic cantons, the Second War of Villmergen.²³

On 28 November 1710, Mayor Willading wrote on behalf of the *Secret Council* to Saphorin in The Hague, requesting him to secretly investigate how and where money could be invested. As an answer, Saphorin gave him a lesson in what historians have called the *Financial Revolution*.²⁴ He explained how capital markets in Amsterdam and London worked by expounding upon the concept of a *funded debt*,²⁵ government bond liquidity, and exchange rate mechanisms. For a Bernese investment in England, Saphorin suggested the purchase of shares in the Bank of England.²⁶ But even though Willading followed this advice for his personal fortune, the rest of the government deemed this strategy to be too risky and unpredictable.²⁷ In April 1710, they opted for the more traditional solution of a loan to Queen Anne, secured by future tax revenues accorded by Parliament.²⁸ For an investment in the Netherlands, Saphorin cautioned against relying on the capital market, but to grant a loan from sovereign to sovereign, for which he considered the province of Holland the most secure debtor. The problem was that the Dutch provinces preferred to issue tradable bonds without a fixed maturity date, which allowed them to redeem debts at their own discretion. Bonds with the highest interest rates were usually paid out first, together with those that were tax exempt. Redemption, however, was what Berne wanted to avoid.²⁹ Therefore, Saphorin's task was to convince the Province of Holland to make an exception by granting an irredeemable loan with the longest possible maturity.

A major reason for the success of these financial negotiations with the Dutch was that Saphorin managed to secure the personal support of Grand Pensionary Heinsius, who saw money as a tool to foster political and military ties between the two republics.³⁰ In addition, Holland desperately needed money to finance her latest military cam-

paings. Finally, a deal was concluded on 18 January 1710: Berne granted 1.5 million Guilders (600,000 Taler) at an interest rate of 4 per cent (tax free). The maturity of the loan was fifteen years, but Berne could only sell its bonds on the secondary market in case of a military emergency.³¹ Saphorin triumphantly wrote home that never before had Holland granted such favourable terms to any of its creditors.³² Some Dutchmen were not amused and feared that Holland's credit worthiness might suffer if these conditions became widely known.³³ Although 1.5 million guilders represented an important sum for Berne, it barely covered a fraction of the wartime expenditures of the Dutch.³⁴ The importance of the loan lay not in the amount, but in the timing.

Holland needed the money urgently. This led to the next puzzle: How to transfer money from Switzerland to The Hague? In the eighteenth century, such a transaction would usually be made via bills of exchange between merchants from one place (Berne) and another (Amsterdam). However, no Swiss city was integrated into the early modern European system of exchange.³⁵ The lack of frequent money transfers and published exchange rates made the transaction both risky and expensive. While the Bernese Great Council would have preferred to pay out the sum at home and to leave this problem to the Dutch, this was not possible because, as Saphorin put it, there was as little commercial knowledge within the government of Holland as in Berne itself.³⁶ Therefore, the diplomat was commissioned to find a suitable way to transfer the funds. He consulted several Dutch merchants and devised some cunning plans.

As a first step, the Bernese bank *Malacrida & Company* would transport one-third of the sum (200,000 Taler) in cash to Genoa, where bills of exchange drawn on Amsterdam could be bought on the open market.³⁷ For the remainder of the loan, an even more sophisticated scheme was used. Money was delivered to the English ambassador in Berne against bills of exchange drawn on London, from where funds could be transferred to Amsterdam quite easily. For this transaction, a discount of 3-4 per cent on the *parity rate* could be expected.³⁸ This was due to the war in Italy, financed by the English and Dutch, which caused more money to be transferred from the North to the South. In order to balance supply and demand, money transfers in the opposite direction were possible at a premium rate. During peacetime, and thus for future interest payments and redemptions of principal, the reverse situation could be expected, because of the negative trade balance of Italy with Holland and England.³⁹

As clever as it was theoretically, the transfer of funds via London became a problem when the English did not fulfil their contractual obligations. Only half of the money that was due in September 1710 was delivered on time, another quarter followed in August 1711. The rest was paid finally in November 1711, more than a year after the contract deadline. Saphorin complained several times in London and even wished that he had not come up with this plan in the first place.⁴⁰ The States of Holland were not amused either.⁴¹

Saphorin expected the delivery of the first payments in March 1710, but instead he faced yet another problem coming this time from Berne itself in the form of a ship full of Anabaptists. To understand why these religious dissenters caused Saphorin so many headaches, it is necessary to turn to the issue of religious tolerance in Berne, or rather the lack thereof.

Disturbing Pacifists and the Reason of State, or the Export of Anabaptists

Their strict interpretation of the Bible meant that Anabaptists criticised any alliance between the Church and secular authorities.⁴² Accordingly, they refused to swear allegiance to the state and considered tithes and taxes un-Christian, despite paying them regularly.⁴³ A peaceful outlook barred them from carrying weapons and thus from serving in the army. Such attitudes made Anabaptism extremely unpopular with the Bernese government. In 1531, only three years after the establishment of a Protestant state church, the first edicts against the sect were released. Similar *Täufermandate* were re-issued on several occasions without any lasting success. The authorities tried to convert dissenters both through public disputations and violence, when necessary. In 1658, the Bernese government established the *Täuferkammer* as a special chamber to handle the issue. Anabaptism was considered a crime, and offenders consequently imprisoned, exiled, or sent to the galley.⁴⁴

Within their local communities in the Emmental, Anabaptists were widely respected as industrious craftsmen and farmers with an uncontested knowledge of the Bible. Contemporary estimates regarding their numbers in the early eighteenth century ranged from 300 to 1,000.⁴⁵ Compared to an overall population of some 200,000 this is certainly a small number.⁴⁶ The main cause of panic amongst

Bernese authorities was their strong rebuttal of any attempts at *confessionalisation*. The historians Heinz Schilling and Wolfgang Reinhard have coined this term to describe how early modern states had an ever-increasing impact on their subjects by implementing bureaucratic rigour and discipline through the official church.⁴⁷ Although the concept has been criticised in several ways, it can be applied quite convincingly to the Bernese attitude towards Anabaptism.⁴⁸ In the eyes of the government, the dissenters were harmful because they fundamentally challenged the authority of the state and undermined its ability to defend its territory. If one group was to be exempted from militia duties, this would be unfair for the others who then had to shoulder the national defence burden.⁴⁹

When Berne issued yet another mandate against Anabaptism in 1659, leaving them the choice between banishment or conversion, their Dutch brethren, the *Mennonites*, protested without much success.⁵⁰ In 1671 and 1693, two groups of Anabaptists emigrated to the Palatinate, where they benefited from religious tolerance, or at least from benevolent ignorance. On 17 May 1699, the Great Council of Berne sent a letter to the *Dutch East India Company*, enquiring if members of the sect could be shipped to East India.⁵¹ Apparently, the company never bothered to respond. But the cunning plan to force dissenters into exile was recycled in Berne two decades later, this time with another destination: West India.⁵² This was the term used by the government to describe the American colonies where, in today's state of North Carolina, the town of New Berne was founded in 1709. Its promoter and *Landgrave* was Christoph von Graffenried, another 'exported' nobleman from Berne with a unique career.

In contrast to Saphorin, Graffenried came from a patrician family and had been an important government member as a bailiff of a Vaud county, Yverdon. This posting had ruined him due to unlucky circumstances, as his term of office (1702-1708) coincided with a costly mobilisation of troops for which he partly bore the cost.⁵³ Graffenried fled from his Bernese debtors, leaving his wife and children behind, and eventually settling in London. Together with Ludwig Michel, he obtained the protection of Queen Anne for a colonial venture in America. A royal charter in 1709 allowed the settlement of New Berne in Carolina with 600 refugees from the Palatinate, for whose relocation the English crown was willing to contribute 24.4 Taler (£5.5) each. To complement this contingent, Graffenried and Michel's partner in Berne, *Ritter & Company*, proposed to the Great

Council the discarding of some ‘burdensome’ subjects by sending them to the colony.⁵⁴ For the Bernese government, this was a difficult choice, as it usually discouraged its subjects from emigrating.⁵⁵ On the other hand, it was an occasion to dispose of unwanted elements like paupers and dissenters. On 25 February 1710, a decision was finally made to pay 500 Taler for the journey of 101 paupers who volunteered to settle overseas. They were accompanied by 56 imprisoned Anabaptists who were forced to emigrate. For each prisoner, Ritter & Company received 45 Taler as a contribution towards their additional expenses.⁵⁶ This money came from the *Täufergut*, a fund that consisted of expropriated assets from jailed Anabaptists. The plan was to ship the expelled dissenters to New Berne via Amsterdam and London. None of them would make it to their final destination, however. Some managed to escape in Basel, another 28 were left behind in Mannheim, and the rest were finally freed in Nijmegen on 7 April 1710.⁵⁷

At this point, Saphorin reappears on the scene. On 12 March 1710, he had been ordered by Berne to organise passports for the Anabaptists on their way to London, as well as ‘protection’ – in other words, support in preventing their escape. When Saphorin presented this request to the States General, the assembly of the United Provinces, he was surprised how fervently the Dutch opposed the Bernese project.⁵⁸ They showed neither support nor sympathy and were outraged by the idea that Protestants could persecute fellow Protestants in such a manner. On several occasions, Saphorin engaged in lively discussions with his opponents, who remained unimpressed by his position and stood firmly for the principle of freedom of conscience. The arguments were heated to the point that the diplomat exclaimed, *‘j’aimerois mieux avoir à combattre dans ce país [Holland] contre tous les Ministres [here: diplomats] des Alliés réservé ceux d’Angleterre, que contre les seuls Anabaptistes, et les membres de cet Etat icy [the States General] voulans leur complaire’*.⁵⁹ Saphorin complained about the form in which the Anabaptists put forward requests and refusals (as ‘a predication rather than a letter’),⁶⁰ and he fundamentally disagreed with the Dutch position. From a Bernese perspective, expelling Anabaptists was not a matter of religious intolerance, but a question of loyalty to the government and national defence. The two positions were irreconcilable. What Berne considered a domestic affair was something quite different for the Dutch, who saw it as a universal issue. In the Netherlands, the Mennonites

were considered model citizens, being useful in trade, industrious and peaceful.⁶¹ All these criteria counted for a lot in a mercantile republic that was funded through taxes. On the other hand, they ranked poorly in the catalogue of required virtues for citizens or subjects in the agricultural and military republic of Berne.⁶²

The Mennonites managed to secure support from the United Provinces for an intercession on behalf of Bernese Anabaptists, which, alas, had no positive effect.⁶³ Further support had to be abandoned when Saphorin managed to convince Heinsius and Charles Viscount Townshend, the British minister in The Hague, to take his side. After several days of heated negotiations, the two parties agreed to a compromise in their meeting on 10 April 1710. As Berne was unlikely to stop its persecution, it was considered best for the Anabaptists to voluntarily emigrate to a place where they would be tolerated, such as the Netherlands or North America. The Mennonites promised to try to convince their brethren to leave for New Berne. In case the Anabaptists wanted to stay in the United Provinces, they would be allowed to do so under the condition that they swore never to return to Switzerland.⁶⁴ Saphorin was pleased with this solution, and he even expressed some respect for the charity of his Mennonite opponents and their zeal in supporting fellow dissenters.⁶⁵ Both sides were still ignorant of the fact that the deal had become superfluous with the release of the prisoners in Nijmegen shortly before.

During the negotiations of 1710, the Dutch Mennonites had made some interesting propositions. To counter the argument that an expulsion of Anabaptists was caused by their refusal to serve in the army, they suggested compensating Berne's loss in troops in the form of mercenaries or money. Saphorin was surprised at the dissenters' confidence, but considered their proposal unacceptable.⁶⁶ Ironically, this solution bears close resemblance to the terms of the military alliance between the Netherlands and Berne concluded two years later.⁶⁷ Another idea put forward by the Mennonites involved a third party that would support the Anabaptists – the King of Prussia. He had offered his own territories for a settlement, which the Anabaptists declined for fear of diseases and serfdom.⁶⁸ Another proposal was to reclaim land for settlement by draining swamps in the county of Neuchâtel, a neighbouring territory of Berne and under Prussian rule since 1707. This would be financed by Dutch Mennonites and Anabaptists from Hamburg. The plan was technically unfeasible and consequently abandoned.⁶⁹ Its fate offers interesting parallels to an-

other ambitious project that brought Dutch technology and financial resources to Berne, the *Canal d'Entreroches*, built in 1638-1648 and likewise hindered by the perils of local geology.⁷⁰

It is compelling to compare the fierce persecution of the Anabaptists in Berne to the government's treatment of another group of religious dissenters, the Pietists.⁷¹ Although they still considered themselves as part of the official church and did not oppose secular authorities, this group also did not support the authority of the state church. Pietism was an urban phenomenon, and thus also struck at the very heart of patrician families. Followers of this faith refused to swear an oath on the *Second Helvetic Confession and Unity of Faith* that Berne had introduced in 1699. As a result, they became ineligible for government offices. Thus robbed of their political ambitions, a group of young Pietist patricians founded the bank *Malacrida & Company*.⁷² With its close family ties to the highest ranks of the government, the bank managed to get involved in the canton's financial affairs overseas. Here, we come full circle to Saphorin's mission, for Malacrida had been assigned the task of transferring money from Berne to Amsterdam for the Dutch loan of 1710, as described above.⁷³ Thus, while Anabaptists were expelled for not joining the militia, Pietists were tolerated as long as they abstained from political ambitions. They were even entrusted important government commissions. This illustrates how religious tolerance in Berne was less a matter of faith than a political act of *Staatsraison*.

Conclusion, or the Trading Balance

Saphorin's mission in The Hague was rather unsuccessful as far as his main political goals were concerned, save for the military alliance of 1712. Throughout his time in The Hague, the diplomat had to contend with a number of bilateral problems between Berne and the Dutch, notably overseas investments and an unsuccessful attempt to force Anabaptists into exile. It shows that, despite the similarities between the two Protestant republics, Holland and Berne differed significantly in terms of military organisations, financial systems, and religious tolerance. The mission of Saphorin illustrates how strongly these elements were interrelated. When striking any – admittedly rather unorthodox – trading balance for my story, the flow of goods appears to be heavily one-sided, with Berne exporting mercenaries,

money and Anabaptists.⁷⁴ This was counterbalanced with salaries, interest payments and religious homogeneity. In addition, one could add military careers for patricians, and maybe some cunning plans involving Dutch technology or Mennonite money. Another possible export from the Netherlands included cultural practices and fashions, such as the introduction of tea and card games by returning mercenary officers.⁷⁵

For Saphorin personally, the outcome of his mission was mixed. Upon his return, he received 10,000 Taler from the Great Council, which was considerable by Bernese standards, as the diplomat proudly pointed out to the Hannoverian secretary of state in 1714.⁷⁶ The rumour that Saphorin would be granted citizenship in Berne as a reward, with the eventual possibility of a political career, did not materialise, however.⁷⁷ Later, when the English king wanted to send him as an ambassador to Protestant Switzerland, the Great Council refused his accreditation. Saphorin ended up at the Imperial court in Vienna instead, where he was the informal representative of George I after 1721. He wrote to his superior Townshend about the bad luck of being born in the wrong place with the wrong faith:

Sans ma religion j'aurais pu faire grande fortune dans ce pays [Austria], vue surtout la disette où ils sont [sic] des gens qui entendent un peu les affaires. Faute d'être né bourgeois de Berne, les services que j'ai rendus à cette république ne m'ont mené à rien qu'à une petite récompense pécuniaire, et ont ensuite excité de dangereuses jalousies contre moi, là, où ils m'auroyent dû conduire à la tête de l'Etat si j'avais été Berinois.⁷⁸

He further lamented that because he was not born an Englishman, he could never serve King George officially and with the appropriate salary. If there is a consolation for Saphorin, it might be that things could have been worse: He could have converted to Anabaptism and end up being sent to New Berne.

Notes

1 The use of the word *Mennonites* in the title is slightly misleading, as they were in fact Anabaptists (see note below). It is used solely for rhetorical pur-

poses here. I thank Beat Kümin (Warwick) and Alicia Altorfer-Ong (Zurich and London) for editing the manuscript, Nick Linder (Zurich) for transcripts and Béla Kapossy (Fribourg and Lausanne) for useful advice. The remaining errors are mine.

2 Staatsarchiv Bern (StABE) B I 107: 50. Translation: ‘... to get rid of numerous Anabaptists [spelled: Anaptistes] which we [the government] have incarcerated for some time ... taken the resolution to hand them over to Sir Ritter and associates in order to transport them to America, during a journey they [Ritter & Associates] are undertaking anyway to bring there a colony of all sorts of people gathered together’.

3 StABE B I 107: 73.

4 StABE B I 107. There are eight other volumes containing Saphorin’s correspondence about secret affairs (foreign policy): StABE B I 98-106. Translation of the title: Book containing the negotiations of Their Excellencies [the government of Berne] on the topic of Money and Anabaptists.

5 Quoted in Sven Stelling-Michaud, *Saint-Saphorin et la politique de la Suisse pendant la guerre de Succession d’Espagne (1700-1710)* (Lausanne 1935), 8. For Saphorin’s career also: Theo Gehling, *Ein europäischer Diplomat am Kaiserhof zu Wien. François Louis de Pesme, Seigneur de Saint-Saphorin, als englischer Resident am Wiener Hof 1718-1727* (Bonn 1964). Thanks to Andrew C. Thompson (Cambridge) for providing me with a preliminary draft of his article on Saphorin for the New Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (online version).

6 For Saphorin’s mission: StABE B I 98: 15-17. See also: Arnold Lätt, ‘Zwei schweizerische Diplomaten im Dienste Grossbritanniens’, *Basler Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Altertumskunde*, 21 (1923), 127-156; here 132-133; Richard Feller, *Glaubenskämpfe und Aufklärung. 1653 bis 1790 (Geschichte Berns, vol. 3)* (Berne 1955), 229-230.

7 For the transformation of armies: Geoffrey Parker, *The Military Revolution. Military Innovation and the Rise of the West, 1500-1800* (Cambridge 1996). For Bern: Willy Pfister, *Aargauer in fremden Kriegsdiensten*, 2 vols., (Aarau 1980-84); Willy Pfister, ‘Die bernischen Soldregimenter im 18. Jahrhundert’, *Berner Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Heimatkunde*, 45 (1983), 1-72. More recent approaches to Swiss mercenaries are collected in Norbert Furrer et al. (eds), *Gente ferocissima: mercenariat et société en Suisse (XVe-XIXe siècle). Solddienst und Gesellschaft in der Schweiz (15.-19. Jahrhundert)* (Lausanne and Zurich 1997).

8 Feller, *Glaubenskämpfe*: 96-97 and Pfister, ‘Soldregimenter’.

9 Pfister, ‘Soldregimenter’.

10 Feller, *Glaubenskämpfe*: 270-320. For the Bernese military also: Béla

Kapossy, “Der Bedrohlich Frieden”. Ein Beitrag zum politischen Denken im Bern des 18. Jahrhunderts’, in Furrer et al., *Gente ferocissima*, 217-232.

11 Feller, *Glaubenskämpfe*: 97.

12 Pfister, ‘Soldregimenter’, 61-62. Slightly different numbers are in: Pfister, *Kriegsdienste*: vol. 1, 271-374 (France) and vol. 2, 344-345 (Netherlands). There were also Bernese troops in the Kingdom of Sardinia.

13 See Ulrich Pfister, ‘Politischer Klientelismus in der frühneuzeitlichen Schweiz’, *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Geschichte* 42 (1992), 26-68.

14 O. Erismann, ‘Schweizer in Holländischen Diensten’, *Blätter für bernische Geschichte, Kunst und Altertumskunde* 12 (1916), 41-73: quote 43.

15 Quoted in *Ibid.*: 42.

16 Strictly speaking, the gift was offered by the English ambassador Thomas Coxe in the name of William III: Daniel Schmutz, ‘Gold in der Welt der Diplomatie. Geschenke des englischen Gesandten Thomas Coxe auf seiner Mission in der Schweiz (1689-1692)’, *Kunst + Architektur in der Schweiz*, 51 (2000), 23-32.

17 Previously, troops were sent to the Netherlands without a formal alliance: Feller, *Glaubenskämpfe*, 96-97. As can be seen from figure 1, the contracted number of Swiss troops was effectively never reached.

18 It is worth noting that the Dutch militias (*schutterijen*) were quite different in character. They were local troops who had to maintain domestic order: Jonathan Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall 1477-1806* (Oxford 1995), 119-124.

19 Stefan Altorfer-Ong, *State-Building without Taxation. The Political Economy of Government Finance in the Eighteenth-Century Republic of Bern*, (unpublished PhD, London/LSE 2006). See also Martin Körner, ‘The Swiss Confederation’, in: Richard Bonney (ed.) *The Rise of the Fiscal State in Europe, c. 1200-1815* (Oxford 1999), 327-357.

20 For the Dutch public debt: Marjolein ‘t Hart, Joost Jonker and Jan Luiten van Zanden (eds), *A Financial History of the Netherlands*, (Cambridge 1997); Marjolein ‘t Hart, ‘The United Provinces, 1579-1806’, in: Bonney, *Rise of the Fiscal State*, 309-325.

21 STABE B I 2: 194. All conversions of currencies are at parity courses. For Bernese foreign capital investment: Julius Landmann, ‘Die auswärtigen Kapitalanlagen aus dem Berner Staatsschatz im XVIII. Jahrhundert. Eine finanzhistorische Studie’, *Jahrbuch für Schweizer Geschichte*, 28 (1903), 1-128 and 29 (1904), 1-91; Stefan Altorfer, *The Canton of Berne as an Investor on the London Capital Market in the 18th Century (LSE Economic History Working Paper)*, (London 2004) and Stefan Altorfer-Ong, ‘State

Investment in 18th Century Berne', *History of European Ideas* 33 (2007), 440-62.

22 For a more detailed discussion: Altorfer-Ong, *State-Building*, ch. 3 and 4.

23 Feller, *Glaubenskämpfe*: 318.

24 STABE B I 107: 1-8. The term goes back to P.G.M. Dickson, *The Financial Revolution in England: A Study in the Development of Public Credit 1688-1756* (Aldershot 1993). For the Netherlands: James D. Tracy, *A Financial Revolution in the Habsburg Netherlands. Renten and Rentiers in the County of Holland, 1515-1565* (Berkeley 1985) and the literature in footnote 20 above. For the development of financial markets, see also Larry Neal, *The Rise of Financial Capitalism: International Capital Markets in the Age of Reason*, (Cambridge 1990); Larry Neal, 'How it all began: the monetary and financial architecture of Europe during the first global capital markets, 1648-1815', *Financial History Review* 7 (2000), 117-140.

25 A *funded debt* is where parliaments guarantee earmarked tax revenues to secure the interest payments on loans.

26 STABE B I 107: 9.

27 STABE B I 107: 33. Willading bought Bank stock worth £2,000 (8,888 Taler) in October and November 1710: Bank of England Record Office (BERO) AC27 423:4057. Ironically, the canton did make (largely unintended) speculative profits by investing in the South Sea Company a decade later: Stefan Altorfer, 'Bulle oder Bär? Der Bernische Staat und die Südseekrise von 1720', in: Béatrice Veyrassat, Hans-Jörg Gilomen and Margrit Müller (eds), *Globalisierung – Chancen und Risiken. Die Schweiz in der Weltwirtschaft 18.-20. Jahrhundert* (Zurich 2003), 61-86.

28 The sum granted was £150,000 (666,666 Taler), which were later invested on the capital market: Altorfer, 'Bulle oder Bär' and Altorfer, *Investor*.

29 STABE B I 107: 22-24.

30 For Heinsius, see also: Jan A.F. de Jongste and Augustus J. Veenendaal Jr.(eds), *Anthonie Heinsius and the Dutch Republic 1688-1720: Politics, War, and Finance* (The Hague 2002). The edition of his correspondence mentions letters with Saphorin, as well as with government members from Bern: Augustus J. Veenendaal Jr. (ed.) *De Briefwisseling von Anthonie Heinsius 1702-1820*, 19 vols. (The Hague 1976-2001).

31 Usually investors could sell their bonds freely on the capital market. For the final loan: STABE B I 107: 28-29; Landmann, 'Kapitalanlagen', 29.

32 STABE B I 107: 28.

33 STABE B I 107: 63.

34 The exact amount of Dutch debts at the time remains unclear. In 1715,

debts of the Generality of the Northern Netherlands amounted to fl. 61.2m, those of the Province of Holland grew from Hfl. 193m (1710) to fl. 308m (1720): Hart, 'United Provinces', 313-314. See also note, above.

35 Markus A. Denzel, 'Die Integration der Schweizer Finanzplätze in das internationale Zahlungsverkehrssystem vom 17. Jahrhundert bis 1914', *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Geschichte* 48 (1998), 177-235. Established exchange rates existed from Amsterdam to Barcelona, Genoa, Livorno, Venice, Paris, Lyon and London.

36 STABE B I 107: 35.

37 For this transaction: Altorfer, 'Bulle oder Bär': 64-65.

38 The *parity rate* is the exchange rate based on bullion content of heavy coins.

39 STABE B I 107: 1-8, 16-22.

40 STABE B I 107: 93.

41 STABE B I 107: 47 and 118-119. Saphorin uses the words '*extrêmement dégoutée*'.

42 In German, the words used were *Wiedertäufer* (by the government), *Täufer* or *Taufgesinnte* (by themselves). I will distinguish them from the Dutch Anabaptists, the *Menmonites* (see note). For the difficulties in translation: Mark Furner, *The Repression and Survival of Anabaptism in the Emmental, Switzerland 1659-1743* (Cambridge 1998), 51-52. For Anabaptism: Hans-Jürgen Goertz, *The Anabaptists* (London 1996).

43 Ernst Müller, *Geschichte der Bernischen Täufer* (Frauenfeld 1895); Furner, *Repression*; André Holenstein, "Ja, Ja – Nein, Nein!" Oder war der Eid von Übel? Der Eid im Verhältnis von Täuferum und Obrigkeit am Beispiel des Alten Bern', *Menmonitica Helvetica*, 11/12 (1988-89), 125-46.

44 For the legal aspects: Furner, *Repression*, 67-68.

45 Müller, *Täufer*, 292-294 and Furner, *Repression*, 138-145.

46 Population estimates for early-eighteenth-century Berne are notoriously unreliable. The first census in 1764 found that 323,008 people were living in the canton: Beatrix Mesmer, 'Die Bevölkerung', *Illustrierte Berner Enzyklopädie*, 4 vols. (Wabern-Bern 1981-1987), vol. 3, 158-169; Christian Pfister, *Im Strom der Modernisierung. Bevölkerung, Wirtschaft und Umwelt 1700-1914* (Berne 1995), 91-159.

47 Heinz Schilling, 'Konfession und Konfessionalisierung in Europa', in: Heinz Schilling (ed.), *Bekennntnis und Geschichte* (Munich 1981), 165-189; Wolfgang Reinhard, 'Gegenreformation als Konfessionalisierung? Prolegomena zu einer Theorie des konfessionellen Zeitalters', *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 10 (1983), 257-277. For Berne: André Holenstein, 'Reformierte Konfessionalisierung und bernischer Territorialstaat', in: Mein-

- rad Schaab (ed.), *Territorialstaat und Calvinismus* (Stuttgart 1993), 5-33 and Heinrich-Richardt Schmidt, *Dorf und Religion. Reformierte Sitten-zucht in Berner Landgemeinden der Frühen Neuzeit* (Stuttgart 1995).
- 48 For a critical position: Schmidt, *Dorf und Religion*, and Heinrich-Richardt Schmidt, 'Sozialdisziplinierung? Ein Plädoyer für das Ende des Etatismus in der Konfessionalisierungsforschung', *Historische Zeitschrift* 265 (1997), 639-682.
- 49 STABE B I 107: 85-92, especially 87.
- 50 Feller, *Glaubenskämpfe*, 162. See also Irvin B. Horst, *The Records at Amsterdam. Dutch Aid to Swiss Brethren* (The Hague 1984), quoted in Hans Rudolf Lavater, 'Die vereitelte Deportation emmentalischer Täufer nach Amerika 1710. Nach dem Augenzeugenbericht der "Röthenbacher Chronik"', *Mennonitica Helvetica* 14 (1991), 51-124, here: 51. For the Dutch Anabaptists (which I refer to as *Mennonites*): Israel, *Dutch Republic: 84-96, 395-398, 637-676 and 1019-1037*.
- 51 STABE A II 579: 96. See also Müller, *Täufer*: 253.
- 52 STABE B I 107: 56.
- 53 Incidentally during this episode of the *Neuchâtel Succession*, Saphorin played an important part in Berne as a supporter of the King of Prussia: Feller, *Glaubenskämpfe*, 217-27.
- 54 STABE B A II 627: 408. See also Hans Gustav Keller, *Christoph von Graffenried und die Gründung von Neu-Bern in Nord-Carolina* (Berne 1953) 18.
- 55 Albert B. Faust, 'Swiss Emigration to the American colonies in the eighteenth century', *American Historical Review* 22 (1916), 21-44.
- 56 STABE A II 627: 166-167; Müller, *Täufer*, 253-254.
- 57 Most of them moved on to the Palatinate. For an account of the expedition: Müller, *Täufer*, 252-279 and Lavater, 'Deportation'.
- 58 STABE B I 107: 51-55.
- 59 STABE B I 107: 55. Translation: 'I would prefer fighting any of the Allied diplomats except the English, rather than against the Mennonites and members of the [States General] that want to please them'.
- 60 STABE B I 107: 57.
- 61 STABE B I 107: 53.
- 62 Béla Kapossy, 'Neo-Roman Republicanism and Commercial Society: The Example of Eighteenth-century Berne', in: Martin van Gelderen and Quentin Skinner (eds), *Republicanism. A Shared European Heritage* (Cambridge 2002), 227-247.
- 63 Müller, *Täufer*, 262-265.
- 64 STABE B I 107: 58, 71-74. The Anabaptists made a declaration *op man-*

nenwaarheid (i.e., not an oath) in front of the council of Amsterdam: Müller, *Täufer*, 284-285 and Lavater, 'Deportation', 89.

65 STABE B I 107: 92.

66 STABE B I 107: 90.

67 This point has been noted by Feller, *Glaubenskämpfe*, 165.

68 Müller, *Täufer*, 288-290.

69 STABE B I 107: 101. See also Müller, *Täufer*, 290-291 and Lavater, 'Deportation', 91 (with reference to Dutch sources).

70 Klaus Grewe (ed.) *Canal d'Entreroches. Der Bau eines Schifffahrtsweges von der Nordsee bis zum Mittelmeer im 17. Jahrhundert*, (Stuttgart 1987) and Paul-Louis Pelet, *Le canal d'entreroches. Histoire d'une idée* (Lausanne 1952).

71 Rudolf Dellsperger, *Der Pietismus in der Schweiz*, (Göttingen 1993); Rudolf Dellsperger, *Die Anfänge des Pietismus in Bern: Quellenstudien*, (Göttingen 1984); Feller, *Glaubenskämpfe*, 168-173.

72 Nikolaus Linder, *Die Berner Bankenkrise von 1720 und das Recht. Eine Studie zur Rechts-, Banken- und Finanzgeschichte der Alten Schweiz* (Zurich 2004).

73 STABE B I 107: 41-43 and Linder, *Bankenkrise*. Saphorin himself had an account with *Malacrida*: Archives Cantonales Vaudoises (ACV) P de Mestral, Section II, C 7/21.

74 In a strict sense, the export of money would count towards the balance of payments, not the trade balance. Economists might excuse this inaccuracy for the sake of rhetoric. The noblemen Saphorin and Graffenried were both 'exported', but not to the Netherlands.

75 François de Capitani, 'Staat und Obrigkeit in Bern zwischen Reformation und Revolution', *Berner Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Heimatkunde* 53 (1991), 61-77, here: 73.

76 Saphorin to Robethon, 4 August 1714, quoted in Lätt, 'Diplomaten', 134.

77 Stelling-Michaud, *Saphorin et la politique*, 382-383. The rumour stems from a letter of bailiff Tillier to Mayor Steiger, 2 September 1712: Burgerbibliothek Bern (BBB) Mss. Hist. Helv., XIII 150, fol. 158-160.

78 Saphorin to Townshend, 6 June 1721, quoted in Lätt, 'Diplomaten', 135. Translation: 'Without my religion I could have made quite a fortune in this country [Austria], given the lack of people who understand something about business [i.e., diplomacy]. Not being born a citizen of Berne, the services offered to this republic brought nothing but a small monetary reward, which then excited ugly shows of jealousy against me, whereas they could have made me head of state had I been Bernese'.

11 **Republican Risks: Commerce and Agriculture in the Dutch Republic**

Ida Nijenhuis

In his comparative assessment of European and North American husbandry, first published in 1764, the English cleric Walter Harte explained why agriculture would continue to flourish more readily under free governments and in Protestant countries, be they republics, or monarchies like England. He believed that Protestantism, besides having significantly fewer holy days than the Roman Catholics, also made people sincere and industrious. Agriculture, Harte argued, could be carried on with great success in monarchical governments, but republics were generally better equipped for the advancement of farming because they were usually situated on a neglected, barren soil that required a combination of liberty and hard labour to yield its 'production'. Liberty gave the inhabitants of republics room within which to exercise their industry, to remain free of ambition and content with the land they owned, and never contemplated future acquisitions of property. By contrast, as 'the sagacious Machiavel' had already suggested, a rich soil tended to make the people less industrious, while it was obvious to Harte that liberty, in a rich country, would inevitably lapse into licentiousness. Consequently, he thought it was highly likely that the canton of Berne, notwithstanding its more mountainous, less manageable, and less fertile territory, would in a matter of a few years surpass France regarding improvements in husbandry. In Berne, diligent rulers upheld equality and restrained excessive wealth by applying sumptuary laws, while the hardworking and productive farmers profited from light taxation and low interest rates.

Although Harte was clearly more fascinated by Swiss efforts to improve, the way the Dutch had dealt with nature's restrictions also at-

tracted his admiration. Apart from draining bogs and fens as an act of self-preservation, they did not specialise in agriculture.¹ ‘Nevertheless’, he continues,

these people (at least, in former ages) were a pattern of industry. Even, at present, they raise little corn, yet contrive to provide enough for themselves and other countries. Without timber of their own, they use more than any nation of the same extent of territory; And that particularly in ship-building and the repairing of their dykes and sea-breaches. They raise neither hemp or flax, nor encourage a breed of sheep for wool, yet they manufacture more of all these materials than any other people, except the English and French. They have no wine, yet consume a greater quantity than those nations that cultivate the vineyard, and, at the same time, supply many northern countries. Thus, where industry prevails, *omnis fert omnia tellus*.

In his opinion, the Swiss, and especially the Bernese, personified the virtues that could promote agriculture and sustain their republic, while the Dutch applied their diligence to profit in a different, but equally astonishing manner. Harte’s passing remark that Dutch industry might be a phenomenon of the past, did not stop him from considering them in some ways ‘more industrious than can be justified’. Their ambition to possess ‘all the lucrative traffic of the world’ still forced them to encroach on British fisheries.²

Harte’s observations provide all of the well-known similarities between the Swiss *Eidgenossenschaft* and the Dutch Republic: a challenging territory, a suitable form of government, true religion and ‘industriousness’, all of which combined to contribute to the economic success of both commonwealths. These elements became more or less topical in moral and political discourse around the time the *Essays on Husbandry* were published, because of the enlightened debate on the consequences of modern, i.e., commercial society for political and social behaviour. At the time Walter Harte published his observations, the representation of republican ideals in Europe had undergone a remarkable transformation: the commercial Dutch Republic had to yield pride of place to the agrarian Swiss *Eidgenossenschaft*. In this exchange of role models, a growing sense of

the changing nature of trade and its connection with moral deterioration had become manifest because, while the inhabitants of the Swiss Confederation appeared to be untouched by the temptations of the modern world, elusive developments like the progress of paper credit and debt financing had perverted the commercial virtues of the Dutch which subsequently caused their decline.³ Around the mid-eighteenth century, previously unrelated observations on immoral behaviour of the people involved in trade had been incorporated into a consistent analysis, Montesquieu's seminal *De l'Esprit des Loïs* (1748). Montesquieu had linked economic systems with types of governments, by distinguishing between *commerce de luxe* and *commerce d'économie* ('thrift'). Consumption characterised the first type of commerce, which was associated with monarchies and their culture of dissipation. *Commerce d'économie*, on the other hand, was born out of necessity and was seen as typical of republican societies. These had to earn a living by procuring and transporting goods for other nations, such as overspending monarchies. By working hard and exercising moderation and prudence, the inhabitants of these free republics could attain a certain level of wealth. But, at the same time, their success contained the seed of their own downfall because as soon as commercial activities began to interact with the rural economy, republican purity was threatened by commerce's various corrupting influences, of which luxury was the most dangerous. It was only when the spirit of the *commerce d'économie* continued to dominate society, ingraining it with the habits of frugality, restraint and hard work, that republics might end up surviving.⁴ In Montesquieu's view, the Dutch had, however, lost their republican ethics and had become immoral materialists, while the Swiss, especially the Bernese, had maintained their republican rural virtues.⁵

Both Harte's emphasis on Swiss simplicity, hard work and freedom, and his criticism of Dutch acquisitiveness, complemented Montesquieu's assertion that pure democratic republican governments could only function and survive in agrarian societies. Although his focus was on agriculture, Harte shared the language of many authors who, inspired by *De l'Esprit des Loïs*, discussed the growing influence of commerce on society and its consequences for virtuous politics.⁶ In various Dutch and foreign texts the previously by and large undisputed reputation of the United Provinces as a free and powerful commercial state, although perhaps not completely undermined, had at least become more ambiguous. Mercantile

virtues, expressed in the *commerce d'économie* appeared to be replaced in the Dutch Republic by idleness, a penchant for conspicuous consumption and a desire to earn easy money via speculation, overextending credit and tolerating a foreign-owned national debt.⁷ In post-Montesquieu Europe, the Dutch Republic's excessive dependence on commerce had become a cause for concern for those who presupposed a strong relationship between the state, i.e., the republic, and the moral character of its citizens. The assumption that the Dutch had lost their commercial integrity was underlined by the undeniable fact that trade had become, in the words of David Hume, 'an affair of state', undertaken by nations with many more natural advantages at their disposal.⁸ England, a monarchy imbued with the republican spirit of liberty, had surpassed the Dutch in terms of commerce, while the poor, but pure, rural Swiss assumed the role of rural republican heroes. In general, the Swiss republics were thought to have preserved much of their original agrarian simplicity and, consequently, to enjoy a greater degree of political stability. Various Swiss reformers, pointing out the diminishing viability of the Dutch model, even stated that the endurance of their own republican form of government was dependent upon agriculture and subsistence in the area of the necessities of life. On the other hand, however, they disapproved of the economic isolation of the *Eidgenossenschaft* and tried to find ways to combine republican politics and modern commerce.⁹ In their dilemma, the Swiss began turning to the political economists who might provide answers to the question of whether the responsibilities for subsistence should be assumed by the state (i.e., republic or monarchy) or left to mercies of the natural forces of the harvest, or the natural economic forces of the market place. In France, the Physiocrats promoted agriculture and a laissez-faire policy concerning the trade in basic goods, while in England, Adam Smith declared that the moral character of man as an economic agent was irrelevant. In this way he tried to explain how within a free market system appalling economic inequality on the one hand, matched subsistence for the wage-earner on the other.¹⁰

Did this change in republican ideals and the emergence of the science of political economy after 1750 also affect the analysis of the Dutch predicament? Were the Dutch supposed to turn to agriculture as a viable livelihood? Should they get rid of their present form of government? Before we can answer these questions, however, we will first have to contextualise them by examining how the Republic's

commercial and agricultural issues were discussed in moral and political thought – specifically in republican theory and in reason-of-state philosophy – prior to the 1750s.

The political economy of the republic

Comparative studies of states, including these states' histories, economies, levels of 'wealth', national interests and international relations have been undertaken by a variety of authors throughout Europe since the last quarter of the seventeenth century.¹¹ A number of these studies examined the strengths and weaknesses of the republics at the time, including the Swiss Confederacy and the Dutch Republic. The latter state often figured as the singular expression of a most successful combination of commerce, civil and political liberties, while the former, in spite of its several commercial centres, was considered primarily as a nation of farmers and soldiers. Because of the impressive international impact of their trade, more often than not the United Provinces were given prominence in comparisons with the Swiss.¹² In general, both moral and political philosophers pictured the rise of the Netherlands as a consequence of peaceful trade, civil and civic virtue. Several Dutch and foreign authors discussed the merits of the Dutch republican constitution, the connection between its freedom and peaceful commerce, as well as the usefulness of alliances with other republics. They examined concepts like the balance of power and reason of state, and were convinced that the Dutch had to promote their prosperity by effectively trading, avoiding war and upholding the freedom of the seas. In their publications we read that commerce was of utmost importance to the United Provinces because it was the only means to earning a livelihood, given the shortcomings of Dutch natural resources. These natural disadvantages necessitated that the Dutch be frugal and industrious, which transformed them into supreme commercial entrepreneurs.¹³ Dutch representations of this argument could be found in Pieter de la Court's *Aanwysing der heilsame politike Gronden en Maximen van de Republike van Holland en West-Vriesland* (1669) and Petrus Valkenier's *'t Verwerd Europa* (1675). Both authors were staunch republicans, although the lawyer and diplomat Valkenier was in favour of a constitution including the stadholder, while the Leiden textile manufacturer De la Court preferred a government presided over by merchants. Govern-

ing bodies of merchants, he pointed out, had clear goals: in pursuit of their own self-interests they promoted freedom in trade and industry. But because mercantile prosperity would not just benefit the few but benefit everyone, their private self-interests led to increased public welfare instead of corruption.¹⁴

Abroad, Dutch commercial practice was especially inspiring to seventeenth-century English proto-economists like Thomas Culpeper, William Petty, Josiah Child, and, some time later, Charles Davenant. In Petty's notable *Political Arithmetic* (written 1672-1676, published 1690), for instance, Dutch economic success was explained as a combination of the freedom of conscience, security of property, efficient banks and good water transport. In Child's *Brief Observations concerning Trade and Interest of Money* (1668) liberal politics, frugality and low interest rates did the trick. One of the main reasons these writers all recommended Dutch commercial practices and the propagation of more economic freedoms in their own country, was due to their trade in basic goods. Despite their reliance on imports, Dutch merchants bought and sold grain without any second thoughts, 'treating food like any other commodity'.¹⁵ In other words, they had overcome their dependence on imports through commercial ingenuity. In 1699, Charles Davenant, in irritated admiration, noted that:

The Hollanders cannot nourish their People from their Territory, and most always seek for assistance from abroad; but in Prospect that the Harvest may be bad now and then, in some and even in all those Places from whence they fetch their Corn, whereby in scarce times they would be impos'd upon. They take care to have Granaries and Store-houses, where in plentiful Years they lay up vast Quantities of all sort of Grain against a dearer Season; by which good and prudent Oeconomy, those dearths which in their turn have afflicted most other Countries, fall but lightly upon their Common People. On the contrary, when such a Calamity happens, they are able from their Stores to assist other Nations. ... [T]hey are very great gainers from time to time, by selling us our own Corn dear, which they had bought cheap, and ... make us pay very largely for its Store-room.¹⁶

In general, Dutch republicans considered agriculture as subordinate to commerce, trade and industry because as a consequence of the na-

tion's natural disadvantages, Dutch agriculture was incapable of providing the basic necessities for the population. The cow as a lasting symbol of affluence might suggest otherwise, but neither husbandry nor livestock-farming were considered to be the decisive factors in creating wealth.¹⁷ About twenty per cent of the Dutch population could be fed with home-grown grain, the rest had to be imported from the Baltic and, after the 1680s, to an increasing extent from England.¹⁸ This dependence on the import of basic goods, notably grain, led to anxieties concerning food supplies, but the corn traders' policy, as described by Davenant, seldom put the population at risk. However, from 1591 onwards, every rumour of impending dearth or famine, led the States General to issue decrees prohibiting the export of grain or to the ordering of extra grain.¹⁹ In this respect, they followed the maxim that governments, whether they be republican or monarchical, had to at least ensure provision of basic foodstuffs to head off social unrest. But what was most remarkable, was the protests these measures provoked, varying from the sophisticated objections of Dirck Graswinckel in his *Aenmerckingen ende betrachtigen ... over 't stuck van kooren ende greynen* (1651)²⁰ to the protest statement issued in 1757 by a number of Amsterdam corn merchants.

Graswinckel's distinctive defence of the agrarian interest in the Dutch Republic consisted of a plea to maintain high prices on corn, to increase domestic rural production and along with it landowners' profits.²¹ The landowners' property rights needed to be handled with extreme care, as Graswinckel tried to point out to the States General: 'Man has to live by man', he stated, 'and thus the winds are blowing from the East, the West, the South and the North, in order that people all over the world are provided with the goods they need for their subsistence and well-being'.²² In fact, maritime trade had grown so dramatically, that while populations increased, the numbers of famines had actually decreased. Of course, Graswinckel upheld the doctrine of needs and justice as well, so that in a situation of extreme necessity the government had to act, but always with extreme prudence. Corn growers and sellers always had to be ensured of a reasonable price. It was clear to him that the fear of high prices was the major cause of high prices, and that prohibiting price increases could only help stimulate them.²³ So Graswinckel concluded that the States General had taken measures with the best of intentions, but in the end, achieved exactly the opposite. The freedom of the grain trade had to be maintained as much as possible:²⁴

Justice demands that each shall be left free to enjoy his own property; this at least should be the rule so long as there are no necessary circumstances that dictate otherwise. This necessity need not be extended so far that everything which is advantageous for the community has to be considered necessary. For it is equally necessary that nobody shall be limited [in his property rights], even if a thousand people will benefit from such limitation’.

Later publications against the decrees of the States General concentrated on their harmful consequences: a prohibition of exports, for instance, might create a temporary fall in prices, but would ultimately lead to a dramatic decrease in imports, because corn traders would hesitate to buy abroad when their chances of making a profit were constrained. Price control measures (like those of 1698) had indeed created scarcity rather than preventing it.²⁵

Commerce and agriculture were thus complementary ingredients of Dutch commercial republicanism, based on the understanding that the interests of agriculture – free grain trade – were subsidiary to those of commerce. Both had helped create an amazing amount of prosperity and puissance, and both had relied on the politics of liberty. But could this amazing state of affairs endure? Anxious comments started to appear in abundance around 1672, the year that foreign troops invaded the Netherlands and the stadholderate – the monarchical element in the Dutch republican constitution – was restored after an absence of more than twenty years. Most of these observations figured that a continued Dutch prosperity and puissance depended on moral and political factors like frugality, hard work and the absence of constraint and coercion within a republican form of government, be it with or without a stadholder. Increasingly, one read laments about the ominous loss of the ancient mercantile virtues of thrift, trustworthiness and industry that had fostered the Republic.²⁶ It was, however, an exception among writers to go beyond the moral analysis and spot the deterioration of the Netherlands as a specifically commercial republic amongst territorial and military monarchies. One of them, William Temple, remained impressed by the moral qualities of the Dutch in their commercial activities. In his *Observations upon the United Provinces of the Netherlands* (1673), written after he had served as England’s ambassador to the Dutch Republic, he maintained that industry, for instance, had endured,

even after the Dutch had overcome necessity through ingenuity and hard work – it had, in his mind, become innate.²⁷ Even so, Temple detected a downturn. Not only had the Dutch lost their bravery and military prowess by getting so wrapped up in their trade activities, they also seemed to be losing their lead in international commerce. In fact, he predicted that the Dutch Republic would not survive the dramatic changes in international trade relations.²⁸

Temple perceived that what happened in 1672 was no mere incident but was indicative of structural problems that would lead to the decline of Dutch supremacy in world trade. The most important aspect, however, was the growing competition from various monarchies after the Peace of Westphalia in 1648: ‘not only Sueden [*sic*] and Denmark, but France and England, have more particularly than ever before, busied the thoughts and counsels of their several governments, as well as the humours of their people, about the matters of trade’. Temple believed that a fall in profits, due to surpluses in grain and spices, proved that the Dutch had already lost control of the market.²⁹ About a decade later, Samuel Pufendorf, the famous German historian and professor of natural law, came to the same conclusions in his *Einleitung zu der Historie der vornehmsten Reiche und Staaten, so itziger Zeit in Europa sich befinden*. Pufendorf summarised the acknowledged strengths of the Dutch Republic and concluded that its people were diligent, thrifty, peaceful, focussed on trade and industry and, most importantly, free. Merchants, or people who knew how to promote trade, were the political leaders. The most impressive example was the Dutch East India Company, which had amassed enormous riches. Although Pufendorf insisted that trade did not suffer coercion lightly, he also mentioned that according to some, the growing and forceful competition of other, less free nations began to have an impact on Dutch commerce. Like Temple, he spotted diminishing returns from the Republic’s trade deals and, furthermore, in contrast with the agrarian Swiss, Pufendorf noticed that the focus on commerce and luxury had weakened the military spirit of the Dutch. Pufendorf was also aware of the dependence on the import of basic goods in both the United Provinces and most of the Swiss cantons, and considered it a structural flaw in their economic system but failed to suggest a solution.³⁰

On the whole, however, critics found it difficult to accurately assess the economic performance of the Dutch at that time because their wealth and power remained impressive. For fervent republicans like

Gregorio Leti, the United Provinces remained the exemplary European society, the home of toleration. The fact that this Italian adventurer sought refuge in Holland in 1683 probably inspired his eulogy, but Leti's secular republicanism was well-argued and he was committed to the view that commerce was the driving force of all republics. He considered the Dutch commercial elite to be exemplary role models with their patriotism, their ability to unite the nation and the fact that merchant rulers produced public prosperity by following their private interests, having transformed the Dutch Republic into the *mater gentium*. Leti did not deny that the Swiss Confederation also had its charms, for instance, its modest taxes, but it had lost its former patriotic simplicity. The local elites, especially those in the republics of Zurich and Berne, had been transformed into an oligarchy, enriching itself with the profits from the *bailliages*.³¹ Obviously, he considered the Swiss Confederacy a less attractive model.

Trade versus agriculture

Temple and Pufendorf issued warning signs regarding the Dutch Republic's future, but they – along with Lete – did not question Dutch commercial republicanism as such, nor did they advise in favour of agriculture as a remedy to perceived ailments. The vision of Montesquieu began to take hold as the dominant appraisal of European republics after 1750, and the cliché of the Dutch miracle definitely began to make way for the truism of Dutch decline. The risks that seemed to emanate from the Dutch dependence on trade led the Swiss to a reassessment of the agrarian nature of their own polity.³² Meanwhile, the Dutch became increasingly preoccupied with their loss of political and economic prominence. To assess their situation, they used the opinions and advice of French, English and German Enlightenment authors – in particular those of Montesquieu and his followers – on luxury and the loss of republican virtue in commercial societies.³³ One of these foreign observers, the Italian traveler Carlo Antonio Pilati, challenged Dutch readers with his analysis of their situation and offered a strategy to counterbalance the risks of their dependence on trade.

In his *Lettres sur la Hollande* (1780), Pilati observed that indeed commerce in the United Provinces had lost its former glory, but '*la situation de ce pays, l'habitude des habitans, leur génie, leur moeurs,*

leurs institutions, et sur tout leur argent ne permettront jamais que leur commerce s'anéantisse'. They continued with their *commerce d'économie* and their *commerce d'argent*, and managed to retain sufficient commercial advantages which they would only lose if they gave up on the republic and turned into '*sujets d'un prince*'. He thought the Dutch were wrong to accuse themselves of '*trop de luxe*' because their expenses in this area were certainly not deleterious, like those of the French and Italians who spent much more on '*frivolités*'. The real problem was the accumulation of riches: '*Tôt ou tard le propre argent des Hollandois les doit encore ruiner, à moins qu'ils ne changent de façon de penser par rapport aux manières de l'employer*'. In that case, the Dutch would continue to make money from those who ultimately would be unable to buy from them any more, which then would cause the Dutch lots of problems precisely because they could not supply their own country with primary goods and therefore required the exports to pay for their imports. If the Dutch could assure themselves of '*un état moins brillant, mais constant*' they would, like the Swiss and Genovese, just have to purchase some land and develop it. On a minor physiocratic note, Pilati concluded, '*La possession de fonds de terre est la seule ressource contre la pauvreté qu'occasionne à la longue le trop d'argent amassé par le commerce*'.³⁴ The solution of more land and its subsequent cultivation somehow could compensate for the changes in the turbulent world of commerce.

The reassessment of agriculture as an apt republican strategy began in the 1770s, a few years prior to the appearance of Pilati's *Lettres*, when the significance of commerce in the creation of Dutch wealth became the central issue in the debates and publications of the *Oeconomische Tak*. This Economic Society, founded in 1777 on a wave of public concern for the state of the Dutch Republic, wanted to 'redress', i.e., restore past glory, never doubting the primacy of commerce but acknowledging its changed nature and the implied consequences for the republican form of government. Using the Enlightenment method of holding an essay contest, the Economic Patriots asked why had Dutch commerce grown and flourished, why had it changed and what was causing its apparent decline.³⁵ The variety of answers to these questions prove that the analyses – now almost a century old – of Temple and Pufendorf had become self-evident: the Dutch had lost their temporary supremacy in commerce as a result of stiff international competition. Their inability to cope with French

and, especially, English competition was because they, the mercantile sector, had lost their moral fibre. Economic Patriots like Herman van den Heuvel, Adriaan Rogge, Cornelis Zillesen, Cornelis van Engelen and other, anonymous contributors to periodicals like *De Koopman*, *De Borger*, and *De Denker*, believed that the prudent merchants of the past had degenerated into a bunch of idle, opulent *rentiers*, who were too busy financing foreign goods with money invested in foreign funds, to care about the deleterious effects it had on the commonwealth. They criticised luxury as a phenomenon that caused depopulation (because people tended to postpone marriage), trade deficits and bankruptcy. According to these authors, luxury could never be lucrative in a commercial republic. This could only be the case if those luxury goods were actually produced in the country in which they were consumed, i.e., in a different economic system.³⁶ The Economic Patriots thought this meant affecting a necessary correction of the perpetual preferential treatment of the mercantile interests in Dutch politics. Although a fundamental condemnation of commerce as the source of Dutch wealth and power was never uttered, nor was a principled plea for a pure agrarian, self-sufficient republic. What was clear, however, was that the absolute sway that commerce had over the Dutch Republic had to change. But in the mean time, other, more urgent issues had to be dealt with, such as: the transformation of wasteland into farmland, husbandry had to be improved and domestic industries had to be better protected, not only by restricting imports, but also by the citizenry purchasing domestic textiles.³⁷

In short, the Economic Patriots tried to resolve the Dutch predicament by criticising the disappearance of republican virtues and by advocating a more balanced economy. In their view, economic problems could be solved with some moral guidance and various political measures. Most of them would have thought it unthinkable to allow 'natural' forces – the harvest or the market place – to totally determine the fortunes of the economy. However, one member of the *Oeconomische Tak*, Dirk Hoola van Nooten, employed Adam Smith's insights on the political economy to promote both freedom of production and commerce.³⁸ In the introduction to his 1796 edition of the first ten chapters of book I of Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, Hoola van Nooten noted that, after the errors of the mercantile system and the exaggerations of the physiocrats, the principles of political economy had now brought some logic to the business of the state and the

economy. This ‘new science of the legislator’ preached restraint when politicians faced issues involving the wealth of a nation. The legislator should do everything possible to get the maximum number of products to the greatest number of consumers and desist from actions that might decrease the quantity of goods and their enjoyment. Freedom should be the guiding principle in a world seen as a market place in which every nation, every private person should be allowed to buy and sell goods based only on their quality and their price. The legislator’s tasks should be confined to securing the property and liberty of its citizenry and providing an adequate infrastructure.³⁹ Private and national wealth, procured and sustained by land and labour, would be the happy result of such a free market system.⁴⁰ Hoola van Nooten used these arguments to draft a proposal for a new prosperous future for the Dutch Republic when it had transformed itself into the revolutionary Batavian Republic. However, it required another major constitutional change – from a republican to a monarchical form of government – to ultimately realise Smith’s prescripts.

Notes

1 In reality, Dutch agriculture had gone through a process of astounding commercialisation and specialisation between 1500 and 1650. At the time of Harte’s publication, however, Dutch farmers had experienced a century of inflexible production costs, increasing taxes, and a number of damaging natural calamities. Cf. Jan de Vries and Ad van der Woude, *The First Modern Economy. Success, failure, and perseverance of the Dutch economy, 1500-1815* (Cambridge 1997) 195 ff.

2 W. Harte, *Essays on Husbandry* (London 1764) 69, 71, 75, 79-80. Harte’s *Husbandry* won substantial contemporary approval (from, amongst others, Arthur Young) and was part of Adam Smith’s library. A second edition appeared in 1770.

3 The changes in Dutch commercial republicanism are analysed in I.J.A. Nijenhuis, ‘Trends and transitions in Dutch commercial republicanism’ in: M. van Gelderen and W.R.E. Velema (eds), *Republic, republican, republicanism* (forthcoming).

4 R. Derathé (ed.), *Montesquieu, De l’Esprit des lois* (2 vols.; Paris 1973) II, 1-18 (book XX). Cf. W.R.E. Velema, ‘Republican readings of Montesquieu: *The Spirit of the Laws* in the Dutch Republic’, *History of Political Thought* 18 (1997) 50, 56.

5 Montesquieu in a footnote referred to 'La Hollande' when he wrote: 'Nous voyons que, dans les pays où l'on n'est affecté que de l'esprit de commerce, on trafique de toutes les actions humaines, et de toutes les vertus morales : les plus petites choses, celles que l'humanité demande, s'y font, ou s'y donnent pour de l'argent.' Montesquieu. *De l'Esprit des lois*, II, 9-10 (book XX, chapter 2). In his earlier published *Considérations sur les Causes de la Grandeur des Romains, et de leur Décadence* (1742) Montesquieu indicated the canton of Berne as the new republic of Rome. Cf. Bela Kapossy, 'Neo-Roman Republicanism and Commercial Society: The Example of Eighteenth-century Berne' in: Martin van Gelderen and Quentin Skinner (eds), *Republicanism. A Shared European Heritage*. (2 vols.; Cambridge 2002), II, 233-234.

6 Albert O. Hirschmann, *The Passions and the Interests. Political Arguments for Capitalism before Its Triumph* (Princeton 1977), 67 ff. discusses the influence of Montesquieu on theories of political and social behaviour. For a number of countries (not the Netherlands, though) the relationship between republicanism and the rise of commerce has been examined in *Republicanism: A Shared European Heritage*, II, 177 ff.

7 As a critic from the 1770s put it, contemporary merchants hastily closed their books to idle away their evenings playing cards, while their fathers used to stay in their offices, occasionally discussing the latest trade news with fellow merchants: *De Vaderlander* (4 vols.; Amsterdam 1775-1779) III, 372. Cf. I.J.A. Nijenhuis, *Een joodse philosophe. Isaac de Pinto (1717-1787) en de ontwikkeling van de politieke economie in de Europese Verlichting* (Amsterdam 1992), 95-112.

8 Eugene F. Miller (ed.) *David Hume, Essays: Moral, Political, and Literary* (Indianapolis 1985), 88.

9 Kapossy, 'Neo-Roman Republicanism', 228-229, 245. See also Kapossy's contribution in this volume.

10. Istvan Hont and Michael Ignatieff, 'Needs and Justice in the *Wealth of Nations*' in: id. (eds), *Wealth and virtue. The shaping of political economy in the Scottish Enlightenment* (Cambridge 1983), I-12, 17.

11 For the seventeenth-century roots of political thought on interest, prudence, international relations, etc., see Nannerl O. Keohane, *Philosophy and the State in France. The Renaissance to the Enlightenment* (Princeton 1980), 151 ff. and Istvan Hont, *Jealousy of trade: International Competition and the Nation-State in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge MA 2005), 8 ff.

12 The sheer number of pages devoted to either one of the republics in comparative state surveys alone confirms this predilection for the Dutch Republic.

lic. For instance, the chapter on the Dutch Republic in Pufendorf's *Historien der voornaemste rycken en staten* (see below, n30) is 62 pages, compared to 13 on the Swiss Confederacy.

13 The blissful mixture of political liberty, tolerance, autonomy and commerce in Dutch political thought is discussed in E.H. Kossmann, 'Freedom in seventeenth-century Dutch thought and practice' in: Jonathan I. Israel (ed.), *The Anglo-Dutch moment. Essays on the Glorious Revolution and its world impact* (Cambridge 1991), 286, 291-92.

14 Pieter de la Court, *Aanwysing der heilsame politike Gronden en Maximen van de Republike van Holland en West-Vriesland* (Leiden and Rotterdam 1669), 6-7, 25 ff., 45. Cf. F. Driessen (ed.), *Het welvaren van Leiden: Handschrift uit het jaar 1659* (The Hague 1911) chaps. 3-4, 61-64. Petrus Valkenier, *'t Verwerd Europa* (Amsterdam 1675) 105 ff., 124 ff. Cf. Jonathan I. Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness and Fall 1477-1806* (Oxford 1998), 608, 674. De la Court's and Valkenier's views on republican interests are compared in Thomas Maissen, "'Par un pur motif de religion et en qualité de Republicain": Der außenpolitische Republikanismus der Niederlande und seine Aufnahme in der Eidgenossenschaft (ca. 1670-1710)", in: L. Schorn-Schütte (ed.), *Strukturen des politischen Denkens im Europa der Frühen Neuzeit (16./17. Jahrhundert)* (Frankfurt am Main 2004), 233-82.

15 Joyce Appleby, *Economic Thought and Ideology in Seventeenth-Century England* (Princeton 1978) 85; in ch. 4, 'The Dutch as a source of evidence', Appleby treats the exemplary role of the Dutch in seventeenth-century English proto-economic thought.

16. [Charles Davenant], *An Essay upon the Probable Methods of Making a People Gainers in the Balance of Trade by the Author of the Essay on Ways and Means* (London 1699), 83-84.

17 See for instance *Consideratiën over de navigatie en commercie der Vereenighde Nederlanden* (1672), 1-2. Cf. E.H. Kossmann, *Political Thought in the Dutch Republic: Three Studies* (Amsterdam 2000), 181. Marijke Meijer Drees, "'Vechten voor het vaderland" in de literatuur', in: N.C.F. van Sas (ed.), *Vaderland: Een geschiedenis vanaf de vijftiende eeuw tot 1940* (Amsterdam 1999), 130-34.

18 The growing competition notwithstanding, in the first decades of the eighteenth century Amsterdam was still the international corn market of Europe; cf. David Ormrod, *The Rise of Commercial Empires: England and the Netherlands in the Age of Mercantilism, 1650-1770* (Cambridge 2003), 207-08.

19 Based on the resolutions of the States General, the States of Holland and

the States of Zeeland, these decrees were published in the *Groot-Placcaetboek van de Staten-Generaal der Vereenigde Nederlanden, de Staten van Hollandt, mitsgaders van de Staten van Zeelandt* (9 vols.; The Hague 1658-1796), 1591, 1596, 1597, 1602, 1624, 1628, 1630, 1631, 1698, 1708, 1709, 1757. The motivation provided by the States General on 29 November 1628 for their decree issued the following day, can be seen as a working example: 'Alsoo Haer Hoochmoogenden bericht syn dat van Oosten ende de quartieren daer ontrent weinich terruwe ende rogge herwaerts sal comen vermidts d'oorloge aldaer, ende dat dies niet jegenstaende verscheiden perthien van terruwe ende rogge buiten de geunieerde provincien nae andere landen gescheept ende vervoert worden: Is nae voorgaende deliberatie goetgevonden ende verstaen dat een concept van placcaet ingestelt sal worden tot verbodt van den uytvoer van tarruwe ende rogge buyten deser landen, ende d'admiraliteiten gelast geen paspoort daer op te verleenen ter tyt ende wylen tot anders sal wesen geordonneert, ten einde dese landen in egeen gebreck van coorn coomen te vervallen' ['Due to the wars in Eastern Europe corn imports are dwindling. Nevertheless wheat and rye are exported. Therefore a decree prohibiting the export of grain will be drafted. The States General also instruct the Boards of Admiralty to withhold export permits with respect to wheat and rye, in order that no shortage of corn will fall upon the Republic']. The Hague, Nationaal Archief 1.01.03 Staten-Generaal, 1576-1796: Resoluties, 1576-1796 inv. 53 fol. 575v-576.

20 These observations were annexed to his edition of the *Placcaten, ordonnantien ende regelementen op 't stuck van de lijf-tocht* (Leiden 1651).

21 Graswinckel, *Aenmerckingen ende betrachtungen*, 124; cf. G.J. Liesker, *Die staatswissenschaftlichen Anschauungen Dirck Graswinckel's* (Freiburg 1901), 61 ff; and Theo van Tijn, 'Dutch Economic Thought in the Seventeenth Century', in: J. van Daal and A. Heertje (eds, *Economic Thought in the Netherlands 1650-1950* (Aldershot 1992) 12.

22 Graswinckel, *Aenmerckingen ende betrachtungen*, 72: 'Den eenen Mensch moet van den anderen leven: Daerom waeyen de Winden uyt den Oosten, Westen, Zuyden ende Noorden, om dat de Menschen uyt alle 's Werelts hoecken den eene den anderen toe souden kunnen brengen, 't gunt tot de Gemeene-welstant van 't gansche Menschelijcke-weesen of eerlijck, of oorbaerlijck, of vermaeckelijck ende in een woort, nootsaeckelijck is, ofte soude kunnen zijn'.

23 Ibid., 133, 166; cf. H.-J. Wagener, 'Free seas, free trade, free people: early Dutch institutionalism', *History of Political Economy* 26 (1994), 409.

24. 'Alsoo de gerechticheyt vereyscht, dat elck een met het zijne vry ghelaten werde te doen wat hy wil. 't Welck plaetse behoort te houden, soo lange

geen noot-saeckelijckheyt een andere Wet stelle. De noot-saeckelickheyt behoort niet soo wijd gheextendeert te werden, dat al wat oorbaerlick voor de Ghemeente is, mede nootsaeckelick gheacht werde. Want daer tegen is een groote oorbaerlijckheijt, ende nutticheyt: dat niemant verkort werde, al waert dat duysent Menschen daer voor-deel uyt trocken': Graswinckel, *Aenmerckingen ende betrachtungen*, 170; cf. Wagenaar, 'Free seas', 411.

25 See for instance the *Eenvoudige neutrale remarques* (Middelburg 1708), 24-25; and the *Korte schets van 's lands welwezen* (1714), 11-13, 25.

26 For example in the *Verhaal van de wonderlijke koopmanschap in de laage eylanden, verhandelt in een t'samenspraak* (1673).

27 Sir George Clark (ed.), *Sir William Temple. Observations upon the United Provinces of the Netherlands* (Oxford 1972; orig. 1673), ch. 4, 108 ff.

28 *Ibid.*, 134: 'And first, I take their vast Trade, which was an occasion of their Greatness, to have been One likewise of their Fall, by having wholly diverted the Genius of their Native Subjects and Inhabitants, from Arms to Traffique, and the Arts of Peace; Leaving the whole fortune of their later Wars, to be managed by Foreign and Mercenary Troops; Which much abased the Courage of their Nation'. On Temple's foresight see Istvan Hont, 'Free trade and the economic limits to national politics: neo-Machiavellian political economy reconsidered', in: J. Dunn (ed.), *The economic limits to modern politics* (Cambridge 1990), 41-42.

29 *Temple. Observations*, 122-25; cf. Ida J.A. Nijenhuis, "Shining Comet, Falling Meteor": Reflections on the Dutch Republic as a Commercial Power during the Second Stadholderless Era', in: Jan A.F. de Jongste and Augustus J. Veenendaal, Jr. (ed.), *Anthonie Heinsius and the Dutch Republic 1688-1720: Politics, War, and Finance* (The Hague 2002), 115-17.

30 S. Pufendorf, *Inleydingh tot de Historien der voornaemste rycken en staten welcke ter deese tijd in Europa worden gevonden* (Dutch transl. Utrecht 1686²), 462-79; 489. The first German edition was published in 1682. Pufendorf mentioned the fact that about a fifth of the Dutch population could be fed with home-grown grain and described the Swiss as being in a perpetual struggle to obtain sufficient provisions for their inhabitants out of the mountainous environment; cf. Alfred Dufour, 'Pufendorf', in: J.H. Burns and Mark Goldie (eds), *The Cambridge History of Political thought 1450-1700* (Cambridge 1991), 584-85.

31 Gregorio Leti, *Kort Begrip der Helden-deugden* 2 vols. (The Hague 1700), I: 289-91, 341 ff., 529 ff., II: 543-48. This was the Dutch translation of his *Raguagli storici, e politici delle virtù, e massime necessarie alla conservazione degli stati, con infiniti esempi, e osservazioni, o vero compendio*

delle virtù heroiche sopra la fedeltà de' suditi, e amore verso la patria de' veri coittadini (2 vols.; Amsterdam 1699).

32 Kaposy, 'Neo-Roman Republicanism', 228.

33 W.W. Mijnhardt, *Tot Heil van 't Menschdom: Culturele genootschappen in Nederland, 1750-1815* (Amsterdam 1987), 113-15; Nijenhuis, *Een joodse filosofe*, 96-97, 104-12; Velema, 'Republican readings of Montesquieu', 50-57.

34 Carlo Antonio Pilati, *Lettres sur la Hollande* 2 vols. (The Hague 1780), II: 121-22; 181; 192-97. One can find a parallel argument in his *Voyages en différens pays de l'Europe en 1774, 1775 et 1776* 2 vols. (The Hague 1777), II: 167-68, though there he is more negative about the Dutch. His argument does not allow for economic growth to resolve the problem of rich versus poor countries; cf. Istvan Hont, 'The "rich country-poor country" debate in Scottish classical political economy', in: Hont and Ignatieff (eds), *Wealth and virtue*, 271 ff.

35 The Economic Society was founded as a branch of the Holland Society of Sciences in imitation of the 'Society instituted at London for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce'; cf. J. Bierens de Haan, *Van Oeconomische Tak tot Nederlandsche Maatschappij voor Nijverheid en Handel 1777-1952* (Haarlem 1952), 5; and H.F.J.M. van den Eerenbeemt, *Armoede en arbeidsdwang: Werkinrichtingen voor 'onnutte' Nederlanders in de Republiek 1760-1795* (The Hague 1977), 21-22. The results of the contest were published in the *Verhandelingen uitgegeeven door de Hollandsche Maatschappij* (Haarlem 1775) xvi. Pilati, *Lettres sur la Hollande*, II: 192 shows that he was acquainted with the prize-winning essay of H.H. van den Heuvel, leading man of the Economic Patriots.

36 Cf. I. Nijenhuis, 'De weelde als deugd?', *Documentatieblad Werkgroep Achttiende Eeuw* 24 (1992), 45-56.

37 *Verhandelingen uitgegeeven door de Hollandsche Maatschappij*, xvi, 30 ff., 45 ff., 56, 67 ff. (Van den Heuvel); 244 ff., 294, 302 (Rogge); 416 ff. (Zillesen).

38 His importance was that for those who did not read French, German or English he provided a Dutch edition of the writings of Bonnet, Montesquieu, Condillac, and Smith. Years of editions by Hoola van Nooten: Bonnet's *Recherches philosophiques sur les preuves du Christianisme*, originally published 1769, Dutch edition 1771; Condillac's *Le commerce et le gouvernement*, originally published 1769, Dutch edition 1782; Montesquieu's *De l'esprit des lois*, originally published 1748, Dutch edition 1783-1786; Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, originally published in 1776, Dutch (incomplete) edition 1796.

39. *Naspeuringen over de natuur en oorzaaken van den rijkdom der volkeren, gevolgd naar het Engelsch van den Heere Adam Smith, door Dirk Hoola van Nooten* (Amsterdam 1796), I: xl, xlvi-xlviii.
40. *Ibid.*, xxviii-xxix, 53-54 note k.

12 Republican Futures: The Image of Holland in 18th-Century Swiss Reform Discourse

Béla Kapossy

In Book Three of the *Spirit of the Laws* Montesquieu famously argued that ‘the political men of Greece who lived under popular government recognised no other force to sustain it than virtue. Those of today speak to us only of manufacturing, commerce, finance, wealth, and even luxury’.¹ Montesquieu’s sentence was repeated throughout the second half of the century as, for example, by the Abbé de Mably in his *De l’étude de l’histoire* published in 1775.² But, whereas Montesquieu much doubted the relevance of ancient politics for modern Europe, Mably, on the contrary, insisted that it was the wisdom of the ‘men of Greece’ which held the key to Europe’s future. It was in Switzerland, he claimed, that one could still detect traits of ancient politics and where ‘*les idées les plus vraies & les plus naturelles de la société*’ had been preserved. Here, the magistrates’ authority was based simply on merit and respect rather than on fear as it was in the rest of Europe. The reason why the governments of the Swiss cantons could grant a maximum degree of liberty to their citizens without having to fear popular unrest was simple enough: the Swiss ‘*ont des mœurs, & n’ont pas nos malheureuses passions.*’ Mably’s view of Holland was less flattering. If Switzerland appeared to be the last refuge of virtuous politics, Holland, on the contrary, presented the image of a purely commercial, distinctly modern and non-virtuous society; one in which, as Montesquieu had put it, even ‘the smallest things, those required by humanity, are done or given for money.’³

Comparisons between Switzerland and Holland can be found in numerous essays and treatises at the time. Some Swiss representatives claimed that Holland presented an exact mirror image of Switzerland

and should serve as a warning of what their country could become if its magistrates and citizens abandoned (or failed to return to) their traditional frugality, military spiritedness and commitment to the common good. This view seems to have been particularly prevalent amongst a group of younger writers from Zurich who, from the mid-1750s onwards, became Switzerland's most outspoken moral critics of commercial society. By attacking the commercial politics of Holland and by brandishing the Dutch as lapsed republicans who had replaced their original fervour for liberty with the desire for continuous material gain, the young Zurich patriots seemed to accept Mably's depiction of themselves as the new flag bearers of the party of the ancients, the leading moral critics of modernity. It has recently been argued that the highly censorious critique of modern commercial politics voiced by members of the Bodmer circle, like the historian Johann Heinrich Füssli or Jakob Wegelin⁴ should be seen as representative of eighteenth-century Swiss republican discourse.⁵ This would suggest that the most appropriate way for understanding the relationship between the Swiss and Dutch republics is to analyse it primarily in terms of a dispute between ancient and modern politics, between virtue and commerce.

In what follows, I would like to propose an alternative reading. Obviously, there were Swiss thinkers who defended the virtuous poverty of the ancients against modern commercial politics, Rousseau being the most prominent amongst them. This, however, overlooks the fact that Rousseau and his followers in Zurich occupied a fairly marginal position within Swiss reform discourse. Most reformers writing during the second half of the eighteenth century did not subscribe to the vision of a militantly virtuous Switzerland, isolated from the corrupting influences of both foreign trade and courtly politeness. Instead, they pleaded for a better integration of Switzerland into Europe's economy and a new alignment between republican politics and modern commerce.⁶ Although this did not make them unconditional supporters of Holland's politics and of its commercial strategy either, many of them were willing to consider the latter as more than simply a symbol of corruption without any relevance for the Swiss case.⁷ Their critical engagement with Dutch politics and commerce, I would argue, was less about ancient versus modern, or virtue versus commerce, but part and parcel of an internal and, at times, even theoretically sophisticated debate about the possibility of reforming the Swiss city-states. Looking at the case of Holland, its economic histo-

ry and political culture became important because it allowed them to think more clearly about how best to disentangle the positive aspects of modernity from those which they considered incompatible with the moral requirements of Swiss politics and the specificities of the cantons' geo-strategic location. Hence, rather than seeing the Swiss critique of Holland as indicative of a fundamental rift within eighteenth-century political thought, neatly separating those who spoke of nothing but virtues and duties from those who spoke of nothing but rights and commerce, one should understand the ideological debate over the comparative advantages of Switzerland and Holland as a dispute over competing visions of republican modernity.

This chapter will look at the Swiss-Dutch relationship by focussing on the debate about the advantages and disadvantages of accepting new citizens and foreign labourers which erupted at the beginning of the Seven Years War. It was here that the case of Holland acquired a particular salience within Swiss reform thinking. Some excellent work has been done on the issue of immigration and naturalisation during the period following the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes and during the *Helvetik*; however, nothing comparable exists for the 1750s and 1760s.⁸ There is a large amount of both published and unpublished material which explicitly deals with this issue, and this chapter shall refer to some of these texts. The main aim, however, is not to provide a detailed historical reconstruction of the Swiss debate on immigration and naturalisation, but to describe the nature of the framework within which a discussion of Holland in eighteenth century Switzerland makes sense.

Eighteenth-century Swiss and European commentators associated Holland not only with commerce but also with populousness and toleration. It was Holland's ability to constantly attract new citizens and to integrate them into the republic's economic life which, as the anonymous author of *The present state of Holland* of 1745 put it, made it a model for the rest of Europe:⁹

Holland is as industrious to receive Strangers from all Parts, as other Countries are to get rid of them. It is a Maxim with the Dutch, *That no Nation can be too populous, provided it be industrious*. They admit all Strangers that come to settle amongst them, and immediately grant them all the Privileges of the Natives. The Magistrates take care of all the poor Fam-

ilies that take Refuge under her Wings, till they are in a Condition to support themselves.

Throughout the eighteenth century, Swiss and other writers were fascinated by the Dutch Republic's welcoming attitude towards foreigners, their liberal stance towards religious minorities and the manner in which they relied on toleration as a core element of modern commercial politics. It was also precisely on this issue that the Dutch provinces seemed to differ most from some of the leading members of the Swiss Confederation. We can see this from an episode in 1710 when the States General undermined the Bernese government's attempt to expulse a group of Anabaptists from its territory and to ship them from Rotterdam to the British colonies.¹⁰ Both the Bernese authorities and the States General, who allowed the Anabaptists to disembark at Nijmegen, couched their respective positions in the language of state interest. The Grand Pensionary, as the Vaudois diplomat François Louis Pesme de Saint-Saphorin reported to the Bernese Avoyer Willading, defended Holland's toleration of Anabaptists on the grounds that 'as merchants they provided excellent services to the nation, that they were diligent and peace loving'; the Bernese, on the other hand, saw the latter's expulsion fully justified in the light of the danger their militant pacifism posed to Berne's ability to fend off potential foreign aggressors.¹¹

From the middle of the eighteenth century onwards, Swiss reform thinkers increasingly questioned the rationality behind the cantons' traditional strategy of national security. Recent developments in military technology, as well as the emergence of new forms of public finance which enabled modern states to bankroll lengthy military campaigns, they claimed, made the Swiss militias look increasingly outdated. These arguments had already been presented by de Pesme in a report to the Bernese government of 1702, where he warned that the days when wars were decided on the battlefield alone had long gone.

Il est impossible de nous soutenir seuls et par nos propres forces contre la puissance de la France ... puisque la France ayant tout les moyens propres à soutenir longtems une guerre, nous sauroit miner peu à peu et nous faire consumer toutes nos provisions d'argent, et de vivre, et abandonner la culture du pays, sans en venir à des actions generales.¹²

Many reform thinkers shared de Pesme's concerns about the effects that the openly economic dimension of modern warfare had on the Swiss cantons' ability to withstand foreign aggression – a concern that seemed all the more justified since most Swiss cantons depended on foreign grain. In contrast to those who defended Switzerland's deployment of foreign regiments, on the grounds that it helped to regulate a male surplus population and hence alleviate the potential impact of food shortages on the militias' fighting capacities, the reformers insisted that it was in Switzerland's interest to have as large a population as possible. For those wanting to understand how the initial struggle to greatness of Swiss cities could be repeated under the condition of modern commercial rivalry, Holland's unprecedented rise to power promised to provide at least some of the answers. Holland's enduring legacy to modern Europe, many Swiss reformers believed, was not only to have shown that the greatness and influence of a nation now rested first and foremost on its ability to conquer foreign markets, but also that economic competitiveness required a culture of tolerance as well as a sufficiently flexible form of politics, capable of adapting to the constantly changing demands of international commerce. It was on these grounds that the Vaudois minister, Benjamin Carrard, in his prize-winning essay on legislation of 1765, insisted on the pertinence of the Dutch case for Bernese reform thinking.

It is the intolerant and persecuting spirit which makes the mind revolt, which blows up hatred, foments divisions, and causes dangerous agitations. In spite of the different sects which Holland nourishes in her bosom, she fails not to enjoy a constant, and invariable tranquillity; she sees her civil laws equally respected by all the inhabitants; and by means of that liberty of conscience which she grants to every one, she has the advantage of attracting an infinity of strangers, who have augmented her industry, who have placed her in a state of sustaining for a long time great wars, of maintaining colonies throughout the world, without decreasing her inhabitants.¹³

When the Swiss, at the beginning of the Seven Years War, entered the European debate on modern commercial rivalry, Holland was already believed to be in economic decline. The Dutch miracle, the argument ran, was built on a mere temporary advantage over their still

largely agrarian, monarchical rivals. Holland was thus able to become the entrepôt for the whole of Europe, the universal factor, the dominant shipping agent for all other nations. The same causes, it was predicted, which had allowed the Dutch to transform their once hostile and barren marshes into Europe's most densely populated region and to build their communities into a major European power, would also determine their downfall. Once the European monarchies started to attend to trade themselves, the Dutch would soon lose their formidable status and rejoin the rank as befitted a nation of its size. This was a standard argument going back to William Temple's powerful analysis of seventeenth-century Dutch commercial politics in the *Observations upon the United Provinces of the Netherlands* of 1673, and we can also find it in many Swiss texts dating from the middle of the eighteenth century.¹⁴ The Bernese Albrecht von Haller had already noted in his travel diary from the 1720s that the growing involvement of other European nations in foreign trade had become a cause for concern to Amsterdam merchants.¹⁵ By the second half of the century, Holland's situation was thought to have deteriorated further, so much so that in 1768, Jacques Accarias de Sérionne, author of the widely read *Le commerce de la Hollande*, could argue that Holland's fate now depended entirely on the commercial success or otherwise of England and France: '*Si ... la France & l'Angleterre, parvenoient à faire tout le Commerce qu'elles peuvent faire, celui de la République seroit Presque entièrement ruiné*'.¹⁶ Given England's determination to establish hegemony in foreign trade, Holland's future looked rather bleak. Holland's safest bet, Sérionne concluded, was to profit from the French nobility's still deep-seated prejudice against commerce and to try and survive as a neutral carrier between France and her American colonies.

Most Swiss reformers judged Holland's disproportionate dependence on a volatile trading economy as incompatible with the requirements of Swiss politics which, as many of them argued, required as high a degree as possible of autarchy in primary goods.¹⁷ This, however, did not stop them from voicing their admiration for Holland's population density and its liberal attitude towards religious minorities. The young Albrecht von Haller, later known for his orthodoxy and political conservatism, was clearly taken by Amsterdam's merchant communities where Jews, Protestants, and Catholics freely intermingled without ever letting theological controversies interfere with their business interests: 'Amongst the merchants there are quite

many Lutherans and Jews who follow, in complete liberty, their religious services and their commercial affairs. One even allows Catholic women to take their vows and to secretly live as nuns. Despite this general liberty, there has, since the establishment of the state, never been any dispute or unrest.¹⁸ Even the young Bernese, Johann Beck, who in his letters to his friend Isaak Iselin had usually little positive to say about the Dutch, could not help but express his admiration for Holland's peaceful trading communities, especially since they seemed to be held together by nothing more than individual needs. The Dutch, Beck argued, might be questionable patriots who would willingly accept the Turkish Sultan as their sovereign as long as he didn't interfere with their claim to private property; and yet it was only here that a citizen was really at liberty to follow his own convictions:

*Il va à la Bourse, et de là aux Temples, Synagoges, Mosquées, Pagodes, dans l'Assemblée des Lutheriens, Jansenistes, Molinistes, Trembleurs, Mennonistes, Quiétistes, Anabaptistes etc. Pourvu que la foi publique soit en honneur on se soucie peu du Reste.*¹⁹

For Swiss reform thinkers, the question was thus not whether the Swiss cantons should simply follow the Dutch model. The real question was whether it was possible to adopt only those aspects of Dutch culture and politics which Swiss reformers believed might contribute towards Switzerland's economic revival, without, at the same time, having to accept Holland's highly volatile trading economy. In the first instance, this required a clear understanding of the connection between Holland's liberal politics, its populosity, and its economics. Was Holland's population directly conditioned by its unique career as the broker for the whole of Europe, or could the two be analysed separately? Could a culture of toleration be sustained over longer periods of economic stagnation, or did toleration within the state depend on a politics of expansionism? Questions like these were endlessly discussed, not just in Switzerland but throughout Europe, especially in England and France, where the issue of naturalisation and civil tolerance constituted a central topic within the debates on the comparative advantages of English 'liberty' and French 'absolutism' for sustaining high levels of economic competitiveness. In all of these debates, references to Holland's politics of toleration abound.²⁰

Many of the key texts of this debate, like Louis-Joseph Plumard de Dangeul's *Les Avantages et les Desavantages de la France et de la Gr. Bretagne par Rapport au Commerce* (Leiden 1754), were well known in Swiss reform circles and Swiss thinkers refer to them in their writings. What sets the Swiss debates apart from those in, say, France, England, and Holland, is thus less the arguments themselves, but the political context within which they took shape. In their writings, Swiss reformers complained that Swiss cities had become bulwarks of protectionism. No other state in Europe, Albrecht von Haller argued in the *Encyclopédie* of Yverdon, was so adverse to the reception of foreigners as Switzerland.

Il y vient peu d'étranger & presque personne ne peut s'y établir, parce que le droit d'y vivre est attaché à la naissance & au sang. Plus que toute autre nation, les Suisses sont avarés de leur droit de bourgeoisie. Ce n'est pas seulement dans les villes dominantes, que ce droit est inaquérable, les villages mêmes, du moins du pays Allemand de la république de Berne, n'admettent aucun étranger. Dans tout autre pays l'on est citoyen, dès que l'on se soumet aux loix du pays; ici comme à Athenes il faut être né de parens & d'ayeux citoyens.²¹

A similar chord was struck by Fortunato Bartolomeo de Felice in his entry, '*Droit de Bourgeoisie*'. Rather than welcoming foreign labourers into their midst, Swiss citizens hoped to preserve their status and to fend off the effects of economic stagnation through ever more regulations.²² In Switzerland, the debate on immigration thus acquired a more openly political connotation than in England or France because it raised some essential questions, not just about comparative economic advantage, but about the very essence of traditional notions of citizenship, the role of public property for maintaining social peace, and the feasibility of a politics of autarchy within modern Europe. The following section provides a brief outline of the main positions within the Swiss debate and shows how they relate to the varying attitudes towards Holland one encounters in Swiss writings.

One of the strongest attacks against naturalisation and what might be called the Dutch model can be found in a pamphlet by the Basel

law professor, Johann Rudolf Iselin, the *Unpartheyische Betrachtungen der Freymüthigen Gedanken über die Entwölkerung unserer Vaterstadt* of 1758, which he wrote in response to an earlier pamphlet by his nephew, Isaak Iselin, calling for a review of the city's stringent anti-immigration policy.²³ Accepting new citizens, J.R. Iselin predicted, would transform the old Basel, with its distinct political culture, into something utterly different – traditional solidarity based on a shared history would be replaced with cut-throat competitive behaviour; old businesses would be forced to close down and ancient families ruined. Once admitted into political life, the new citizens would steadily build up their power base within the Great Council and then reshape the constitution to suit their own particular interest. Soon the Basel citizens would suffer the fate of old Moeris, described in Virgil's ninth Eclogue, whom Octavian had had expelled from his lands with the words: *haec mea sunt veteres migrate Coloni*, 'these lands are mine; leave, old settlers'.²⁴

Similar fears were repeated across Europe and proved extremely stable over time. What distinguishes Johann Rudolf Iselin's criticisms from the others, was the importance he attached to the idea that the acceptance of new citizens would undermine Basel's capacity to feed the urban population. Basel's politics, he argued had always followed the principle that the city, together with the hinterland or subject territory, should form a single economic entity. The countryside fed the city, while the citizens provided the labourers with artisan goods and other commodities that allowed for a steady agricultural output. Agricultural output thus necessarily determined the size of the urban population. Rather than strengthening Basel's position, an increase in urban population, it followed, would only make the city even more dependent on foreign grain supplies and, hence, on the goodwill of potentially aggressive, neighbouring producers of primary goods.²⁵ The key to Basel's survival, Iselin continued, was the careful management of its limited resources, especially grain, wine, and wood. The arrival of new citizens was bound to upset this already fragile balance, not just by increasing the risk of food shortages, but also, and perhaps most importantly, by reducing the benefits of what a citizen was entitled to by virtue of being part of the sovereign body. A larger citizenry meant more people applying for the same number of posts in the administration; it meant an even smaller stipend for those in need and more difficult access to the closed market in the subject territory. Furthermore, there was little reason to be-

lieve that the arrival of new competitors would force the citizens to renounce their craving for foreign luxury goods. A better way to restore the balance between supply and demand was for the government to initiate a new culture of solidarity, frugality and good house-keeping, and to encourage citizens to buy whenever possible from local producers.

Johann Rudolf Iselin's defence of the status quo reflected his highly critical understanding of European politics and of Basel's chances to withstand the pressure of international economic rivalry. It was only by adopting a politics of moderation and neutrality that the canton could hope to escape the developments underway elsewhere on the continent. This was also the position of the Lucerne magistrate, Valentin Meyer, in his *Gründe und Gegengründe, über die Annahme neuer Bürger in einer freyen Republik*, published in 1761. Rather than emulate Europe's rich, commercial states like Holland, the Swiss cities should adopt the opposite strategy. By reducing the overblown size of the administration, by exercising strict control over the use of public funds, and by abolishing costly festivities, the cantons could return to the kind of economic equilibrium between city and hinterland as befitted small, landlocked, non-expansionist republics. Although a politics of moderation was no guarantee for peace, it was Switzerland's best hope of remaining a spectator of, rather than an unwilling participant in the continuous arms race between Europe's major powers.

Isaak Iselin, too, accepted the ideal of city and hinterland as a single economic unit; yet in his *Freimühtige Gedanken über die Entvölkerung unserer Vaterstadt* he argued that self-sufficiency was neither strictly necessary for Basel's independence, nor should it become the prime focus of reform.²⁶ Basel, due to its export-oriented textile industry was already integrated into the European economy. It was exposed to the unpredictable nature of foreign fashion and surrounded by countries eager to take over Basel's dominant position in silk-ribbon manufacturing. This left the city with no other option but to follow the logic of market competition. National economies, Iselin explained, that did not want to be overtaken by foreign rivals were forced to expand. An isolationist standstill, as the critics of naturalisation seemed to imagine, was purely utopian, the brainchild of Christian idealism.²⁷

For Iselin, the principle that republics could achieve greatness only by increasing their populations was confirmed, not just by the histo-

ry of the 'mighty Rome but also by the industrious Holland and the wise city of Geneva.'²⁸ Although he listed a number of internal reforms, he doubted whether such measures alone would suffice to make Basel a viable competitor.²⁹ It was only by exposing the local artisans to artificially created external pressure that one was likely to see any significant changes. The arrival of foreign skilled workers, he predicted, would lead to the dissemination of new, cutting-edge technology which the manufacturing industry needed if it was to maintain its present position. While admitting that the competition from foreign workers and artisans might spell the end for a few established businesses, Iselin argued that the losses some individual citizens might suffer were negligible compared to the enormous profits that would ensue for the community as a whole. Placing the long-term interests of the entire community above the short-term interests of individuals was what patriotism was about, after all.

Basel, according to Iselin, was ideally located for industry and foreign commerce; situated at the crossroads of important trading routes and with immediate access to one of Europe's main waterways, there was no reason why his hometown could not emulate the achievements of some of the larger cities further down the Rhine. Although Iselin mentions the Dutch case only in passing in his pamphlet, there can be no doubt that it was Holland he had in mind when arguing that Basel could easily increase the urban population beyond the agricultural capacity of its hinterland. Although, unlike Holland, Basel had no open access to the sea, it was surrounded by grain producing regions. Just as Holland could always rely on its merchant fleet to procure the necessary basic goods, land-locked Basel could always rely on its access to neighbouring grain markets. Grain producers, he insisted, did not have enemies, only customers. Once Basel managed to increase its population and consumption of primary goods, it was inconceivable that neighbouring grain producers would scoff at the profits to be made and refuse to feed the city. Even if one of them did decide to impose export restrictions, Basel could always buy more from another source.³⁰ Basel's interests, Iselin concluded, were thus exactly the opposite of what his critics had maintained. Instead of aiming to restore some imaginary balance between city and hinterland and strictly regulate both urban consumption and agricultural output, Basel should become Europe's foremost advocate for the liberalisation of the grain trade.

It is important to realise that the call for an increase in population in itself did not necessarily amount to a position in favour of immigration. This becomes clear when we look at the Bernese *Economic Society's* debate on legislation and population during the 1760s. The Bernese debate was not, as in the case of Basel, about whether or not an increase in population was beneficial to the canton; most correspondents of the *Economic Society* took this for granted. Rather, it was a debate about whether economic modernisation and, more specifically, agricultural development required the input of foreign workers or whether this should be attempted through reform measures that aimed to increase the local, rural population.

Here, the case of the Vaudois minister, Louis Muret, author of the *Mémoire sur l'état de la population dans le Pays de Vaud*, published in 1766, is particularly illuminating. Turning against the anti-reformist camp, Muret argued that the failure to recognise the benefits of populousness constituted one of the fundamental mistakes of traditional Swiss politics. Experience had taught our forefather:

*que souvent de nouveaux venus font une concurrence, qui porte préjudice aux anciens colons. De-là leur préjugés contre tout accroissement de population; de-là cette conséquence peu juste, que rien n'est plus avantageux à une ville ou à un peuple, que de resserrer ses privilèges, dans le cercle étroit d'une société peu nombreuse.*³¹

It was the short-sightedness of this so-called 'gothic system', Muret argued, which had initially led him to promote the introduction of radical reforms along the lines of the Dutch model:

*Persuadé, comme je le serai toujours, de la grande utilité d'une nombreuse population, je croyois dicté par intérêt particulier, & par une basse jalousie, tout ce qu'on allégué communément dans nos petites villes, contre la réception des bourgeois & des habitans: j'aurois voulu pouvoir retourner en arrière, retenir dans le pays tous les réfugiés du siècle passé, & leur offrir gratuitement à tous la bourgeoisie de nos villes. ... J'aurois volontiers ouvert un azyle aux Juifs, que j'aurois voulu associer à tous nos privilèges, jusqu'à les admettre aux emplois. Mon zèle pour la population ne respectoit aucune de nos anciennes constitutions.*³²

What made him change his mind, Muret insisted, was not that he had come to doubt the importance of populousness for modern greatness. His skepticism regarding the desirability of adopting a Dutch or English style of commercial politics stemmed mostly from what he claimed was his new understanding of the relationship between agriculture and industry. The real shortcoming of those who opposed population growth on the grounds that it endangered the economic balance between city and hinterland, was a failure to sufficiently acknowledge the effect of technological innovation on agricultural output. By developing new agricultural tools, by introducing new types of grain, draining marshes, building new roads and prolonging leases on the land, Swiss farmers could easily increase their productivity. Only after agricultural supply started to exceed urban demand, could magistrates start thinking about whether or not to invite foreigner workers.

The main argument that could be made against immigrants, Muret insisted, was that they contributed little, if anything, to any increase in the rural population. Most foreigners who settled in the Canton of Berne were *rentiers*, who preferred the cities to the countryside; they were ‘*des gens âgés qui se retirent dans un pays de liberté, pour y passer doucement leurs vieux jours*’ and with little inclination to establish new families.³³ Even worse, because of their wealth, they often served as a magnet for the rural poor who would then move to the city in the hope of finding employment in one of the large households. Wealthy foreigners were beneficial only to cities like London or Amsterdam, not to ‘*nos petites villes [qui] sont dans un cas tout différent de ces grandes villes, situées près de la mer, où la classe des artisans & des marchands, peut se multiplier beaucoup, sans s’embarrasser & sans se nuire*’.³⁴ As an alternative, the magistrates should try to repopulate the countryside with its own people, which they could easily do by simplifying marital laws, by giving newlyweds grants, that would allow them to establish a household, and by reducing the number of Bernese soldiers stationed abroad. Berne, Muret concluded, should still welcome foreigners, but only ‘*par un principe d’humanité, & nullement en vuë de prétendus avantages, qui se trouvent contre-balancés par de grands inconvénients*’.³⁵

Although Muret’s essay earned him a prize from the *Economic Society*, the editors of the *Mémoires et Observations* distanced themselves from his conclusions which, they feared, played into the hands of the protectionists.³⁶ In line with the ideological profile of the for-

ward-looking members of the society were the writings of people like Benjamin Carrard, Jean Bertrand, Abraham Pagan, or Charles-Louis Loys de Cheseaux who, in a number of essays from the 1760s, developed a series of wide-ranging reform proposals which sought a very different direction. Although they, too, considered that Berne's foremost interest should remain in the development of its agriculture, they dismissed Muret's idea that the recovery of Berne's manufacturing sector should build on a rural surplus population, because it overlooked the positive effects of large urban populations on agricultural productivity. The key to improving agricultural output was neither a forced resettlement of an urban surplus population, but the creation of a strong urban consumer market, in order to drive up prices for agricultural products. Hence, it was more through the encouragement of manufacturing and industry than through the education of the rural population that Berne could modernise its own agriculture and better guarantee its independence from foreign producers.³⁷

It is in these essays that one can also find the most open endorsement of Dutch politics. According to Bertrand and Carrard, Berne could learn how to best attract foreigners from its maritime sister republics.³⁸

An easy access to the country should be preserved. All obstacles to their reception be removed. All laws and customs which can impede it be reversed. They should be received with joy, naturalized in every thing, and no difficulties thrown in their way. It is right never to make any odious distinction between the antient and the new inhabitants, when the one and the other are confounded together, making one and the same people; participating [in] the same advantages, and being regarded as the children of their country, as long as they obey the laws.³⁹

It was precisely this blend of Bernese agrarian solidity and Dutch political openness, developed in the writings of the forward-looking elements of the *Economic Society*, which attracted foreign commentators to the Bernese reform movement. We can see this from Italian Carl Antonio Pilati's travelogue, *Voyages en différens pays de l'Europe*, where he drew a direct comparison between the Swiss and the Dutch republics. Obviously, Switzerland could not compete with the wealth and splendour of the Dutch cities.⁴⁰ What made Switzerland interesting to the European observer was that the reformist zeal,

which could be witnessed in Basel, Zurich, and Berne, showed a republic in the making. In that sense, reformist Switzerland could even be compared to early Holland, albeit that the Swiss now seemed bent on avoiding the pitfalls of the Dutch experience. For, while the Dutch had quickly moved into trade, the modern Swiss were determined to follow a more natural path of economic development and start with agriculture and industry. For these reasons, as Pilati argued, '*l'état des cantons Suisses*' seemed '*plus solide, & de nature à devoir durer beaucoup plus longtemps*'.⁴¹ Like Mably a few years earlier, Pilati insisted on the uniqueness of Switzerland's political culture. The Swiss, he claimed, were the only modern people that still practised '*cette vertu qu'on appelle l'amour de la patrie, dont les autres nations ne savent pas seulement se former une idée*'. But the virtue Pilati found so appealing during his visit was no longer the virtue of the ancients, but that of the modern republicans; the Swiss patriots he admired were not of the halberd-swinging kind, but the scientists, the clergy and young magistrates who called for more openness and who gathered in one of the numerous '*sociétés qui n'ont d'autre but que de songer à rendre heureux leurs concitoyens, & de faire fleurir les différents états confédérés*'. It was against the background of Holland's endlessly predicted decline that the Swiss reform movement could be read as the harbinger of a promising and more stable alternative to the Dutch republic's spectacular burst into the modern world.

Notes

1 Charles Secondat, Baron de, Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, trans. Anne M. Cohler, Basia Carolyn Miller and Harold Samuel Stone (Cambridge 1989), 22.

2 Gabriel Bonnot de Mably, 'De l'étude de l'histoire, à Monseigneur Le Prince de Parme', in *Collection Complète des Oeuvres*, XIII, ed. Peter Friedemann (Aalen 1977), 145: 'Les anciens pensoient que la morale est la base de la politique.... Que disent au contraire les institutions de la plupart des peuples de l'Europe? Lisez, si vous le pouvez, ces ouvrages sans nombre que l'ignorance & l'avarice nous ont dictés sur le commerce & les finances; vous y trouverez par-tout des principes opposés à ceux des anciens.'

3 Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, 339.

4 In his *Politische und moralische Betrachtungen über die spartanische Gesez-Gebung des Lykurgus* (Lindau, Frankfurt and Leipzig 1763), 147,

Wegelin argued that Holland amounted to little more than a political association of merchants, fully exposed to the dangers of international trade: 'Es ist eine politische Gesellschaft von Kauffleuten, die ihre Stärke in der Industrie und ihre Wurzeln in den beyden Indien hat. Sie ist also allen Abwechslungen einer jeden kaufmännischen Gesellschaft in einem so viel grösseren Maas unterworfen, als ihre Handlung sich in weitläufftigere Aeste und Zweige ausgebreitet hat'.

5 I take this to be the position of Daniel Tröhler in his highly informative article, 'Die Vereinigten Niederlande und die Alte Eidgenossenschaft im 18. Jahrhundert. Der republikanische Tugenddiskurs der Schweiz vor dem Hintergrund einer commercial republic', in: Max Mangold and Jürgen Oelkers (eds): *Demokratie, Bildung und Markt* (Berne 2003), 175-205.

6 I have tried to deal with this issue at greater length in my study *Iselin contra Rousseau – Sociable Patriotism and the History of Mankind* (Basel 2006), esp. 103-72.

7 See for example the 'Lettre à Mr. *** sur les Hollandois', published in *Journal Helvétique* in Oct. 1765, 378-81.

8 See the excellent studies by Dominique Quadroni and Marie-Jeanne Ducommun, *Le refuge protestant dans le Pays de Vaud* (Geneva 1991); also Silvia Arlettaz, *Citoyens étrangers sous la République Helvétique* (Geneva 2005).

9 *The present state of Holland or a description of the United Provinces* (London 1745), 96. Not surprisingly, Dutch reform writers like Pieter de la Court had a far less flattering view of Holland's attitude towards foreign workers. See the striking passage in Jean de Wit, *Mémoires de Jan de Wit. Grand Pensionnaire de Hollande* (Ratisbone 1709), 45-46, where he accused the guilds and trading companies of deliberately undermining Holland's national interests: 'Si quelques anciens Bourgeois jugeoient que cet accueil aux Etrangers leur seroit nuisible, voulans par un intérêt particulier conserver tout le gain pour eux, & prétendoient que la Régence les fit prévaloir par dessus les Etrangers; l'on devoit considerer ces sortes de personnes comme de très-mauvais Sujet de la patrie; & que les Etrangers qui se sont établis dans le pays, payent les impôts, & portent les charges de l'Etat comme les autres, & par consequent doivent jouir des memes privileges... [Q]uand on considère que la plus grande partie du commerce est limitée dans l'Europe, & combien il y a de Marchands en Hollande, dont le nombre doit être grand pour la faire subsister, on ne devoit pas empêcher leur Navigation & commerce, par de trop grands droits, ni par des Compagnies qui excluent les autres'.

10 The expulsion of the Anabaptists in 1710 is discussed at great length in

Ernst Müller's *Geschichte der Bernischen Täufer. Nach den Urkunden dargestellt* (Frauenfeld 1895), 252ff. See also the contribution by Stefan Altorfer in this volume.

11 Ibid., 260-61. The importance the Bernese magistrates attached to moral discipline for national security is attested by Abraham Stanyan in his *An Account of Switzerland* (London 1714), 165-66, where he neatly sums up the arguments de Pesme had put forward in defence of his Bernese masters. The Anabaptists' refusal to 'willingly acknowledge the Power of Magistrates', to take oaths and to bear arms, Stanyan argued, 'is more particularly dangerous' in a country that relies 'entirely on their Militia; so that if this Opinion, or the unlawfulness of bearing Arms, should prevail, they would become a Society of Non-resisting Christians, who must necessarily fall Prey to the first Invader'.

12. 'Considérations sur ce que l'on pourrait faire de plus convenable dans les circonstances ou l'on se trouve pour la seurté du corps Helvétique (1702)', Archives cantonales vaudoises, P. De Mestral, Sect.II, D8/1/1/8, Saint-Saphorin.

13. 'Esprit de la Législation', originally published in the *Mémoires et Observations*, 1765, 141-412. I am quoting from the English translation, *Essays on Legislation, in the Encouragement of Agriculture, Population, Manufactures, and Commerce* (London 1772), 297. The London edition includes essays by Jean Bertrand, Benjamin Carrad, and Gabriel Seigneux de Correvon.

14 See, for example, Georg Louis Schmid d'Auenstein's essay, 'Du commerce et du luxe' which was published as part of his *Traité sur divers sujets intéressans de politique et de morale* ([Paris] 1760), 201-02: 'C'est la nécessité qui force un peuple à faire le commerce d'économie. Habitant un pays borne & sterile, ou cherchant dans une ville maritime un asyle contre l'oppression, ce peuple ne saura fournir à ses besoins qu'en devenant le facteur des nations voisines... Mais si la nécessité élève cet edifice, elle ne saura lui donner la solidité. Rien de plus fragile que les fondemens sur lesquels il est porté, l'ignorance & la paresse des peuples voisins. Ces peuples n'ont qu'à s'éclairer sur leur vrais intérêts, & à faire leur commerce eux-mêmes pour détruire le peuple qui se nourrit du commerce d'économie'.

15 See Albrecht von Hallers *Tagebücher seiner Reisen nach Deutschland, Holland und England 1723-1727*, ed. by Erich Hintzsche (St. Gallen 1971), 33-34.

16 Jacques Accarias de Sérionne, *Le commerce de la Hollande ou tableau du commerce hollandois dans les quatre parties du monde* (Amsterdam 1768), 43.

17 Swiss and, in particular, Bernese reform thinkers consistently stressed

the importance of economic autarchy in primary goods for maintaining political liberty. See, for example, Jean Bertrand's essay 'Les raisons, qui doivent engager la Suisse, par préférence, à la culture des bleds', published in the *Recueil de Mémoires concernant l'oeconomie rurale par une société établie à Berne en Suisse*, vol. 1, Zurich 1760, 106: '[I] est incontestable qu'aussi souvent qu'un païs ne peut pas nourrir ses habitans, il est dans la dépendance de celui de qui il est force de tirer sa subsistence. Ce principe n'a pas besoin de preuves. Il est manifeste d'un côté qu'un état est obligé à des ménagemens très humilians & qui tiennent de la subjection, envers des voisins qui le nourrissent, & de l'autre que des sujets sont exposés à des avanies, des confiscations & des risques très facheux, lors qu'ils se hasardent à exporter des grains d'un païs où cette exportation est interdite'.

18 *Ibid.*, 34.

19 *Briefve Johann Becks an Isaak Iselin aus den Jahren 1744-1748*, Neues Berner Taschenbuch auf das Jahr 1917 (Berne 1916) 75. See also 68-69: 'Le païs fourmille de monde, mais qui se laisseroient égorger tous comme des moutons par les François plutôt que de tirer l'Epée pour leur propre conservation... Ils m'étourdissent par des vivat Orange, et cependant de ... personne veut se faire enrôler pour le service de l'Etat, personne veut prendre les Armes pour la defence de la patrie, de la liberté, de la Religion dans la plus grande Extremité.'

20 In France, the case of Holland was frequently evoked by Huguenot writers in order to buttress their call for civil liberties. See, for example, Antoine Court's *Lettre d'un patriote sur la tolérance civile des Protestants de France et sur les avantages qui résulteroient pour le Royaume* (s.l. 1756), 42-43: '[Le peuple Hollandais] tendit les bras à tous ceux qui demandoient d'être admis au nombre de ses citoyens. Pour jouir de ce droit, il suffisoit d'être homme & vertueux; le Catholique y a élevé des Eglises, le Protestant y a bâti des Temples, le Juif y a construit des Synagogues : tous ensemble se sont embrassés comme frères; chacun a servi Dieu selon les lumieres de sa conscience ; les disoutes ont été renvoyées dans les écoles; & par cette union charitable & ce support mutuel, chaque jour a vu croître le nombre de ces fortunés habitans; leur commerce, leurs richesses & leur puissance se sont augmentées à vue d'œil, & dans l'espace tout au plus d'un demi siècle, la Hollande parvint à couvrir l'Océan de ses flottes, à rendre son nom respectable en Europe, & à se faire craindre jusque dans le fond de l'Asie'.

21 See Albrecht von Haller's entry 'Nostalgie, Maladie du Pays, ou Heimweh', *Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire universel raisonné des connaissances humaines* vol. 30 (Yverdon 1774), 519.

22 *Encyclopédie* vol. 6 (Yverdon 1771), 197: 'Les privileges attachés au

droit de *bourgeoisie* sont plus ou moins considérables, suivant les différentes formes de gouvernement & leurs constitutions essentielles. Celui qui a été de tous tems commun à tout bourgeois ou citoyen d'un endroit, est de pouvoir prétendre à toutes les charges, à tous les emplois, & à tous les honneurs de l'Etat. L'on jouit encore dans quelques bourgeoisies de certaines franchises, qu'on n'accorde point aux étrangers, qui y ont leur domicile. Enfin l'on partage ailleurs quelques biens publics, l'accorde le droit d'exercer le commerce en détail, en certaines branches seulement, à l'exclusion des étrangers. Les bourgeois doivent être d'autant plus jaloux de ces derniers droits, qu'en les partageant avec des nouveaux bourgeois, ils en diminuent la quantité & le prix. Aussi dans les villes où le droit de *bourgeoisie* accorde ces avantages, les anciens bourgeois s'opposent de toutes leurs forces à la réception des nouveaux'.

23 The dispute started with Isaak Iselin's *Freimühtige Gedanken über die Entvölkerung unserer Vaterstadt* ([Basel], 1758); this was followed by J.R. Iselin's *Unparthyische Betrachtungen der Freymühtigen Gedanken über die Entvölkerung unserer Stadt* [Basel 1758], which in turn elicited a reply by Isaak Iselin, *Anmerkungen über die Unpartheyischen Betrachtungen...* [Basel 1758]. Isaak Iselin later summarised many of his earlier arguments in an article, 'Ueber die Annahme von Bürgern in republikanischen Handelstaaten', which he published in his *Ephemeriden der Menschheit* Zweites Stück, February 1780, 129-64. For more information, see Ferdinand Schwarz, 'Der Kampf um die Wiederaufnahme neuer Bürger in Basel, 1757-1762', in *Basler Jahrbuch* (1925), 212-49.

24 J.R. Iselin, *Unparthyische Betrachtungen*, 1.

25 *Ibid.*, 3.

26 I. Iselin, *Freimühtige Gedanken*, 7. The main source of inspiration for Iselin's pamphlet seems to have been Plumard de Danguel's *Remarques sur les avantages et les desavantages de la France et de la Gr. Bretagne*, especially the chapter 'De la Naturalisation' which Iselin mentions on page 46.

27 *Ibid.*, especially 38-39: 'Wäre es uns aber nicht besser, wenn wir eine kleine Anzahl ruhiger, tugendhafter und minder reicher, aber glücklicher Bürger wären? ... Würden nicht alsdenn alle unsere Gedanken von Bevölkerung unnütze sein? Unsere Glückseligkeit wäre weit sicherer, und wir wären auf alle Weise unabhängig. Ich will alles dises gerne zugeben. Ich wollte auch lieber der Bürger einer solchen filosofischen und wahrhaftig christlichen Republik, als der blühendsten Handelstadt in der Welt sein. Ist es uns aber möglich, uns dermalen in disre Schranken zu sezzern?'

28 See p. 45n*.

29 *Ibid.*, 28: 'Wer indessen unsre Umstände, wer unsre Verfassung, wer

uns, wer die Menschen überhaupt kennet, der kan leicht einsehen, dass man sich allzuvil schmeicheln würde sich zu versprechen, diese Mittel würden so zureichend sein, dass wir andre, die man uns etwa vorschlagen möchte, für überflüssig und unnötig erachten sollten’.

30 See especially *ibid.*, 8-9. The same argument was reiterated by Iselin’s friend, Kaspar Hirzel, in his ‘Beantwortung der Frage: Ist der Handelschaft, wie solche bey uns beschaffen, unserm Lande schädlich oder nützlich, in Absicht auf den Feldbau und die Sitten des Volkes?’, published in *Auserlesene Schriften zur Beförderung der Landwirthschaft und der häuslichen und bürgerlichen Wohlfahrt* vol. 2 (Zurich 1792), 381-562; See 534: ‘Je mehr unsere Bedürfnisse zunehmen, je mehr wird der Fleiss unsrer Nachbarn gespornt werden, uns solches zu verschaffen, so lange sich Gelegenheit dazu findet, und daran wird es nie so leicht mangeln. Die grossen Felder Schwabens werden noch lange nicht so zerstückt werdem wie die unsrigen, und sie sind auch, wenn bey zunehmender Bevölkerung eine mehrere Vertheilung nöthig werden sollte, noch vieler Verbesserung fähig, und wenn bey ihnen die Bevölkerung zunehmen wurde, so werden immer entferntere Länder übrigbleiben, die ihre Naturprodukte ausliefern werden’.

31 *Mémoire sur l’état de la population*, 75.

32 *Ibid.*, 76.

33 *Ibid.*, 72.

34 *Ibid.*, 73.

35 *Ibid.*, 85.

36 See the note that the editors added at the bottom of p. 79 of the *Mémoire sur l’état de la population dans le Pays de Vaud*: ‘Nous sommes fort éloignés d’adopter les conclusions de l’auteur sur cette matière, non seulement elle ne nous paroissent pas évidentes; mais nous sentons combine, en les étendant un peu, on pourroit en abuser en faveur de ce système exclusif reçu dans la plupart des communautés’.

37 This point was put forward by Jean Bertrand in his *Essay on the Spirit of Legislation*, 59: ‘All arts and manufactures have some connection with agriculture, at least indirectly, by population and the consumption of products; by the taste which they give to labour; and by the money which they procure; from whence it necessarily results an increase of the value of the land... Thus agriculture augments, in proportion as manufacture and commerce flourish’.

38 See especially 36, 49-55.

39 *Ibid.*, 293-94.

40 Carl Antonio Pilati, *Voyages en différens pays de l’Europe en 1774, 1775, et 1776* ([Suisse] 1778).

41 *Ibid.*, 168.

PART VI

Improving the Republic

13 Radical Elements and Attempted Revolutions in Late 18th-century Republics¹

Marc H. Lerner

Too often the assumption has been that revolutionary political innovation came solely from centres such as seventeenth-century London and eighteenth-century Paris, and that republican French troops imposed radical structures based on universal principles elsewhere in Europe during the later revolutionary period. However, the small republics of Europe, places like the Netherlands, the Swiss Confederation, Geneva and Hamburg, were also centres of political innovation. In fact, popular sovereignty was entrenched in these small states before the French Revolution spread its rhetoric of the Rights of Man across Europe. These eighteenth-century republics, often decentralised, were not solely passive recipients of French Revolutionary innovation. The Helvetic and the Batavian revolutions, for example, were organised and implemented by native Swiss and Dutch Patriots. Of course, the shadow of the French radical experiment hangs over these innovations, as well. Certainly, these revolutions and crisis periods of intense experimentation were influenced or, at times, determined by the French, but I argue this influence served as a catalyst, not as a controlling force throughout the life of the unitary republics. On a broad level, what is at stake here is the question of whether small states were capable of political innovation. The availability of popular sovereignty in late-eighteenth-century small states demonstrates that ordinary people were able to participate in politics without necessarily participating in the French Revolution.²

Contrary to republican theory, republican practice in early modern Europe did not necessarily rest on classical models.³ In fact, within the framework of small European republican polities there was tremendous variety. Commercial republics such as the Hanseatic city

of Hamburg or the Dutch Republic differed from Berne, where a military republican tradition fit the oligarchy's conception of themselves as the inheritors of the Roman republican mantle.⁴ For the most part, self-governing entities emerged within the early modern European hierarchical structure after militarily defending what the community saw as its legitimately granted rights and privileges. Custom gave rise to the construct of an 'ancient constitution' that was rarely, if ever, written down. To some extent, notions of the common good and the requirement that government to be responsive to the needs of the governed emerged from communally organised societies of equal, free men.⁵ In addition, natural law theory and early modern republican political thought, often existing in tension with each other, were used to legitimate notions of governmental obligations to the people.⁶

Although there is some degree of continuity, equality among an organised society of free men, or an early modern conception of individual rights deriving from natural law, is very different from universal equality or a modern democratic polity. The case of the Swiss Confederation is illustrative because the variety of republican forms, direct democracy and understandings of equality and freedom that existed within the umbrella entity known as Switzerland provide alternative paths to modernity.⁷ One of these alternative conceptions of freedom and political participation is found in the seemingly paradoxical institution of the *Landsgemeinde*, which flourished in the rural cantons of Switzerland. The *Landsgemeinde* was a genuinely popular assembly in which all male members of the community gathered together in order to decide important political matters. Each participant was allowed to voice his opinion on community business and vote to determine the Assembly's course of action. In one sense, therefore, the Swiss *Landsgemeinde* cantons, such as Schwyz, should be seen as the great examples of republican practice in early modern Europe.⁸

The example of Geneva also provides an interesting case study for republican political innovation; the contentious politics of the city in the eighteenth century provide a great example of attempts to mix political theory and practical politics.⁹ Resistance theory was a key dynamic in Geneva during the battle to open up that city's elitist government during the eighteenth century. Although natural law theory was often used as a force to resist oppressive or absolutist governments and protect individual rights, this was not the case in Geneva

from 1707 into the 1760s, when a battle raged over where sovereignty lay. In Geneva, at this time, natural law theory was used to defend and justify the status quo of a small patriciate dominating the government and ruling over fellow citizens, residents and inhabitants. For intellectual support the patriciate looked to theorists like Jean-Jacques Burlamaqui, professor of natural and civil law at the Genevan Academy and a student of Jean Barbeyrac who had, in turn, popularised Samuel Pufendorf's work. Pufendorf had described two social pacts, one of association, which forms a civil society, and one of submission, which gives sovereignty to the government.¹⁰ The Genevan patricians argued that this decision to submit sovereignty to the authorities may not be taken back on a whim. Therefore, the legitimate authorities must be supported and political sovereignty should not be given to the Great Council of Geneva, the council of all citizens. It was Jean-Jacques Rousseau, while serving as one of the political pamphleteers on the side of the citizens of Geneva, who twisted the natural law school's argument and declared that the people could never lose its sovereignty. The social contract demanded that the government serve at the citizens' pleasure and the right of the people to change an illegitimate government could not be challenged.¹¹

There were certainly other radical elements in eighteenth-century Switzerland who attacked what they perceived to be a conservative structure. For example, various conceptions of republics, republicanism, natural law and popular consent probably influenced by the Dutch, were discussed in the rest of the Swiss Confederation and absorbed into the political culture.¹² By the early eighteenth century in the learned societies such as the 'Collegium der Wohlgesinnten' of Zurich, or later in the more national *Helvetische Gesellschaft*, members were already discussing ideas of democratic republicanism and popular sovereignty.¹³ The notion of popular consent as a pillar of society continued to be an important rhetorical claim and began to undermine an older conception of the state and society.¹⁴ Unlike the Genevan patricians, Johann Kaspar Escher, a member of Zurich society, used natural law theory to argue that political society is originally and fundamentally democratic.¹⁵ This is because the decision to create a civil society must be taken voluntarily by each member of that hypothetical first society, thus building a popular foundation for sovereignty. Escher pushed his point further by claiming that even after this foundational step to create a civil society, sovereignty remained with the people.¹⁶

Later in the eighteenth century, historian Johann Jakob Bodmer mentored a circle of young radical intellectuals in Zurich. Bodmer's brand of patriotism and his group were deemed dangerous by the Zurich oligarchy.¹⁷ He defended the theoretical basis of human rights, popular sovereignty, the natural equality of man, freedom of religion and the right to overthrow a corrupt government.¹⁸ Although this discourse contained the inherent possibility of future radical interpretation of a society based on universal principles,¹⁹ his was a theoretical stand and did not necessarily seek to end the practice of government by a well-trained elite. For the most part, these discussions about radical themes took place in order to further the knowledge and education of the participants, rather than to actively pursue radical political reform.²⁰ The cantonal government, moreover, successfully repressed the more radical aspects of Bodmer's circle by reinforcing such institutions as the censor.²¹

Revolution

In reality there was very limited support in Switzerland for the radical notion that all subjects should be equal. The ideals of an explicit 'rights of man' were not institutionalised in Swiss territory until after they were first outlined in France. Once the model of Revolution existed in France, however, opponents of the status quo in the Swiss Republics could not help but confront the possibility of political reform as well as French revolutionary rhetoric.

Pamphlets such as the anonymously published *Should the Swiss be for or against the French Revolution?* (1793) argued that the Swiss should support the new French Republic in sympathy with fellow republicans and their triumph over tyranny, despotism and privilege.²² However, this pamphlet does not provide any real evidence of Swiss support for radical revolutionary innovation. In effect, the author was congratulating the French for becoming more like the Swiss and was not arguing for the remaking of Swiss society.

This was not the only case of a distorted comparison with the French example. In their correspondence with the French General Brune in the spring of 1798, the members of the Schwyz *Landsgemeinde* claimed that there was no need to enforce change in the Inner Swiss cantons, because their government was already the same as the French and democratic. '[Our constitution] has consecrated as its

principles, in all their purity, the rights of man and the sovereignty of the people; it is therefore in perfect consonance with that adopted by the French Republic'.²³ In a related message to the French Directory, the people of the territories of eastern Switzerland claimed that, based on the model of Appenzell, they had recognised the 'Rights of Man' for the past 300 years.²⁴ Here again, the Swiss imply that the French, by creating a republic in 1792, have simply become more like the Swiss, rather than suggest that the Swiss should change their own governing systems. These references to radical rhetoric, such as the sovereignty of the people or to the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen*, are attempts to maintain the old system of government rather than actually break societal boundaries.

It is somewhat difficult to tell if the mixture of discourses in late eighteenth-century Switzerland were simply supporting old forms disguised in a new language or if there was a real commitment to a language of revolutionary innovation. There are examples of each. The attempt of the Inner Swiss cantons to compare French liberty with their own conceptions of virtue and *Freiheit* broke down very quickly once the French declared the imposition of the 'one and unitary Helvetic Republic' in the spring of 1798. If the institutions were really so similar there should have been no protest against a French Directory-style regime in Switzerland.²⁵ In fact, however, the residents of the inner Swiss cantons militarily resisted the imposition of a new unitary regime and chose to fight for their traditional conceptions of *Freiheit* and local autonomy. Therefore, I argue that the members of the Schwyz *Landsgemeinde* did understand the differences between traditional and modern elements of liberty. They had deliberately tried to conflate the two in order to protect Schwyz's traditional system and gain immediate political advantage.

The second alternative of a mixture of the languages of old and new *Freiheit* can be best illustrated by various examples of the behaviour of subject peoples in the Old Confederation, while a full commitment to radical republican practice can be seen in the Helvetic Republic that was constitutionally based on the French Republic. For those who lived outside the inner circle of the privileged citizenry (whether in towns or rural cantons) the mixture of discourses was the result of attempts to gain full membership in the old regime. Subjects turned to more radical language only after the opening up of the old regime was rejected. The Stäfa Affair illustrates this pattern.²⁶

In 1794, Heinrich Nehracher and probably a group of his col-

leagues from the *Stäfa Lesegesellschaft* wrote a *Memorial* to the government of Zurich listing the demands of the people of the subject community along the lake.²⁷ The mixed discourses are demonstrated in the *Stäfa Memorial* since the authors, in a single document, claimed that Zurich's constitution was the best of all possible constitutions while they still demanded the inalienable rights of man. Even while they were claiming inalienable rights, the authors made traditional claims on Swiss liberty: the people of Stäfa should be free because their fathers were free.²⁸ In addition to an allusion to the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen*, the authors explicitly referred to recent events in France in order to challenge the governmental leadership of Zurich with the implied threat of a mass popular uprising and possible foreign intervention.²⁹

The authors of the *Memorial* challenged the existing constitutional framework in two ways. First was the suggestion of expanding the Zurich constitution beyond the city walls. However, this solution only advocates opening up the structure; calls for such things as more freedom of trade, or freedom among the professions does not challenge the inherent legitimacy of the regime. However, with a second possible reading, the document becomes radically innovative. The authors, instead of demanding the restoration of lost privileges, challenge the very structure of society by calling for the equality of the countryside. By claiming the inalienable rights of man they challenged the legitimacy of the oligarchic – though republican – city government well before the French army arrived.

A counterfactual question is useful to test how complete the commitment was to the radical aspects of the document: what would have happened if the city elite of Zurich had agreed to the traditional demands of the countryside? Would the leaders of the Stäfa reading society have accepted the opening up of the old regime without any introduction of the rights of man? The example of the March, a dependent district of Canton Schwyz, may be instructive.³⁰

Residents of the district of March had reinitiated attempts to restore what they saw as unfairly lost privileges. In 1790, March sent deputies to Schwyz demanding autonomy and reminding the central district of promises it had made in 1712. The people of March did not make the radical demands of the *Stäfa Memorial* for a new constitution based on inalienable rights, but when the Helvetic Revolution broke out in the Vaud, suddenly the residents of the subject districts of Schwyz gained some leverage. They refused to send soldiers

to the aid of Berne without first receiving information as to where and why they were fighting. On February 11, the residents of March held a district *Landsgemeinde* without the approval of Central Schwyz, a collective action that the central district considered illegal. Furthermore, the members of this district's popular assembly declared that their condition for putting soldiers into the field to fight for 'Freedom, fatherland and holy religion' was the liberation of the countryside of Schwyz.³¹ Faced with a shortage of soldiers and the threat of a possible French invasion, the Schwyz *Landsgemeinde* gathered in an extraordinary meeting and declared the *Landleute* of all the subject districts to be free, except those in the March.³² It was not until the month of March, after the fall of Berne, that the Schwyz *Landsgemeinde* granted similar rights to the residents of the last subject district. However, once these rights were granted, the soldiers of March expressed a willingness to fight on the side of their former lords. Not intending to trade dependence on Schwyz for dependence on France, the residents declared they would 'fight and struggle until the last drop of blood for our holy religion, freedom and fatherland'.³³

It is striking that as soon as subject peoples were granted full membership in the old system they were happy to fight alongside their former rulers against the French and their radical conceptions of universal individual rights and equality. The French, of course, despite a widespread perception to the contrary, had already stepped back from the most radical phase of the Revolution. The Directory had moderated its calls for universal equality, reinstated wealth based voting restrictions and terminated universal male suffrage in France.

The Helvetic Republic did make use of radical language and demonstrated the third possibility of a full commitment to radical innovation. Since supporters of a unitary state battled with supporters of a federal system, the 1798 establishment of the Helvetic Republic was contested and not every Swiss citizen shared the commitment to individual rights and equality. However, supporters of the new republic did ultimately commit. Although Basler patrician Peter Ochs may not have intended his constitutional draft to be imposed without popular comment, his work serves as evidence of Swiss political innovation; he wanted to reshape Swiss politics. Ochs's constitutional plan explicitly promised to destroy the aristocracy and established several fundamental principles that included equality for all regions and men as well as a declaration that the citizens are the sovereign body of the country.³⁴

Moreover, Ochs supported individual rights and declared that the 'natural liberty of man is inalienable', freedom of conscience is unlimited and freedom of the press is guaranteed.³⁵

This was not an anomaly forced by Ochs. The July 1801 Helvetic constitution reinforced the notion of a unitary state and national citizenship, while also enforcing national freedom of settlement; each citizen was able to exercise his rights anywhere in the country.³⁶ The focus on radical equality was not solely a constitutional issue. There were numerous pamphlets that dealt with questions of *Freiheit* and equality. One example is the *Catéchisme de la Constitution helvétique* by Gabriel-Antoine Miéville, chapter 18 of which was entitled 'de la Liberté et de l'Egalité'.³⁷ This pamphlet declared that liberty consisted of the 'right to say, do and write what one wants'.³⁸ This sentiment is reminiscent of article 4 of the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen*: 'Liberty consists in being able to do anything that does not injure another'.

Supporters of revolutionary innovation faced a conception of an historical Confederation that was based on immutable structures and principles. For much of the population of the Helvetic Republic there was not enough support for radical political innovation whether couched in terms of ancient continuity or not. In the end, massive opposition to the state is exactly why the unitary experiment failed after five years. An older, Swiss conception of liberty obviously still held tremendous sway for much of the population that was focused primarily on local issues and local sovereignty. Too often in this transitional revolutionary period radical innovation meant national reform and the citizens of the old style republics were willing to give up everything except for a degree of local sovereignty. This tension dominated Swiss debates for the next half-century. Although the Helvetic Republic introduced reforms that were favoured by the majority of the population, such as the abolition of feudal dues and subject status, it did not allow for enough local decision making, which was the cornerstone of Swiss political culture. The Mediation Act of 1803 restored some of that decision-making power to the cantons and the political situation in Switzerland stabilised, demonstrating tacit support for the new constitutional document.³⁹ If the abolition of subject status, feudal dues and guilds, or lip service to the equality of the individual, guaranteed local autonomy, citizens of the early modern republics were willing to accept these radical/modern elements. On the other hand, radical reforms such as the unitary

state or complete freedom of settlement were not accepted by the citizens of the old-style Swiss republics, because such reforms threatened the Confederation's religious settlement and local sovereignty.

Netherlands

There was a similar pattern of mixed republican rhetoric, federalism and a large degree of popular sovereignty in the Dutch Republic. In 1652, Johan de Witt described the United Provinces as a confederation of sovereign republics rather than a single sovereign state.⁴⁰ Like in the Swiss Confederation, the political decentralisation of the Dutch Republic led to a number of local models and variations. Thus, by the late eighteenth century there was a strong native tradition of local citizenship and republican politics in the Netherlands.⁴¹ For the most part, however, Dutch rhetoric shied away from the voluntarist models of authority typical of the Swiss rural cantons and instead emphasised either traditional liberties or republican virtue.⁴² The idea of the classical mixed constitution was very influential in Dutch republican thought and references were made to the Venetian model as the image of the Roman Republic.⁴³ The Dutch were even self-consciously republican before the Swiss were; the mixed constitution and a Swiss sense of elite republicanism really originated as a Dutch republican message to Protestant, urban Switzerland.⁴⁴ In spite of this tradition, we can, however, find many challenges to the Dutch republican status quo. An investigation of the series of eighteenth-century Dutch Revolutions, in 1747, 1787 and 1795, is a way to examine Dutch republican political thought, political innovation and the evolution of understandings of popular sovereignty in the Netherlands.

After the death of William III in 1702, sovereignty in the United Provinces of the Netherlands unambiguously rested with the estates of the seven provinces. Moreover, a tremendous amount of autonomy remained in local bodies and urban centres. Corporations such as guilds or militias had a large role in administering Dutch cities as well as in choosing the local representatives to the States General. Although meant to represent the people, these mandated representatives were not elected directly by the citizenry as a whole.⁴⁵

In the second half of the eighteenth century, urban autonomy was undermined by the return of a stadholderate regime.⁴⁶ 1747-48

marked the first of a series of eighteenth-century Dutch revolutions. It was caused by a perceived failure of the ruling patrician regime to adequately govern or protect the country. French troops had crossed the Dutch borders and the population panicked.⁴⁷ Massive popular intervention, often through the civic institution of the militia, then restored the stadholderate.⁴⁸ The reliance on the popular intervention of armed urban citizens explains how alongside a quasi-monarchical reform, there could also be attempts to democratise local institutions. In fact, pamphlets published at this time invoked the sovereignty of the people.⁴⁹ Of course, many more of these pamphlets looked back to an idealised golden age. However, both types of pamphlets challenged the current oligarchic republican regime and did not necessarily promote mutually exclusive ideologies. Calls for popular sovereignty, especially at the local urban level, were often based on the legitimacy of an 'ancient constitution'.⁵⁰ This desire to regenerate a Dutch golden era was related to a locally oriented ideology of 'true liberty' (*Ware Vrijheid*) that recalled de Witt's patrician-led regime.⁵¹ For adherents to this ideology, the Dutch decline from its supposed 'Golden Age' was a moral problem, not an economic one.⁵²

A new language of patriotism evolved out of this rhetoric of true freedom. It was through the process of trying to restore true freedom that more radical political alternatives emerged.⁵³ After the 1747-48 regime change, the stadholder had increasing amounts of local control in the United Provinces because of the court's patronage system. This unprecedented influence was seen as a corruption of the country's constitution, which led to opposition.⁵⁴ Opponents of the stadholder or urban regent regimes rejected the oligarchic political reality, while an active free and popular press helped spread patriotic rhetoric that argued for representative government, liberty and the inalienable rights of the people.⁵⁵ The leaders of the Revolution claimed to speak broadly and unequivocally on behalf of the people and for greater popular influence in political life. The new national platform and organisation of the Patriot movement introduced new modes of communication and political discourses that challenged the secrecy of the old regime.⁵⁶ This, however, like the equivalent Swiss movements, was not a pre-revolutionary call for modern democracy but a call to regenerate the traditional, but currently corrupted, republican government.⁵⁷ Pamphlets referred to the 'ancient' constitution, which, Patriots claimed, was founded upon the sovereignty of the people, liberty and local autonomy.⁵⁸

The Patriot movement still worked largely within the boundaries established by a tradition of urban citizenship; for example, only individuals who were socially and economically independent were able to claim citizenship.⁵⁹ There were traditional Dutch republican overtones to the whole movement. Indeed, some of the movement's most effective tools were adaptations of older forms of popular political action, such as massive petition campaigns and the direct action of the crowd.⁶⁰ Furthermore, the patriotic regent elite feared the crowd and did not desire fundamental political change even though 'representative democracy' and 'sovereignty of the people' were slogans of the Patriot revolution.⁶¹ Therefore, in some ways the 1787 Patriot revolution parallels the Swiss examples of mixed discourses. In spite of its new national perspective, the Patriot Revolution entailed a series of municipal and provincial revolutions and not a single national, coherent movement. This was not a full commitment to universal male democratic equality, let alone a complete remaking of society. In their attempt to reform the stadholderate, the Patriots mixed old and new conceptions for their own immediate political advantage.⁶²

However, just because Patriot rhetoric argued in favour of 'restoring' popular sovereignty or the 'ancient' constitution, it is important not to overlook the radical possibilities implied in the rhetoric.⁶³ The 1787 Dutch Patriot Revolution was the most forceful challenge to Europe's old regime prior to the French Revolution.⁶⁴ Additionally, the Prussian invasion of 1787 did not end Dutch generated reform; indeed radicalised Patriots were very much a part of the Batavian Revolution in 1795.⁶⁵ 1795 was thus an authentic Dutch-based revolution and not solely the result of French machinations. Both in 1787 and 1795, the Patriot movement formed a viable revolutionary coalition. The presence of French troops in 1795 certainly precipitated the Dutch revolution and in that critical period as well as in 1798, the French army was 'co-responsible' for the course of Revolution.⁶⁶ However, there is no evidence that the French government or their representatives pushed the French system as a model for the Dutch.⁶⁷ For the French, financial goals were the focus of any agreement with the Netherlands. The French Directory certainly demanded much in terms of indemnities for the occupying force and the war with Britain, but did not require specific constitutional forms.⁶⁸ In fact, much like the Swiss in 1798, Dutch political activists initiated the democratisation of local and provincial government institutions even before the French conquered the country. In the face of possible occu-

pation, the Dutch made their own revolution.⁶⁹ When the French did invade the whole of the Netherlands and the Batavian Republic was declared in January of 1795, the new republic was supported by a relatively broad consensus and the French government did not extensively insert itself into internal Dutch affairs.

If the Batavian revolution was legitimately Dutch, or, more accurately, Dutch actors had their share of agency within the international conflict, the question becomes whether the Batavian Republic was radically innovative. Although one political coalition can be labelled democratic and radicals, such as Isaac Gogel, could link the unitary state with popular sovereignty,⁷⁰ certainly there was some compromise. In the Netherlands, like in the Swiss republics, popular sovereignty was not necessarily linked to national unity, political centralisation or universal rights, which were the conditions of radical revolution elsewhere.

Nonetheless, real commitment to radical principles and practice existed. The example of the radical One-and-Indivisible Clubs demonstrates the popularity of unitarist beliefs as a way to remake society.⁷¹ In addition, new elections in 1795 introduced democratic forms and the constitutional draft of 1796 recognised a national citizenship.⁷² The 1798 constitution that was approved after a radical coup removed the remnants of Dutch federalism and backed the unitary state form.⁷³ At this point in time, Dutch revolutionaries were more radical than even the French. The most famous slogan of the European revolutionary period '*liberté, égalité, fraternité*' was in fact first used as an official motto by Batavian administrators, not Parisians.⁷⁴ The continuing emphasis on equality well into the 1790s was too dangerous for a French Directory trying to come to terms with the experience of Terror. The beliefs underlying these principles were too radical for the Directorial regime that opposed equality and fraternal bonds in terms of political rights for all men from all classes of society. The ever more conservative French regime abandoned the Dutch radicals.⁷⁵ It was actually the Netherlands that taught revolutionary lessons to France in 1798. The Dutch constitutional committee explained to the French representative and former Foreign Minister Delacroix that the Dutch were 'capable of a greater measure of democracy than would be suitable for the French'.⁷⁶

Conclusion

It is clear that radical elements did exist in late-eighteenth-century Switzerland and the Netherlands, both before and during the attempted revolutions in the two countries. Moreover, there were clear instances of native political innovation not solely derived from Paris. The thriving international book trade and an international republic of letters ensured that the French had no monopoly on ideas in the eighteenth century. Even if radicals were not triumphant in the long term, within the intertwined rhetoric of radical, moderate, classical and mixed government forms, a real strain of native radical elements existed in these late-eighteenth century-republics. Small states were perfectly capable of political innovation and they provide us with rich models that should be investigated further. However, perhaps the most significant innovation that can be found in the late eighteenth-century small states is the combination of different republican discourses. French centralisation could not serve as the sole model for republicans who had understood their freedom to be based on federal decentralisation and varied traditions of liberty. Therefore, a continuity-discontinuity paradigm only goes so far; in the Dutch Republic, Swiss Confederation and Geneva there was a mixing of forms. Local elites often found an accommodation with a new national government and accepted a unitary state-form or other modern elements only when this acceptance brought tangible benefits. In Switzerland, the abolition of feudal remnants and subject status were welcome even as the notion of a unitary state was rejected. In the Netherlands, there were attempts at establishing a state somewhere between the early modern federal form and a radical unitary state. Finally, however, financial issues triggered a realignment of local political coalitions which allowed the unification of the Dutch state.⁷⁷ A pragmatic hybrid emerged in late-eighteenth-century small states, that, although perhaps not entirely radical, is the application of republican theory put into practice.

Notes

1 I thank Maarten Prak, Thomas Maissen, Béla Kapossy and Monika Gisler for their comments.

2 For more on political participation by ordinary people in early modern

Europe, see Wayne Te Brake, *Shaping History: Ordinary People in European Politics, 1500-1700* (Berkeley 1998). Other recent examples of scholarship on eighteenth-century Europe include David M. Luebke, 'Signatures and Political Culture in Eighteenth-Century Germany', *The Journal of Modern History* 76 (2004), 497-530. See also Maarten Prak's review article 'Popular Politics Before the Advent of Liberal Democracy', *Journal of Early Modern History* 2 (1998), 274-79.

3 Cf. Maarten Prak, 'Burghers into citizens: Urban and national citizenship in the Netherlands during the revolutionary era (c. 1800)', *Theory and Society* 26 (1997), 404. For the development of classical republican theory see J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton 1975).

4 For more on republican thought in eighteenth-century Hamburg and Berne see Katherine B. Aaslestad, 'Old Visions and New Vices: Republicanism and Civic Virtue in Hamburg's Print Culture, 1790-1810', in: Peter Uwe Hohendahl (ed.), *Patriotism, Cosmopolitanism, and National Culture: Public Culture in Hamburg 1700-1933* (Amsterdam 2003); Béla Kapossy, 'Neo-Roman Republicanism and Commercial Society: The Example of Eighteenth-century Berne', in: Martin Van Gelderen, Quentin Skinner (eds), *Republicanism: A Shared European Heritage* vol. 2 (Cambridge 2002), 229, 233-36. For a perspective that emphasises the distinctions between imperial cities and early modern republics, see Thomas Maissen, 'Bedrohte Souveränität: Schweizer Städte um 1800', in: Peter Blickle, Andreas Schmauder (eds), *Die Mediatisierung der oberschwäbischen Reichsstädte im europäischen Kontext* (Epfendorf 2003), 208-09.

5 For more on 'communalism' see Peter Blickle, *Deutsche Untertanen: Ein Widerspruch* (Munich 1981); id., 'Communalism as an Organizational Principle between Medieval and Modern Times', in: id., *From the Communal Reformation to the Revolution of the Common Man*, trans. Beat Kümin (Leiden 1998) id., 'Communalism, Parliamentarism, Republicanism', *Parliaments, Estates and Representation* 6 (1986), esp. 1-3, 7-8; Randolph C. Head, *Early Modern Democracy in the Grisons: Social Order and Political Language in a Swiss Mountain Canton, 1470-1620* (Cambridge 1995), esp. ch. 1, 10-35.

6 Head, *Early Modern Democracy*, 30; Knud Haakonssen, 'Republicanism', in: R.E. Goodin and P. Petit (eds), *A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy* (Oxford 1993).

7 For more on the complicated political and social structure of the 18th-century Swiss Confederation, see Andreas Würigler's contribution in this volume. On the variety of possible trajectories of European state transfor-

mation, see Charles Tilly, *Contention and Democracy in Europe 1650-2000* (Cambridge 2004); Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow and Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention* (Cambridge 2001).

8 Cf. Machiavelli: '[the Swiss are] the only people who still live as the ancients did, being uncorrupted in both their religion and their military service'. Machiavelli, *Discourses*, bk. 1, ch. 12. Cf. Andrew Fletcher: 'The Swisses [sic] at this day are the freest, happiest, and the people of all Europe who can best defend themselves...': Fletcher, 'A Discourse of Government with relation to Militia's', in *Political Works*, ed. John Robertson, Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought (Cambridge 1997), 22, quoted in Kaposy, 'Neo-Roman Republicanism', 230. Head argues, and quotes Jean Bodin to that effect, that Graubünden, an Associated power of the Swiss Confederation was the 'most popular, and most popularly governed of any Commonweale that is': Head, *Early Modern Democracy*, 248.

9 For much of the following on Geneva I am indebted to the work of Helena Rosenblatt, *Rousseau and Geneva: From the First Discourse to the Social Contract, 1749-1762* (Cambridge 1997).

10 Pufendorf, *On the Duty of Man and Citizen*, bk. 2, ch. 6.7-6.9.

11 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *On the Social Contract*, bk. 1, chaps. 3-4; bk. 2 ch. 1.

12 For the Dutch influence on Swiss republican thought see Thomas Maissen, 'Petrus Valkeniers republikanische Sendung: Die niederländische Prägung des neuzeitlichen schweizerischen Staatsverständnisses', *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Geschichte* 48 (1998), 152, 155-59, 164-65, 174-75. Jonathan I. Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity, 1650-1750* (Oxford 2001), 33-34.

13 Michael Kempe, 'Republikanismus und Naturrecht. Selbstaufklärung um 1700 im "Collegium der Wohlgesinnten" in Zürich', in: Michael Böhrer, et al. (eds), *Republikanische Tugend: Ausbildung eines Schweizer Nationalbewusstseins und Erziehung eines neuen Bürgers* (Geneva 2000), 197-99; Ulrich Im Hof, François de Capitani, *Die Helvetische Gesellschaft: Spätaufklärung und Vorrevolution in der Schweiz*, 2 vols. (Frauenfeld and Stuttgart 1983). See also Michael Kempe, Thomas Maissen, *Die Collegia der Insulaner, Vertraulichen und Wohlgesinnten in Zürich, 1679-1709* (Zurich 2002).

14 Maissen, 'Petrus Valkenier', 174-75, and Wolfgang von Wartburg, *Zürich und die französische Revolution: Die Auseinandersetzung einer patriarchalischen Gesellschaft mit den ideellen und politischen Einwirkungen der französischen Revolution* (Basel and Stuttgart 1956), 18-19, 21. Von Wartburg claims that the principle of the authorities ruling in name of the sovereign people was never given up in eighteenth-century Zurich.

- 15 Kempe, 'Republikanismus und Naturrecht', 199.
- 16 Ibid., 199-200.
- 17 Simone Zurbuchen, 'Patriotismus and Nation: Der Schweizerische Republikanismus des 18. Jahrhunderts', in: Böhler, et al. (eds), *Republikanische Tugend*, 155.
- 18 Francis Cheneval, 'The Reception of Rousseau's Political Thought by Zurich's "Patriots"', in Böhler, et al. (eds), *Republikanische Tugend*, 429-30.
- 19 See Lynn Hunt (ed.), *The French Revolution and Human Rights: A Brief Documentary History* (New York 1996), 36.
- 20 Kempe, Maissen, *Die Collegia der Insulaner*, 258; For one of the cases where members of a learned society did take part in a later reform movement see Kempe's discussion on the influence on the 1713 Zurich movement by members of the Collegium der Wohlgesinnte: Kempe, 'Republikanismus und Naturrecht'.
- 21 Rolf Graber, *Bürgerliche Öffentlichkeit und spätabsolutischer Staat: Sozietätenbewegung und Konfliktkonjunktur in Zürich, 1746-1780* (Zurich 1993), 160-66.
- 22 *Sollen die Schweizer für oder wieder die Französische Revolution seyn?* n.p., 1793.
- 23 Representatives of Uri, Schwyz, Unterwalden, Zug, Glarus to Brune, (16 March 1798) quoted in Heinrich Zschokke, *The History of the Invasion of Switzerland by the French and the Destruction of the Democratical Republics of Schwitz, Uri, and Unterwalden*, trans. J.B. Briatte (London 1803), 197-201. Cf. StaatsArchiv Schwyz (STASz) Akten 1, 470; 5 March 1798 letter from Schwyz in *Actensammlung aus der Zeit der Helvetischen Republik (1798-1803)*, (ASHR) ed. By Johannes Strickler (Berne 1866), vol. I, 495.
- 24 Memorial of the People of Appenzell, St. Gall, Toggenburg, Rheinthal, and Sargans to the Executive Directory of the French Republic, (5 April 1798), quoted in Zschokke, *Invasion of Switzerland*, 224-27; ASHR I:605-606.
- 25 Andreas Suter, 'Vormoderne und moderne Demokratie in der Schweiz', *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung*, 231-54 (2004), 31.
- 26 Cf. Leonhard von Muralt, 'Alte und neue Freiheit in der helvetischen Revolution', Inaugural lecture, Zurich, 1941, 10-17; Graber, 'Vom Memorialhandel zu den Stäfner Volksunruhen', in: Helmuth Holzhey, Simone Zurbuchen (eds), *Alte Löcher- neue Blicke: Zürich im 18. Jahrhundert* (Zurich 1997).
- 27 The *Stäfa Memorial* is reprinted as 'Das Stäfner Memorial von 1794', in

Memorial und Stäfner Handel, 1794/1795, ed. by Christoph Mörgeli (Stäfa 1995).

28. [Nehracher], 'Das Stäfner Memorial von 1794', 127-28.

29. [Nehracher], 'Das Stäfner Memorial von 1794', 137, 138. 'Endlich brauchen wir das unveräusserliche Menschenrecht. Dieses sagt: Ein jeder Mensch ist frei geboren, und es gibt keine Ungleichheit vor dem Gesetz'; Cf. Article 1 of the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen*: 'Men are born and remain free and equal in rights'.

30 For the additional examples of ex-subjects in Ticino and the Berner Oberland allying with their former lords, see Maissen, 'Bedrohte Souveränität', 212-14.

31 Regula Hegner, 'Geschichte der March unter Schwyzerischen Oberhoheit', *Mitteilungen des historischen Vereins des Kantons Schwyz* 50 (1953), 80-83.

32 See Josef Wiget (ed.), 'Die letzten Landsgemeinden des alten Standes Schwyz: Die Landsgemeindeprotokolle vom 26. April 1795 bis 4. Mail 1798', *Mitteilungen des historischen Vereins des Kantons Schwyz* 89 (1997).

33 Hegner, 'Geschichte', 81. Similar rhetoric of sacrificing one's blood, life and goods in armed defense of self-rule can be found in the Dutch case. Cf. Prak, 'Burghers into citizens: Urban and national citizenship in the Netherlands during the revolutionary era', *Theory and Society* 26 (1997), 405.

34 Peter Ochs, 'Plan d'une Constitution provisoire pour la République Helvétique ou Suisse', in: Alfred Kölz (ed.), *Quellenbuch zur neuern schweizerischen Verfassungsgeschichte: Vom Ende der Alten Eidgenossenschaft bis 1848* (Berne 1992), 113-14.

35 Articles 6,7,8 of Ochs, 'Plan d'une Constitution', in: Kölz, *Quellenbuch*, 114.

36 *Helvetische Staatsverfassung* (Berne 1801), 3, 16.

37 Gabriel-Antoine Miéville, *Catéchisme de la Constitution helvétique* (Lausanne 1798); *Erklärung der helvetischen Konstitution in Fragen und Antworten* (Luzern 1798).

38 Miéville, *Catéchisme*, 60.

39 Excerpts from the Act of Mediation, in Kölz, *Quellenbuch*, 159-188. See also Maissen, 'Bedrohte Souveränität'.

40 Wayne te Brake, 'Provincial Histories and National Revolution in the Dutch Republic', in: Margaret C. Jacob, Wijnand W. Mijnhardt (eds), *The Dutch Republic in the Eighteenth Century: Decline, Enlightenment and Revolution* (Ithaca and London 1992), 65.

41 Simon Schama, *Patriots and Liberators: Revolution in the Netherlands*,

1780-1813 (New York 1992), 14; Prak, 'Burghers into citizens', 404-10; Prak, 'Burghers, Citizens and Popular Politics in the Dutch Republic' *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 30 (1997) 444-45.

42 Randolph C. Head, 'William Tell and His Comrades: Association and Fraternity in the Propaganda of Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Switzerland', *Journal of Modern History* 67 (1995), 556; See also Martin van Gelderen, *The Political Thought of the Dutch Revolt* (Cambridge 1992).

43 Eco G.G. Haitsma Mulier, *The Myth of Venice and Dutch Republican Thought in the Seventeenth Century*, trans. Gerard T. Moran, (Assen 1980).

44 Maissen, 'Petrus Valkenier', esp. 159-67.

45 E.H. Kossmann, 'The Dutch Republic in the Eighteenth Century', in Jacob, Mijnhardt (eds), *The Dutch Republic in the Eighteenth Century*, 21. For implications of an aristocratisation process in the Netherlands as well as in Swiss cities, see Schama, *Patriots and Liberators*, 45; Prak, 'The Dutch Republic's City-State Culture (17th-18th Centuries)', in: Mogens Herman Hansen (ed.), *A Comparative Study of Thirty City-State Cultures* (Copenhagen 2000), 348.

46 Prak, 'Die städtische Politik in den Niederlanden, 1780-1820', in Peter Blickle, Andreas Schmauder (eds), *Die Mediatisierung der oberschwäbischen Reichstädte im europäischen Kontext* Oberschwaben – Geschichte und Kultur vol. 11 (Epfendorf 2003), 223.

47 Jan A.F. de Jongste, 'The Restoration of the Orangist Regime in 1747: The Modernity of a "Glorious Revolution",' in: Jacob, Mijnhardt (eds), *The Dutch Republic in the Eighteenth Century*, 32-36.

48 Prak, 'Burghers, Citizens and Popular Politics', 446. Links between the militia and conceptions of [a male] citizenship were strong in the Swiss case as well. See, e.g., the Stäfa Memorial's claim that having fought in Zurich's armies entitled the residents of the countryside to full citizenship in the city/canton.

49 Jacob, 'Introduction', 3 and De Jongste, 'The Restoration', 57.

50 See Prak, 'City-State Culture', 352 for an example from a later period.

51 De Jongste, 'The Restoration', 37. Parallel references to *wahre Freiheit* can certainly be found in the Swiss sources, a notion that an original, virtuous freedom could be restored.

52 Wijnand W. Mijnhardt, 'The Dutch Enlightenment: Humanism, Nationalism and Decline', in: Jacob, Mijnhardt (eds), *The Dutch Republic in the Eighteenth Century*, 207-08.

53 te Brake, 'Provincial Histories', 90.

54 Prak, 'City-State Culture', 352; Prak, 'Burghers, Citizens and Popular Politics', 446.

- 55 Nicolaas C.F. van Sas, 'The Patriot Revolution: New Perspectives', in: Jacob, Mijnhardt (eds), *The Dutch Republic in the Eighteenth Century*, 98, 106-08; Prak, 'Städtische Politik', 220.
- 56 te Brake, 'The Old Régime and the Dutch Revolutions', in: Robert M. Schwartz, Robert A. Schneider (eds), *Tocqueville and Beyond: Essays in Honor of David D. Bien* (Newark 2003), 257; Prak, 'Burghers, Citizens and Popular Politics', 446.
- 57 Prak, 'Citizen Radicalism and Democracy in the Dutch Republic: The Patriot Movement of the 1780s' *Theory and Society* 20 (1991), 73-74, 93-95.
- 58 E.g. *Ontwerp om de Republiek door eene heilzaame vereeniging van regent en burger van binnen gelukkig en van buiten gedugt te maaken*, (Leiden 1785), 9, quoted in Prak, 'City-State Culture', 353.
- 59 Prak, 'Burghers into citizens', 415.
- 60 te Brake, 'The Old Régime and the Dutch Revolutions', 257.
- 61 te Brake, 'Provincial Histories', 88, 90.
- 62 van Sas, 'The Patriot Revolution', 118; Prak, 'Burghers into citizens', 410.
- 63 Prak, 'Burghers, Citizens and Popular Politics', 446.
- 64 te Brake, 'Provincial Histories', 61, 87; te Brake, 'The Old Régime and the Dutch Revolutions', 257; te Brake, *Regents and Rebels: The Revolutionary World of an Eighteenth-Century Dutch City* (Oxford 1989).
- 65 Schama, *Patriots and Liberators*, 17, 19, 63, 173; R.R. Palmer, *The Age of Democratic Revolution: A Political History of Europe and America, 1760-1800* (Princeton 1964); Prak, 'Städtische Politik', 228. Thomas Poell, 'Local particularism challenged (1795-1813)', in: O. Gelderblom (ed.), *The Political Economy of the Dutch Republic* (Aldershot 2008). Poell goes so far as to claim that 'the patriot movement took control of the Dutch state after the French invasion in 1795'.
- 66 Prak, 'Städtische Politik', 240.
- 67 Prak, 'Burghers into citizens', 411.
- 68 Schama, *Patriots and Liberators*, 198-207; Prak, 'Burghers into citizens', 411.
- 69 te Brake, 'The Old Régime and the Dutch Revolutions', 258; Prak, 'Städtische Politik', 228; Poell, 'Local particularism challenged'.
- 70 Poell, 'Local particularism challenged'.
- 71 Palmer, *The Age of Democratic Revolution*, vol. 2, 193. I use Palmer's translation of the Society's name. For more on the impact of these clubs on the Dutch democratic ideal and the 1798 coup see Poell, 'Local particularism challenged' and Poell, *The Democratic Paradox: Dutch Revolutionary*

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72 Prak, 'Städtische Politik', 229; Prak, 'Burghers into citizens', 411-12.

73 Prak, 'Städtische Politik', 231; Prak, 'City-State Culture', 353.

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76 Palmer, *The Age of Democratic Revolution*, vol. 2, 201.

77. Poell, 'Local particularism challenged'; Poell, *Democratic Paradox*.

14 Debating the Republic: A Conference Report

Daniel Schläppi, in collaboration with Simon Hari

‘Republics in Early Modern Europe’ was the title of the international meeting at the University of Bern, 7-9 May 2004, which forms the basis of this volume. Although a comparison between Dutch and Swiss history should have been made long ago, given the similarities in politics, constitution, and religion, it became evident during the meeting that comparisons between the two countries had, thus far, gone largely unstudied, and what did exist had not been systematic. Swiss and Dutch historians have only made limited reference to one another’s research. This volume represents a first step to overcoming this traditional isolation. Therefore, the following observations indicate fields for further research as discussed at the conference, but could not be sufficiently documented in the articles gathered for this volume.

1 Practices of religious plurality

The Dutch solution of toleration and religious pluralism within local structures was contrasted to the Swiss state churches on a cantonal level and the building of confessional blocks within the Confederation that fit into old traditions of pragmatism in favour of stability at home and the collective protection of common interests in Europe. One explanation for these differences can be the relatively late arrival of the Reformation and confessionalisation in the Netherlands. As an indirect consequence of this, not even an extreme dogmatist would have had any doubts about the principles of the freedom of faith. This peculiarity was also due to the Calvinistic character of all of the vari-

ants of Dutch Protestantism. Public debates on religion and morality remained relatively open, because the Union of Utrecht did not pursue anything more than a general separation from Catholicism. A rigid separation between Calvinism and Catholicism in the Netherlands did not exist prior to the eighteenth century.

This open situation intensified confessional debates especially among the Calvinists themselves. Swiss religious controversies never took quite such an ideological turn as they did in the Dutch Republic. The Catholic Church was only marginally interested in these peripheral regions. There was not even a clear definition of the diocesan territories. With a passive Papacy, re-Catholisation was instead linked to the tradition of autonomy in Central Switzerland. The tensions caused by religious disputes became particularly virulent whenever the condominiums (*Gemeine Herrschaften*) with mixed confessions were ruled in turn by Catholics and Protestants, or when active minorities insisted on protective regulations as they had been established between the cantons in the *Landfrieden*. It may therefore have been for essentially political reasons that, towards the end of the sixteenth century, a peaceful religious co-existence became increasingly difficult in Switzerland.

The different religious politics could well be shown through a comparative study of the Anabaptists' fate. Berne and Zurich persecuted them until well into the eighteenth century. This created serious irritation among the Dutch. In the Netherlands, the Baptists were in a privileged position; they acted as promoters for modern branches of industry and were most welcome. Why was this so different for the Swiss Baptists, although they couldn't and wouldn't ever threaten the Swiss system with their behaviour or moral concepts? Still, the mere possibility of conspiracy in a religious splinter group caused the state to make an exemplary use of its monopoly of power. The authorities considered the Baptists' refusal of military service an offence against the belligerent political culture of the cantons. The Dutch solution of taxation instead of military service was not an attractive option in the larger reformed cantons, as they were not dependent on direct taxation.

Considerable research, which is documented in the bibliography, has already been undertaken regarding personal exchanges between the two republican states, especially among mercenaries and scholars. During the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, numerous Dutch clerics acquired their theological degrees at Swiss academies. This intellectual relationship was later reversed, when in the seventeenth century, the Netherlands developed into a highly educated and attractive nation. The Protestant universities provided intellectual networks, in which Leiden University, with its excellent reputation in the areas of philosophy and medicine, was particularly significant. In the Swiss Confederation, a doctorate could only be obtained from the University of Basel. Because of the general lack of possibilities for education at home, many Swiss, especially from Protestant towns, went to study in the Netherlands. These academics introduced Dutch ideas into Switzerland and, via the foundation of learned societies established in the late seventeenth century, influenced the early Swiss Enlightenment, particularly amongst Zurich's intellectuals. The reception of Grotius triggered academic debates on natural law, with important theoretical as well as practical contributions by, among others, Johann Jacob Scheuchzer and Hans Caspar Escher, who had both been trained at Utrecht. Moreover, the chair of natural law founded in Berne in 1679 was a direct consequence of the influence of Leiden.

The Netherlands were also seen as a role-model in military matters. The Bernese army reform at the end of the sixteenth century used the organisation of the Dutch army, which was based on Orangist reforms, as a source of inspiration: careful training, better artillery techniques, and the use of drills to increase troop discipline. The repeated request by the Dutch for Swiss mercenaries was, at the same time, of great importance for international resource transfers from the Netherlands to the Swiss Confederacy. Although some mercenaries might not always have gotten paid, the Dutch generally paid off their debts on time. Comparative research shows that this spared them from having to pay pensions as a bribe to their suppliers, the way poor or insolvent employers of mercenaries did (like France). The sheer amount of existing studies regarding Swiss mercenaries serving in the Dutch army, as well as in the East Indies, invites further research on the social and cultural aspects of military and colonial life, and the exchanges that these entailed.

3 Economic exchanges

An area that remains very much underdeveloped is the study of the economic exchanges between the Netherlands and the Confederates. The two countries were connected via the river Rhine. The solid political trade interests of the Dutch, as well as inspirational intellectual impulses, underpinned the spectacular city foundation project along the shores of Lake Neuchâtel ('Henriopolis') and construction plans for a canal across Bernese territory (Entreroche, plain of Orbe), which was to create a navigable trade route that would connect the Rhine and the Rhone and create a direct access to the Mediterranean for the Netherlands.

At least on the level of discourse, this book does provide some new contributions to our understanding of both the differences and the similarities between the two economies. One could also try to compare Swiss and Dutch economic policies, in order to measure the 'success rate' of the interventionist policies of the two states. Thus, both states did provide 'guarantees for private property', but were very different in their fiscal policies. While the Netherlands, as a consequence of its continuous wars and the investment policies of the rich, suffered from the burden of huge national debts, and as a consequence, from the highest tax burden in the whole of Europe, the Swiss Confederate cantons were able to survive without taxes, thanks to revenues gained from the mercenary trade and military pensions.

For further comparative research we need to know more about crucial themes such as the dynamics of the circulation of money, private investment habits in local and global financial markets, national financial policy – both with a focus on Dutch national indebtedness and the lack of possibilities for investment in Switzerland. The relation between centre and periphery, and their importance to the traffic situation and the various degrees of urbanisation should be compared, as well as regional and international relations and networks, domestic and foreign trade, the development of proto-industrialisation, migration and mobility, and the handling of fringe groups and social problems.

4 Republicanism and self-image

The concept of a political legitimacy in both the Netherlands and Switzerland, based on general agreement, developed from organisations whose objective was one or another public benefit (water boards, urban and rural institutions with a communal character, and so on). One could maintain that 'local' ways of acting and thinking among governments and rulers in small territories enhanced political participation and administration efficiency. Communal structures would produce a recipe for success quite different from efforts towards territorialisation. However, these corporations played only a secondary role in the self-image and the collective memory of the two states, built as it was on hazy images of primeval ancestors and early traditions rather than on historical facts. The Helvetians were by no means just some legendary progenitors from a distant time. They were much more a symbol representing the tradition of freedom, like the *Alten Eidgenossen*. The Helvetians also appeared to be heroic champions of liberty. From this point of view both, the Batavians and the Helvetians were forced into a specific function in the pre-national histories of their respective republics.

But other concepts of the past were also important: Roman traditions influenced the local elite's self-comprehension, as was clearly evident in the town halls of Basel and Zurich, but also, perhaps less expected, in the work of an author like Christoph Schappeler from St. Gallen who, as an active thinker during the Peasant War in Memmingen, in 1525 conceived a tight analogy between the Swiss Confederation and the Roman republic. However, if the Swiss confederates preferred to see themselves in the context of a sacred tradition, they referred to a Nordic rather than to a Roman provenance. The memories of a Swedish origin of the citizens of Schwyz, as noted in the *Landsgemeindebeschluss* of 1531 or in the *Grosses Gebet der Eidgenossen*, were an expression of a specific 'awareness of descent'.

It would be very difficult to strictly differentiate between historiographic and state theoretical approaches in contemporary works. The recent search for the subject 'political theory' risks imposing an anachronistic idea of academic studies and intellectual discourse on early modern age intellectual culture. Instead, one might prefer to argue that contemporary historical accounts (such as the *Weisses Buch von Sarnen*) or even popular songs (*Liedgut*) introduced fundamental topics for discussion without necessarily claiming to articulate

specific political theories. They dealt for example with the struggle against tyranny. The mere fact that they employed concepts like tyranny, gives them a theoretical significance nonetheless.

Political theory developed slowly in the two republics, which led to the emergence of peculiar dialectics between them and the Holy Roman Empire. There was a symbolic relation to the Empire in every Dutch town. But the Dutch also had to concentrate on European debates, because the principle '*cuius regio eius religio*', although valid within the Empire, was not valid in the Dutch Republic. One must wonder whether the basic monarchist trend, which had been handed down via its contact with Spain, hindered the identification that the Netherlands had with their own traditions within the Holy Empire. These historical interests still manifest their roots in the selection of topics in modern Dutch historical research: for instance, there is no school of thought regarding the Dutch relationship to the Holy Roman Empire. When we look at the images displayed in Amsterdam's city hall, we see no suggestions for a conclusive debate on the Dutch relationship to the 'Reich'.

For the Confederates, on the other hand, the Empire guaranteed the autonomy of the cantons, gave unequivocal support and, to a certain extent, served as the starting point for the future development of the republic. Further research will ultimately reveal in what respect the relationship between the Swiss and the Empire was interrupted during the separation process initiated during the late Middle Ages. Thus, a conscientious comparison of institutional ties and political processes, but especially of the symbolic values of the republican spirit in both small states, might produce some exciting results.

It is not easy to determine to what extent the 'self-imaging' of the protagonists in the arts was connected to republican thought and whether the transfer or importation of republican motives was intentional or fortuitous. Artists were very mobile and many Swiss painters travelled to the Netherlands to study. During their stays, the painters came into contact with a specific tradition, which they then brought back to Switzerland. Artists who depended on customers for their survival were often forced to produce what their clients wanted. It might be worthwhile to analyse the conditions surrounding the production and sale of smaller art works. For instance, does glass painting that was widely produced in southern Germany and the Swiss Confederation represent a folkloristic characteristic, or can it be understood as a political innovation, or as the democratisation of

art? These reflections may uncover the limitations of a purely semi-otic image analysis, which only deals with the discourse on the history of conceptions, instead of focussing on the conditions of production and reception of art. Rather, we must relate all of this to the debate whether, and at what point, ‘republican’ and ‘monarchist’ art can be distinguished, or whether the category ‘republican’ used in the context of art essentially means ‘urban’. Was the development of certain art subjects, such as the Alps, inspired by Rousseau, or did it stem from a contemporary idealisation of the Old Swiss Confederation?

Future research on ‘republicanism’ as a generic term will have to consider whether (and since when) there has ever been an early modern theory of ‘republicanism’. One possibility is, that this was limited to a republican ‘habitus’, with its own particular character and conventions, as well as its own consumer habits. If ‘republicanism’ turns out to be more of a heuristic aid than a historical fact, then future research will have to establish a more sophisticated terminology, which should go beyond a nominalistic history of terms and, further, take into consideration the ‘variety of republican languages’, including, e.g., the discourse on virtues, lifestyle and luxury. It is only with these types of linguistic instruments that we can hope to produce clear and useful results in larger comparative studies that would go beyond a mere confrontation between the two countries. In order to make these comparisons, one is forced to simplify and to systematise. Ultimately, it is only those parameters that are well-defined and comprehensible that can be usefully compared.

To this end, a finely structured chronology of sub-periods should also be developed. Approaches based on statements which provide general evidence that is applicable to several centuries may not be the most useful. National cultures in the realm of post-1800 ceremony and republican symbolism may, for instance, have coloured our perspective on the pre-modern free states. For purposes of verification, the results of comparative research on republicanism must also be placed in relation to developments in non-republican territories. If differences with the monarchies are a central issue, then the conditions of states with a monarchist constitution obviously need to be included in future research. This also implies more consideration for outsider views on the republics, coming from states with non-republican constitutions, which could act as correctives to the more common internal perspectives. This is the only way that the ‘republic’ as a

type of constitution and its effect on historical processes can be assessed with greater precision. The question could be put even more starkly: Were republican state-building models superior to the authoritarian and hierarchically organised state forms? If so, it begs the obvious converse notion: Why then were they not successful elsewhere?

5 Potential for modernisation

Whenever the potential for modernisation is questioned in concrete terms, typical difficulties immediately arise regarding modernisation concepts. Rating terminology such as ‘moving forward towards democracy’, ‘conservative’ or ‘traditionalistic’ have various connotations and thus tend to confuse historical discussions. These problems may be a consequence of applying modern categories to the events of the past, and can thus only be counteracted by a full understanding of the historical actors, their interests and standards, and their range of action. When dealing with states that consider themselves republican or those that can be characterised as republican, one is curious about the population’s actual abilities in exercising political influence. For instance, can emigration be considered a valid means of applying implicit pressure by discontented social elites? Powerful elites were generally well aware of the advantages of their system. The privileges associated with the possession of civil rights were a general characteristic of the early modern age, and they were too attractive and desirable to allow them to become imperilled by emigration. One may consider ‘access options’ as a more valid and fruitful alternative.

The questions of how and whether different political systems were able to react to increasingly complex social developments, remain to be answered. The Confederation’s political community projects, such as the *Defensionale* or the *Landfrieden*, were established to conserve the system, not to solve structural problems. Important structural changes were hindered, not only by a collective fear of losing one’s autonomy, but more importantly by the lack of a common vision of a common future. However, economic interests based on the international mercenary trade did trigger intense political co-operation in some cases. Furthermore, the success and potential of one’s own state was judged on pragmatic rather than on theoretical

criteria. But would these criteria have been enough to allow Switzerland to achieve political reforms without Napoleon's influence? There were independent attempts to carry out reforms – even radical reforms – towards the end of the eighteenth century, although the confederates were not dependent on foreign imports of modern constitutional ideas. Instead, radicalism was an expression of a specific politically active generation. However, this Swiss radicalism was usually neither democratic nor future-oriented. Even the hotheads in Johann Jacob Bodmer's entourage in Zurich did, in the end, defend conservative values. Further research will have to show to what extent Swiss discussions about tradition and the constitution were focussed on democratic participation in the same way as it could be postulated in the United Provinces on the basis of natural law.

A further elaboration of the comparison between the trajectories of Swiss and Dutch history, as well as a broader comparison between republican and Absolutist societies thus seem to suggest fruitful itineraries for future research on the specific notions of the European experience.

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Simon Hari

This bibliography includes titles covering the early modern period, the same period that the rest of this book is concerned with. ‘Switzerland’ and ‘the Netherlands’ have been defined as the territories of these two modern countries. The bibliography concentrates on historical interpretations. Source editions, manuscripts and maps in general are not included. Titles relating to religious movements have only been included when they explicitly refer to Swiss-Dutch connections. As a result, a title such as *Calvin in the Low Countries* might be included, but the history of Calvinism in the Low Countries would not.

The bibliography reveals that historical research has hitherto mostly focused on biographical and geneological relations, on the one hand, and diplomatic and especially military history, on the other, with studies of the Swiss mercenaries creating a link between these various interests. Individual influences on artistic and religious issues have also been investigated. Systematic comparisons, or confrontations of the histories of two countries remain underrepresented, as are almost all of the studies dealing with economic and commercial exchange.

Sometimes additional information, not included in the original title, has been added in brackets [].

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The Netherlands and Switzerland are among the world's most successful societies. Their inhabitants enjoy high standards of living and express great satisfaction with their lives according to surveys. This despite serious natural handicaps, such as a lack of raw materials and an abundance of water and rock respectively. The foundation for their prosperity was laid in the early modern period, between roughly 1500 and 1800, when, as federal republics, the two countries were already something of an anomaly in Europe. Their inhabitants experienced serious anxieties and tried to justify their exceptionality, to which they were, at the same time, greatly attached. *The Republican Alternative* attempts, through a sustained comparison, to highlight the special character of the two countries, which were similar perhaps at first sight, but nonetheless developed their own solutions to the challenges they faced. The book includes in-depth discussions of citizenship arrangements, Swiss and Dutch dealings with religious pluriformity, political discourses justifying the republican form of government, and the advantages and disadvantages of an agrarian over a commercial society.

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