

William of Orange and the Reformation 1559-1567: Coming to Terms with Religious Diversity¹

The peace of Cateau-Cambrésis in April 1559 more or less coincided with the accession of new rulers in France and the Spanish Habsburg lands. In the wake of the Reformation, these all faced an increasingly serious problem, namely that of governing communities which were religiously divided and, especially in France, inflamed by noble rivalries. Both Henry II and Philip II saw the restoration of peace as a providential opportunity to suppress heresy and so restore religious uniformity. On theological and on political grounds they believed passionately in the maxim 'un roi, une loi, une foi'. Their attempts however to impose Catholic orthodoxy provoked turmoil. In the case of the Low Countries, the consequent revolt against Spanish Habsburg rule resulted in the unforeseen emergence of a new and relatively tolerant state - the United Provinces and in France, eventually, to the conditional toleration of the Calvinist minority. 1559 also proved a watershed in the life of Prince William of Orange, now in his mid-twenties. Hitherto William's life had revolved around the Habsburg-Burgundian court in Brussels, his estates in Breda and the army. But his participation in the peace negotiations with France in the autumn of 1558 thrust him into the world of international politics. Here he too was confronted with the intractable problems thrown up by competing religious confessions.

In the summer of 1559, William was sent with the count of Egmont and the duke of Alba to Paris as a hostage to ensure that the terms of the peace were implemented. It was while there that the famous encounter between Henry II and William, recounted in William's *Apologie* first published in 1581, supposedly took place. On that occasion, the king apparently talked with William about Alba's plans 'pour exterminer tous les suspects de la religion en France, en ce païs [Les Pays Bas] et par toute la Chrestienté'. Though the Prince was not privy to these, he concealed his ignorance and listened while the king went on to reveal 'le fond du project des Inquisiteurs'. In the *Apologie* we are told that on hearing this the Prince was so filled with compassion for the many good people destined for slaughter that he vowed to help expel 'ceste vermine d'Espaignols' from the Low Countries.²

If – and the conditional is used advisedly – this story is true, this episode in Paris would represent the earliest expression of William's opposition to religious persecution. Yet, historians are notoriously divided about its veracity. For some it is just a cock and bull story,³ but others are less sceptical.⁴ While the account in the *Apologie* cannot be independently corroborated, it is not implausible. We know plans were then being hatched by Catholic 'hawks' in both countries for a concerted campaign against heresy.⁵ Nor seemingly was the *Apologie* the only source for the story. Pontus Payen, a Catholic lawyer from Arras, includes an extensive account of the exchange between Henry II and Orange in his memoirs written in the late sixteenth century. While indebted to the *Apologie*, he included piquant details not found there.⁶

Because those weeks in Paris were so eventful, one can readily understand why William might have recalled them twenty-odd years later. His time there was punctuated with solemn rituals and festivities connected with Cateau-Cambrésis. There was the mass in Notre-Dame on 18

June when Henry II solemnly swore to fulfil the terms of the peace treaty followed closely by the marriages contracted between Philip II and Elisabeth de Valois and between the duke of Savoy and Marguerite, Henry II's sister, which were intended to reinforce ties between the Habsburg and Valois dynasties. No sooner had the second marriage taken place than the French court was plunged into mourning following the unexpected and tragic death of Henry II after a jousting accident.

It is hard, too, to imagine that this comparatively young man would have been oblivious to the religious passions then raging in Paris as popular preachers radicalised the city's Catholic inhabitants. In neither Brussels nor Breda at this time would Orange have encountered the apocalyptic mood that then gripped the French capital. During that summer Henry II ratcheted up the campaign against the heretics. He was still smarting from the temerity of the Protestants who had dared to stage psalm-singing demonstrations in the Pré-aux-Clercs in May 1558. Only days before William arrived in Paris, the king had personally, and sensationally, ordered the arrest of *parlementaires* who had obstructed the registration of his anti-heresy edicts. This caught William's attention for he reported the arrest of one of magistrates in a letter to Cardinal Granvelle later in June.⁷ One way or another those weeks in Paris would have made William aware, perhaps for the first time, of just how contentious the issue of religion had become.

In Paris William had been a spectator but in his capacity as the prince of Orange in the Vaucluse, he found himself struggling to maintain law and order in communities torn apart by confessional rivalries. Minuscule though the territory of Orange was, possession of this statelet mattered because the prince held it, as the *Apologie* boasted, 'en souveraineté nuë et absoluë'.⁸ Juridically, William therefore enjoyed the same status as any other sovereign monarch. But as Orange was wedged between the lands of the king of France and those of the papacy, William exerted little power there; neither could he keep the marauding bands of Huguenots and Catholics at bay. Using its influence in Brussels, the papacy leaned hard on William to expel the heretics who had in its opinion turned Orange into a 'second Geneva'.⁹ As his own religious allegiance was already under suspicion, he could not blithely ignore these papal strictures. Initially, William responded by instructing his officers to uphold the Catholic religion while repeatedly proclaiming his own devotion to what he called 'nostre vraye et ancienne religion'. But neither, as he told the Regent in the Netherlands, Margaret of Parma, could he turn a blind eye to the edicts allowing limited toleration from 1560 onwards in France nor the growing strength of local Calvinists. At times he despaired of finding a solution such as the enmity between the parties.¹⁰ When the Huguenot leader Antoine de Crussol staged a Calvinist coup d'état in Orange, William had little choice but to acquiesce. Accordingly, in August 1563 he issued an edict which, while reserving the cathedral and other churches for Catholics, granted the Reformed in Orange the temporary use of the Dominican church there and required the Parlement to designate places in the villages where they might worship.¹¹

In religious matters William was no ideologue. His policy in Orange was driven by expedience and practical considerations. When in December 1563 he tried to justify the concessions made to the Calvinists in Orange to Margaret of Parma, he explained that without these, the Protestants might otherwise have rebelled and chosen another overlord.¹² A German confidante advised William to reply to Pius IV's criticism of his policy in Orange by telling him that he was making unreasonable demands. Protestantism was now so deeply rooted that there was no alternative but to tolerate it; if the king of France could not eradicate it, how much less the absentee ruler of a small state.¹³ This was just the sort of a pragmatic argument that appealed to William. But even at this early stage the prince also appreciated the importance of restoring peace and harmony in a religiously-divided community. For that reason he urged his subjects in Orange to live together, as he said told them, 'comme freres, amys et concitoyens'.¹⁴ In the circumstances this was rather optimistic, but William was conscious that confessional quarrels could easily turn to bloodshed.

The consequences of the divisions within western Christendom were brought home to William himself in the course of the negotiations for his second marriage. Following the death of his first wife, William's choice fell on the Lutheran Anna, duchess of Saxony, the niece of the Elector Saxony and the granddaughter of Philip of Hesse. From the point of view of the house of Nassau, whose head William had become on the death of his father, this was an advantageous match. But since the marriage necessarily brought William into close association with two of the leading Lutheran princes in the Empire, it found no favour in Brussels or Madrid. And while August of Saxony was enthusiastic, Anna's other guardian, Philip of Hesse declared that he could not in conscience allow her to marry a Catholic. During the protracted negotiations that led up to the Lutheran wedding in Leipzig in late August 1561, William found himself learning, as the saying went, to 'nager entre deux eaux'. He had to keep on assuring Philip II and his ministers, whose outright opposition would have been embarrassing, that he would live and die a Catholic¹⁵ and that in Breda his fiancée would comport herself as a good Catholic. At the same time he had to satisfy the conscientious objections of Philip of Hesse. During the discussions William let it be known that 'in his heart' he was inclined to the Lutheran faith, but this was not enough for the landgrave. In order to gain his crucial consent, the Elector of Saxony had a notarial act drawn up and sent to William for signature. This stated that after her marriage Anna would be free to follow 'the true Christian religion of the Augsburg Confession', could read Lutheran literature and would have access to communion in both kinds when she so wished. William further bound himself, in so far as was possible, to see any children from the union were brought up as Lutherans. William cannily side-stepped signing this potentially incriminating document. But before the wedding took place, he still had to testify before a select audience that he would abide by it. This testimony was kept a close secret for fear of the repercussions back in Brussels and only came to light in the early nineteenth century.¹⁶

William's deviousness about his religious position is more easily understood when we remember that, like many of his contemporaries, he did not think in hard and fast confessional

categories.¹⁷ When pressed about his religious affiliations by those who did, whether that was Pius IV, Philip II or even Philip of Hesse, William gave the bland assurances they seemed to require. In the same way, he behaved as a Catholic until Christmas 1566.¹⁸ He attended mass regularly, as he was obliged to as a Knight of the Golden Fleece, his first son by Anna was baptised according to the Catholic rite (though Philip of Hesse and August of Saxony were god-parents) and, as a provincial governor after 1559, he investigated breaches of the anti-heresy edicts. At the same time his marriage to Anna of Saxony brought him into close contact with the German Lutheran princes. In times of crisis he turned for advice to the Elector of Saxony and Philip and William of Hesse as well as his own younger brother, Louis of Nassau, who flaunted his Protestantism, even in the Low Countries.

During the early 1560s religious dissent manifested itself on an unparalleled scale in the towns of Wallonia and Flanders as well in Antwerp. So many suspects fled abroad to the Lower Rhineland and south-eastern England that people worried about depopulation while the anti-heresy edicts were seen as a deterrent to German Protestant merchants doing business in the Low Countries and as harmful to the all-important domestic cloth industry. In the Conseil d'État, which was dominated by the great nobility after the departure of Granvelle in the spring of 1564, the feeling grew that only major political and administrative reforms could save the country from civil disorder. It was therefore decided to send Egmont to Spain to make the case for such changes. William was not alone in thinking that the anti-heresy edicts had, coûte que coûte, be moderated. He was, however, the most outspoken in demanding that Egmont should tell the king bluntly just how parlous the situation had become. He concluded his lengthy address to the Council on New Year's Eve 1564 by declaring that though he were a Catholic, he thought it quite wrong for rulers to tyrannise over their subjects' consciences and prescribe what religion they should follow.¹⁹ Though William's intervention influenced the brief given to Egmont, the count failed to persuade Philip II to alter his repressive religious policy; on the contrary, the king blamed the upsurge in heresy on the lax enforcement of the edicts and insisted that these should be rigorously applied.

When William heard the king's reaction he wrote in dismay to a German correspondent in mid-November 1565.

Not only has the king, ordered that those who give themselves over to other doctrines be burnt, but also that those who then repent should lose their heads. Truly I cannot feel in my heart other than that this is neither Christian nor feasible ... Your lordship can imagine in what anguish I find myself.²⁰

William did not only disapprove of the king's religious policy on grounds of conscience; he thought it would provoke rebellion and so destabilise the entire Habsburg Netherlands.²¹ Not for the last time, William asked to be replaced by someone better able than himself to keep the peace; personally, he only wanted to live, as he said, as a 'bon Créstien'.²²

Meanwhile a large body of gentry formed a sworn association known as the Compromise. Their purpose was to prevent the introduction of what they called the inquisition, ‘fust ce soubz nom et ombre d’inquisition, visitation, placarts ou aultre quelconque, mais du tout la extirper et desraciner comme mère et occasion de tout désordre et injustice’.²³ In April 1566 a petition to this effect was presented to the Regent. William like the other great nobles kept aloof, though he must have known what was afoot. As a loyal vassal of the king, he simply could not be seen to endorse such an act, no matter however much he might sympathise with the aims of the Compromise. Like some other members of the Conseil d’État, William thought a meeting of the States-General might offer a way forward. In his case, he hoped this body would grant the subsidies needed to address the king’s debts and so repair relations between the ruler and his subjects. Though William did not say in so many words, he seems to have thought that, if the States General were forthcoming, Philip II might be more prepared to agree to moderate his religious policy.²⁴

Throughout 1566 William kept in regular touch with his Lutheran confidantes in the Empire to see what they could do for the ‘poor, oppressed Christians’ in the Low Countries. To that end he sought to exploit the political leverage exerted by the Lutheran estates within the Reichstag [États du Saint Empire] to end religious persecution. One of his German correspondents suggested that the Netherlands should see whether the Religionsfriede [Paix de Religion] agreed at Augsburg in 1555 might be extended to the Low Countries.²⁵ Another strategy was to see whether the emperor Maximilian II, whom some thought was well-disposed to the Lutheran faith, might be persuaded to take the matter up with his cousin Philip II.²⁶ But the price of Lutheran support was acceptance on the part of the Protestants in the Netherlands of the Confession of Augsburg.²⁷ Unfortunately for William, the antagonism between the inflexible Lutheran dogmatists and the Reformed in the Low Countries obstructed cooperation between the two confessions.²⁸ The destruction of churches and the Calvinist insurrections made the Lutheran princes, allergic to anything that smacked of rebellion, distinctly queasy about giving William meaningful support. Though sympathetic to William and to the plight of Protestant Netherlands, they did not want to disturb the religious status quo in the Empire or to be embroiled in a conflict not of their making. Their assistance was, accordingly, limited. They despatched Lutheran theologians and sent a rather limp and belated embassy to Brussels in May 1567 to ask for religious freedom for Lutherans in the Low Countries, a request which Margaret of Parma dismissed with disdain.²⁹ For William, who set little store by doctrinal scruples, the refusal of the Calvinists to sign up to the Confession of Augsburg was a bitter disappointment.³⁰

The so-called ‘année des merveilles’ began in the summer of 1566 with the ‘presches en plein air’, continued with the rash of image-breaking and concluded with the despairing Calvinist revolts in early 1567. In the wake of the field services and the destruction of churches, Brussels was obliged, however reluctantly, to make concessions to the Protestants. On 23-25 August Margaret of Parma struck a deal with the lesser nobles in the Compromise. Through gritted teeth she agreed the preaching might continue where it had already taken place outside the

towns, but in return she required that the nobles' association be dissolved.³¹ In many towns, however, local agreements, which granted the Calvinists more freedom, were also made as magistracies struggled to re-assert their authority, re-open the churches for Catholic worship and generally restore order. The most significant of these urban accords was concluded by William in his capacity as governor of Antwerp on 2 September with the Lutheran and Reformed communities. This gave the Protestants a degree of religious freedom far beyond that offered by Margaret of Parma. For example, the Protestants were allotted places *within the city* where they might assemble to hear sermons and where they eventually built their own churches. The purpose behind this accord was, as William explained, to foster an environment where the townspeople 'might henceforth live with one another in complete tranquillity, peace, love and friendship'³² and commerce might resume. Crucially, the Antwerp agreement gave the two Protestant congregations legal recognition. Their ministers, who took an oath of loyalty to the civil powers, baptised children, performed marriages and buried their dead; they also administered Communion and, through their consistory exercised discipline and dispensed poor relief. For a few months – until the early spring of the following year – the Lutheran and Reformed churches constituted corporate entities alongside the established Catholic Church. In the eyes of William and others in Antwerp, such confessional pluriformity seemed in the circumstances to offer the best prospect of social harmony and order. But Margaret of Parma was outraged. She saw the Antwerp accord as a gross violation of the very limited pact she had made earlier with the nobles, and repudiated it.

Where William stood on the religious spectrum at any one time is difficult to determine. Until late in 1566, he behaved in public as a Catholic, but his marriage to Anna of Saxony raised doubts in various quarters because of his close relations with the Lutheran Philip of Hesse who in the view of the Spanish was *persona non grata*.³³ In late 1564 a German friend advised him that in the matter of religion he was considered suspect and warned him to be discreet.³⁴ As we have seen he felt under pressure to re-affirm his Catholicism to the king, the pope and Margaret of Parma in these years. He sensed too that he did not have the confidence of the king. That insecurity explains his extraordinary outburst in the Conseil d'État in April 1566, when that body was discussing how to respond to the petition from the lesser nobles. He felt aggrieved because he and his family were disparaged as heretics and because the king never communicated with him. He told the meeting that he intended to leave the country immediately and would not return until the king had given him re-assurances. Margaret managed to mollify William and persuaded him to stay on, but the tirade betrays his sensitivity.³⁵

From his correspondence one gains the impression that out of both conviction and political expedience, William was edging closer to the Lutherans towards the end of 1566. In contrast to the Calvinists whom he described as 'bien eschauffés', he spoke favourably about the Antwerp Lutherans as 'gens de bien et paisables'.³⁶ By late 1566, some Lutheran princes believed William was on the brink of subscribing to the Confession of Augsburg and urged him to take this step.³⁷ Yet, while he felt more at ease with the Lutherans and carefully distanced himself

from the Calvinists, he also refused to disassociate himself from them and included them among 'the oppressed Christians' whose cause he pleaded with the German princes. Though he hesitated to declare himself a Lutheran because that would have been tantamount to burning his boats with the king,³⁸ he may also have been held back by a wish not to offend Calvinist susceptibilities.

William's position deteriorated rapidly as autumn gave way to winter. In Madrid doubts about the loyalty of William and his noble compeers, Egmont and Hoorne, grew apace because of the concessions they had made to the Calvinists.³⁹ Philip II's decision in late November to appoint Alba to command an army to restore order in the Low Countries demonstrated how completely the king had lost faith in the high nobility of the Habsburg Netherlands, and especially in William. A note of despair enters his correspondence at this time. In late February 1567 he wrote to William of Hesse:

We beseech you, my lord, most devotedly and diligently ... bearing in mind that we and our beloved wife are alone in this country and ... in the greatest need and at threat to our very life and limb, and have no trustworthy friends about us, to whom we dare fully open our hearts and minds, ... that you might extend to us and the poor Christians your protection out of family loyalty and love ...'⁴⁰

As William became more isolated in the Netherlands, he turned increasingly for advice to his confidantes among the German Lutheran princes. They however pressed him to subscribe openly to the Confession of Augsburg. This, they insisted, was essential if he were to gain their support. Yet William backed away from making any such categorical declaration. In mid-December 1566 he proposed instead petitioning the king humbly in a 'secret letter' asking that he and his consort, who had been born and brought up in the Augsburg Confession and always professed the same 'in our hearts' might be free to practise the same.⁴¹ This was as far as he was prepared to go. Quite what purpose this would have served is uncertain. Obviously the king would have disregarded it, but it is also far from clear that it would have satisfied the demands of the Lutheran estates.

William, as I have remarked, seems not to have attached great significance to specific doctrines and ceremonies. When he returned to the Low Countries after his marriage in Leipzig, he let it be known that he rather admired the irenic religious regime prevailing in the duchy of Cleves. Here he claimed the people 'prendront la liberté d'estre en la religion comm'ilz voudront'.⁴² Until the end of 1566 he went to mass but, as we have remarked, his religious disposition had aroused suspicion ever since his marriage to Anna of Saxony. Because of the hostility among many Lutherans towards Reformed Protestants, William's German correspondents needed to be re-assured he was not a Calvinist and in November 1566 he gave that assurance to William of Hesse. He also knew that the confessions were locked in doctrinal controversy, but he hoped the differences could be resolved by negotiation between 'good men and peace-loving people' rather than by bloodshed.⁴³

Philip II believed to his core that the inhabitants in his lands had to be Catholics. For him this was a religious imperative. As he once told Margaret of Parma, he intended to live and die in 'la foy ancienne Catholique' and he would not suffer his subjects to do otherwise. If that meant punishing offenders harshly, then so be it.⁴⁴ Catholicism had to be upheld, not least for the spiritual well-being of the inhabitants. Netherlanders too knew that this was how the king saw things. Had not Philip told Egmont when he was in Madrid that he would rather lose a hundred thousand lives than alter his religious policy?⁴⁵ By the time William went into self-imposed exile in April 1567, his own thinking on the matter was poles apart from that of the king.

The prince, it should be said, was not an original or consistent advocate of religious freedom, but he did place a higher value on some form of toleration than his compeers as he explained to William of Hesse. The other nobles, he wrote, are concerned about 'the freedom of these lands', meaning freedom from Spanish domination, but they did not take 'these common religious matters to heart'.⁴⁶ Repeatedly he re-assured his Lutheran correspondents that he and other Protestants would honour all their obligations to the king if only he left them free to practice their religion. Nor had they any wish to impose their own faith or remove the Catholic clergy who might enjoy their property in peace.⁴⁷ Freedom of conscience mattered to William. He had made that clear in the Conseil d'État at the end of 1564. So, when the Regent required the nobles and major office-holders to take a new oath of loyalty to the king, it was perhaps unsurprising when William refused to comply, claiming that he might be ordered to do something 'contre ma conscience'.⁴⁸

But William opposed the king's religious policy above all because he had come to the conclusion that the cost of enforcing it in a country where support for the Reformation was widespread was exorbitant. William feared that unless the repressive edicts were repealed, opposition would provoke civil unrest, and so threaten the Habsburg state itself. Writing to his German friends in the wake of the iconoclastic riots, William blamed the disturbances on the pent up anger of the people. Had the inquisition been abolished, as he and several of our other nobles had, out of their great loyalty to the king, recommended, he was certain that the 'old Catholic religion' would have been better upheld and the country would have been spared such turmoil. It would have been even better had if the Protestants had been granted a place, as happened at Antwerp, where they could freely hold their services.⁴⁹

In a rather disjointed memorandum written sometime in late 1566, the prince considered seven ways to bring about, after the upheavals of recent months, a 'pacification générale'.⁵⁰ It might be possible to suppress Protestant services for a time or banish all those 'qui sentent mal' of Catholic faith, but both these would be counter-productive. Liberty of conscience might be another way forward, it being understood that those who found this insufficient could leave the country while still enjoying their property. Yet, William was not very enthusiastic about this option. He feared that unless dissidents could attend their own services, they would lapse into 'atheïsme'. Since they would certainly shun Catholic churches, they would die like 'bestes brutes'.⁵¹ The memorandum mentions, but does not discuss, the granting of religious freedom

to Lutherans and Calvinists perhaps because William thought this was quite unrealistic. Instead he thought the king should offer limited toleration and so he suggested an arrangement remarkably reminiscent of the French edict of Amboise of 1563.⁵² Places should be appointed in every province where Protestants might hold their services or, alternatively, towns and nobles were given discretion as to whether such services might take place.

Of course, in the short term, William's proposals for accommodating religious diversity fell on deaf ears. Within months, the prince was effectively a fugitive, having had to abandon his vast estates and leave behind his eldest son Philip William. But he did not forget his commitment to religious toleration when he became the leader of the Revolt. The commissions he issued to those to whom he gave office stipulated that while the Reformed faith should be preached, 'those of the Roman church [should not] in any way to be molested'.⁵³ Though he soon became a member of the Reformed church, he did what he could to restrain the anti-papist fury of some of his followers. In 1573 he summarily dismissed Lumey from his post as lieutenant general, to which he had appointed him, largely because of atrocities committed against Catholics. And when in 1577 the magistrates of Middelburg closed shops belonging to Mennonites because these refused to take an oath on religious grounds, the prince told the magistrates they must accept the word of the Mennonites as valid. When these Mennonites appealed to William, they told him they wanted 'to live with liberty of conscience' and added that was why the war against the king had been undertaken.⁵⁴ Historians might well find this interpretation of the Revolt too simplistic, but the principle that each individual should enjoy freedom of religion was enshrined in the Union of Utrecht. The United Provinces were not as tolerant as is sometimes supposed, but the fact that 'freedom of religion' was written into what became the de facto constitution of the new state that was taking shape by 1579 owes much to the conviction of the 'father of the fatherland'. This was a conviction the prince had entertained since the early 1560s and which only grew stronger as time went on. His experiences in Orange and as governor of Antwerp as well as his knowledge of the religious settlements in the Holy Roman Empire and in France had convinced him that 'freedom of religion', far from threatening the viability of the state, was in fact the best guarantee of its political stability.

¹ I am obliged to Rodney Livingstone for help with translating some of the German letters and to N.M. Sutherland for her helpful comments, especially on the French situation.

² A. Lacroix (ed.), *Apologie de Guillaume le Taciturne ... contre l'édit de proscription publié en 1580 par Philippe II*, Bruxelles 1858, pp. 88-9.

³ For example, A. Ruble, *Traité de Cateau-Cambrésis (2-3 avril 1559)*, Paris 1889, pp. 198-99; K. Verhofstad, *De regering der Nederlanden in de jaren 1555-1559*, Nijmegen 1937, pp. 183-84; 193; M.J. Rodríguez-Salgado, *The Changing Face of Empire. Charles V, Philip II and Habsburg Authority 1551-1559*, Cambridge 1988, pp. 329-30.

⁴ See P.J. Blok *Willem de Eerste Prins van Oranje* 2 vols., Amsterdam 1919, I, pp. 44-5; A.A. van Schelven, *Willem van Oranje. Een boek ter gedachtenis van idealen en teleurstellingen*, Haarlem 1933, pp. 46-50; N. Sutherland, 'William of Orange and the Revolt of the Netherlands' (1983) in: idem, *Princes, Politics and Religion 1547-1589* London 1984, pp. 211-12; H. Klink, *Opstand, politiek en religie bij Willem van Oranje 1559-1568. Een thematische biografie*, Heerenveen 1998, pp. 89-100.

⁵ The supporting evidence is marshalled by Sutherland 1984 (op. cit. note 4) and Klink 1998 (op.cit note 4).

⁶ A. Henne (ed.), *Mémoires de Pontus Payen* 2 vols., Bruxelles 1861, I, pp. 6-10. It is, for example, from Pontus, not the *Apologie*, that we learn the French king struck up the conversation with the prince about heresy when they became separated from the hunting party in the Bois de Vincennes. B.A. Vermaseren, *De katholieke nederlandse geschiedschrijving in de XVI^e en XVII^e over den opstand*, Maastricht 1941, p. 160 has suggested that Pontus had access to the papers of Christophe d'Assonleville, who was a fellow arrageois and a colleague of William in the Conseil d'État.

⁷ De correspondentie van Willem van Oranje [henceforth correspondentie van WvO] nr. 6874. Though most of William's correspondence used here was published by Groen van Prinsterer and L.P. Gachard in the nineteenth century, I have cited the online edition of the correspondence [www.historici.nl/Onderzoek/Projecten/WVO] because it is easily accessible as well as adding new material.

⁸ For William's concern about his sovereign title see Correspondentie van WvO, nr. 6719; 6720; 6731; also Lacroix 1858 (op. cit. note 2), p. 60.

⁹ M. Venard, *Réforme protestante, réforme catholique dans la province d'Avignon au XVI^e siècle*, Paris 1993, p. 461; Correspondentie van WvO, nr. 1106.

¹⁰ Correspondentie van WvO, nr. 4460

¹¹ Correspondentie van WvO, nr. 9128 and 12000.

¹² Correspondentie van WvO, nr. 10219.

¹³ Correspondentie van WvO, nr. 1102.

¹⁴ Correspondentie van WvO, nr. 12000. In granting the Calvinists of Orange the use of the Dominican church there, William exceeded the edict of January 1562 which still forbade Protestants from possessing churches, N.M. Sutherland, *The Huguenot Struggle for Recognition*, New Haven 1980, p. 355.

¹⁵ Correspondentie van WvO, nr. 6730

¹⁶ Blok (op. cit., note 4) I, pp. 59-68; see also R.C. Bakhuizen van den Brink, *Het huwelijk van Willem van Oranje met Anna van Saksen*, Amsterdam 1853, pp. 75-76.

¹⁷ I have benefited from Olaf Mörke's observations about William's religious outlook in his *Wilhelm von Oranien (1533-1584) Fürst und "Vater" der Republik*, Stuttgart 2007, pp. 73-74.

¹⁸ Blok (op. cit., note 4) I, 168.

¹⁹ Henne (op. cit. note 6), I, 70.

²⁰ Correspondentie van WvO, nr. 3894.

²¹ Correspondentie van WvO, nr. 4479; the same point is made in the Petition of 5 April 1566, G. Groen van Prinsterer (ed.), *Archives ou correspondance inédite de la maison d'Orange-Nassau*, première série, 8 vols., Leyde 1835-47, II, pp. 80-84.

²² Correspondentie van WvO, nr. 321.

²³ Groen van Prinsterer (op. cit. note 21), II, pp. 4-5.

²⁴ See the notules du Conseil d'État for 1566-67 published by L.P. Gachard as a supplement to his *Correspondance de Guillaume le Taciturne, prince d'Orange* 8 vols., Bruxelles 1850-57, VI, p.381.

²⁵ Correspondentie van WvO, nr. 5912. This possibility was mooted at the Reichstag of 1566, M. Weis, *Les Pays-Bas espagnols et les États du Saint Empire (1559-1579). Priorités et enjeux de la diplomatie en temps de troubles*, Bruxelles 2003, p. 244. This was of course quite out of the question as far as Brussels was concerned.

²⁶ Gachard 1850-57 (op cit. note 23), II, p. 215.

²⁷ Correspondentie van WvO, nr. 4485; 3953; 154.

²⁸ William was dismayed on hearing from Louis of Nassau that the Calvinists would not accept the Confession of Augsburg, Correspondentie van WvO, nr. 4484.

²⁹ Correspondentie van WvO, nr. 154 and 157; on the embassy from Lutheran princes see L.P. Gachard, J.S. Theissen and H.A. Enno van Gelder. (eds.), *Correspondance de Marguerite d'Autriche ... avec Philippe II*, 6 vols. Bruxelles/ Utrecht 1867-1942, IV, pp. 367-68.

³⁰ Perhaps William was behind 'la concordance, faite en la ville d'Anvers, de la confession d'Auguste et de la religion calvinistique'; certainly he wanted a rapprochement between the two confessions, Gachard 1850-57 (op.cit. note 24), II, 426-27.

³¹ P. Bor, *Oorsprongk, begin en vervolgh der Nederlandsche oorlogen, beroerten, en borgerlyke oneenigheden* 4 vols., Amsterdam 1679-84, I, pp. 95-97.

³² Gachard 1850-57 (op. cit. note 24), II, pp. 215-18; the same phraseology recurs in the Utrecht agreement which William oversaw, Bor (op. cit. note 31), I, pp. 106-7.

³³ Weis 2003, (op. cit. note 25) pp. 97, 116-17.

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- ³⁴ Correspondentie van WvO, nr. 7789.
- ³⁵ Gachard 1850-57 (op. cit. note 24), VI, pp. 374-5.
- ³⁶ Correspondentie van WvO, nr. 6129.
- ³⁷ Correspondentie van WvO, nr. 1463; 157; 6007.
- ³⁸ Correspondentie van WvO, nr. 1260; 5905.
- ³⁹ L. Geevers, *Gevallen vazallen. De integratie van Oranje, Egmont en Horn in de Spaans-Habsburgse monarchie 1559-1567*, Amsterdam 2008, pp. 165-72.
- ⁴⁰ Correspondentie van WvO, nr. 163.
- ⁴¹ Correspondentie van WvO, nr. 5905.
- ⁴² Gachard 1867-1942 (op. cit. note 29), II, pp. 38-9; on the religious regime in Cleves see J.P. Dolan, *The Influence of Erasmus, Witzel and Cassander in the church ordinances and reform proposals of the united duchy of Cleves during the middle decades of the sixteenth century*, Münster, 1957.
- ⁴³ Correspondentie van WvO, nr. 1260.
- ⁴⁴ Gachard, Theissen (eds), (op.cit. 41), IV, p. 143.
- ⁴⁵ L.P. Gachard (ed.), *Correspondance de Philippe II dans les affaires des Pays-Bas*, 6 vols. Bruxelles 1848-1936, I, p. 347.
- ⁴⁶ Correspondentie van WvO, nr. 163.
- ⁴⁷ Correspondentie van WvO, nr. 1260; 156; 1051; 159.
- ⁴⁸ Correspondentie van WvO, nr. 1251.
- ⁴⁹ Correspondentie van WvO, nr. 484.
- ⁵⁰ Groen van Prinsterer, (op. cit note 21), II, pp. 430-43; cf. Bor, (op. cit. note 31), I, pp. 131-32. This memorandum may have been drafted in preparation for a speech to the estates of Utrecht. Because it is not a letter it does not appear in the online edition of William's correspondence.
- ⁵¹ Francois du Jon, *Brief discours envoyé au roy Philippe* (1566) used a similar argument when he urged the king to grant freedom of worship to Calvinists.
- ⁵² Sutherland (op.cit. note 14), pp. 356-7.
- ⁵³ Bor (op.cit. note 31), I, 375.
- ⁵⁴ Correspondentie van WvO, nr. 10455.