

RESHAPING ARGUMENTS

HOW POLITICAL IDEAS TRANSCEND BORDERS
A case study of political thought during the Dutch Revolt

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Cover illustration: *De kerk van Christus (The Church of Christ)* (c. 1570) in Daniel R. Horst, *De Opstand in zwart-wit. Propagandaprenten uit de Nederlandse Opstand 1566-1584* (Zutphen 2003) 69.

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*“den Spaengeart [...] die synen aert ende wreehteyt so
wel ouer hen als ouer eenighe andere tooghen sal”**

* Een discoers ofte Vertoogh ghedaen voor den Coninck van Vrankerijke ende ettelyke van zynen raet, vvaerin verclaert vvort met wat middelen men soude connen Vranckerijke in een Turksche slavernije bringhen, verclarende insghelycks hoe de Spaense Nacie den saluen boosen raet ende middelen ghebruyckt om onse Nederlanden in een Turckse slavernije ende tyrannije te bringhen, Knuttel 232 (1575) [8v].

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When I began this study on Dutch political thought during the Revolt for my master thesis, I had selected 80 pamphlets from the Knuttel collection to research. I selected the pamphlets on the basis of their content: Every pamphlet printed in the period between 1560s and 1580s which dealt with the Spaniard and/or the Ottoman Turk found its way into my list. It was my supervisor Prof. dr. Robert von Friedeburg who encouraged me to focus on one pamphlet in particular. We discussed its contents and mused on its possible implications during one of our sessions. Now this treatise forms the focus of this study. Furthermore, I would like to thank Prof. dr Benjamin Schmidt, Prof. dr. Mark Greengrass and Thierry Amalou for their thoughts and encouragements and Dr. Jan Waszink for his role as assisting reader. During my time in Oxford from January until March 2012 I was tutored by Dr. Geert Janssen, who has greatly inspired me to formulate my own thoughts and extend my analytical abilities. I would also like to thank Dr. Adrie van der Laan for taking the time to help me reconstruct the history of publishing for the Dutch and French pamphlets that play such a key role in this study. Tjan van der Krogt assisted me in translating the French passages that were vital for understanding the content and context of the pamphlets. Annemieke Romein read the first version of this thesis. Lastly, I would like to thank Marc de Bruijn for extensively reviewing the concept chapters and for the graphical design of this thesis. Writing this thesis has been a very inspiring, but at times also tense process, which I would not have been able to accomplish without the assistance of these people and I greatly thank them for it.

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I.

Introduction. Pamphlets and Propaganda in the Dutch Revolt

Introduction

In 1575 a remarkable pamphlet was printed with the aim to serve “the perpetuation of our Netherlands especially well.”¹ According to the author of the pamphlet, his Dutch audience could learn much from the French situation at the time of St. Bartholomew’s massacre. Indeed, the author chose to translate the French original² in Dutch in order to save his fatherland from “utter ruination”. Dated in the year of the Breda Peace negotiations, the pamphlet urged people to take heed of the warning put forward by the French situation, so that the country might be saved after all.³ This pamphlet, titled *A discourse or exposition held before the French King and some of his council, in which is declared with which means France could be turned into a Turkish slavery, declaring likewise how the Spanish Nation uses the same evil council to bring our Netherlands in a Turkish slavery and tyranny*,⁴ is the focus of this study.

In 1986 Nicolette Mout argued that prior to Justus Lipsius (1547-1606) the Netherlands had had no great political theorist. The Estates and cities defended their privileges with juridical arguments, but according to Mout this could hardly be labeled as political theory. She assumed that the cause of this deficiency may be found in the political organisation of the Netherlands: the States-General was an institution consisting of delegates of the provincial estates and each provincial delegation had

1 “tot de behoudinge onser Nederlanden wonderlicken vvel soude dienen”, *Een discoers ofte Vertoogh ghedaen voor den Coninck van Vrankerijke ende ettelyke van zijnen raet, vvaerin verclaert vvort met wat middelen men soude connen Vranckerijke in een Turksche slavernije bringhen, verclarende insghelycks hoe de Spaense Nacie den saluen boosen raet ende middelen ghebruyckt om onse Nederlanden in een Turckse slavernije ende tyrannije te bringhen*, Knuttel 232 (1575) [1v].

2 *Discours traduit Italien en François convenant aucuns moyens pour reduire la France à une entière obeissance à son Roy* (Augsburg, 1575). Another pamphlet bearing similar content is *La France-Turquie, c’est à dire conseils et moyens tenus par les ennemis de la Couronne de France pour reduire le Royaume en tel estat que la tyrannie turquesque* (Orleans, 1576). For the relationship between the three pamphlets, see Chapter two of this study.

3 “soo en hebbe ick niet vvillen naelaten of ick en soude het in onser sprake ouersetten, om my eenichsins te quijten, van de liefde die ick mijne vaderlant schuldig ben, des welckes vveluaert hier aen een groot en deel mochte hangen, ende voor meerder catiuicheit, destructie, ende vvterlicke ruine, behouden vvorden”, *Een discoers*, [1v].

4 The Dutch title reads: *Een discoers ofte Vertoogh ghedaen voor den Coninck van Vrankerijke ende ettelyke van zijnen raet, vvaerin verclaert vvort met wat middelen men soude connen Vranckerijke in een Turksche slavernije bringhen, verclarende insghelycks hoe de Spaense Nacie den saluen boosen raet ende middelen ghebruyckt om onse Nederlanden in een Turckse slavernije ende tyrannije te bringhen*, Knuttel 232 (1575), which I will refer to as *Een discoers*.

its own composition and political interests. Particularism may have thwarted the development of political theories. However, Mout did not take in consideration that the particularism that was part and parcel of Dutch politics could just as well have created the need for political theories. In a later period, the famous Hugo Grotius would even prove that particularism could be the starting point for political theory. This renders the question why the Dutch had no great political theorist during the Dutch Revolt even more immediate. Another explanation put forward by Mout is the fact that the Low Countries were a small part of the much greater Habsburg Empire, so the Netherlands did not exist as a separate political entity. From this reasoning it would follow that there was no solid or unified basis for political theory in the Low Countries.⁵ Nevertheless, when investigating the pamphlets of the period, Mout identified several political ideas nonetheless, even though the Dutch rebels had no political theories to build on before the Revolt. However, these ideas did not result in abstract political theories like the paradigms existing in England or France; they were tied to the political practise of the time.⁶

When Martin van Gelderen set out to write about the political thought of the Dutch Revolt in 1992, he too noted that the subject had never been examined very thoroughly, even though the Dutch Revolt itself had been studied quite extensively. According to Van Gelderen, in historiography it was generally contended that Dutch political thought was an adaptation of French monarchomach ideas. It had become commonplace to argue that the Dutch themselves had no political thought that could guide political actions. Van Gelderen claims the direct opposite in his *The Political Thought of the Dutch Revolt*. He demonstrates that the political thought of The Dutch Revolt was interesting in its own right.⁷ In reconstructing the political thought of the period, pamphlets are a welcome source. The relevant pamphlets have been studied extensively by P.A.M. Geurts. In 1956 he pointed out that during the Revolt there existed a war of words in pamphlets besides the war with weapons. Geurts had taken it upon himself to analyse the several propagandistic themes he found in the pamphlets of the period between 1566 and 1584.⁸ In the later 1980s Craig E. Harline also drew from the voluminous source of Dutch pamphlets during the Revolt, covering the period between 1565 and 1648.⁹

Een discoers is a pamphlet that originates from this corpus of historical documentation. Even though Geurts mentions the treatise only in passing when he considers the general formal similarities of the pamphlets of the period,¹⁰ it has not been investigated for its politico-theoretical implications at all. This lack of interest is all the more striking, not only because *Een discoers* can be considered as part of the political theories of the Dutch Revolt, but also because in the pamphlet a comparison is made between the situation in France and the Low Countries at the time. By studying this pamphlet, not only can we learn more about the political thought during the Revolt, but we can also examine how a description of

5 M.E.H.N. Mout, 'Van arm vaderland tot eendrachtige republiek. De rol van politieke theorieën in de Nederlandse Opstand', *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 101 (1986) 345-365, 350.

6 Mout, 'Van arm vaderland', 365.

7 Martin van Gelderen, *The Political Thought of the Dutch Revolt 1555-1590* (Cambridge 1992) 2-3.

8 P.A.M. Geurts, *De Nederlandse Opstand in de pamfletten 1566-1584* (Utrecht 1983, first ed. Nijmegen 1956).

9 Craig E. Harline, *Pamphlets, Printing and Political Culture in the Early Dutch Republic* (Dordrecht 1987).

10 Geurts, *De Nederlandse Opstand*, 263.

the French situation was used to interpret the Dutch state of affairs. Moreover, in *Een discoers*, the “Spanish nation”¹¹ is depicted as a government that introduces a “Turkish slavery and tyranny”¹² in the Netherlands. Following the French *Discours*, the treatise explains what this ‘Turkish tyranny’ amounted to according to the pamphleteers. In this study the conceptualisation of this specific form of government is explored. We focus on the question how the themes that originated in the European political debate at the time are deployed in the Dutch pamphlet *Een discoers*. Language that is used in the French pamphlet is adapted to fit Dutch circumstances. In this thesis it is examined how this adaptation took place and how European political ideas were transferred to the Dutch state of affairs in order for the Dutch author to formulate arguments that were particular to the Dutch experience with Spanish rule. Moreover, at the same time the terminology of ‘Turkish tyranny’ is used to describe domestic politics in both pamphlets and seems to have appealed to the French author as well as the Dutch. This study aims to clarify why this specific terminology is used in the pamphlets and what the background of this political debate was.

An explanation for the lack of interest in *Een discoers* might be found in the fact that the pamphlet is a translation of the French *Discours*. At first sight it might seem that the pamphlet does not bear any original content in itself. However, when one investigates the pamphlet in further detail, one soon comprehends that it is a critique on Spanish government aimed at a Dutch audience in its own right. At the same time the importance of such discourses in the propaganda of the time have not been lost on historians. Recently Judith Pollmann has pointed out that among the rebel propaganda pamphlets several “alleged ‘advices’ and ‘decrees’” were mentioned “in which cardinal Granvelle, the Spanish Inquisition, or the duke of Alva had condemned all to Dutch slavery”.¹³ This particular theme can be found in *Een discoers* as well, where the author states that the situation in the Low Countries was such that there “soon follows a more than Turkish slavery”.¹⁴

In order for us to begin to understand the background of the pamphlet and interpret its contents, we must turn to historiography first. We should take a moment to consider what historians have written about the medium of pamphlets, since *Een discoers* was part of this world of popular print. Subsequently, we will give an outline of the themes that found their way into the propaganda during the Dutch Revolt. The aim of this chapter is to establish the main themes that have been examined in historiography and are relevant for the understanding of *Een discoers*. In doing so, we will be able to analyse the pamphlet regarding these themes in subsequent chapters.

11 “de Spaensche nacie”, *Een discoers*, [8r].

12 “een Turckse slavernije ende tyrannije”, *Een discoers*, [1r] (Title page), also: “Turcksche slauervye”, *Een discoers*, [8v].

13 Judith Pollmann, “Brabanters do fairly resemble Spaniards after all.” Memory, propaganda and identity in the Twelve Years’ Truce’, in Judith Pollmann and Andrew Spicer (eds.), *Public Opinion and Changing Identities in the Early Modern Netherlands* (Leiden 2007) 211-227, 218. Pollmann mentions three pamphlets in this regards, dating 1568, 1570 and 1571.

14 “daerwt volge corts meer dan een Turcksche slauernye”, *Een discoers*, [8v].

1.1 Pamphlets in the sixteenth-century Netherlands

Since this thesis draws from the rich corpus of pamphlets that were published in the tumultuous second half of the sixteenth century, it is imperative that we first examine what we understand the medium of pamphlets to be. This has been a question that has kept historians fascinated for quite some time. Harline offers a clear overview of the Dutch climate in which pamphlets were written, published, distributed and consumed. He follows the Dutch historian Ter Horst in formulating his own definition of a pamphlet, because like Harline, Ter Horst emphasises that not the form of the work, but rather the function of it should be decisive in determining if a treatise is a pamphlet or not. Therefore, following Ter Horst, Harline states that pamphlet is “a work which was intended sometimes to inform but usually to persuade the reader about current events.” According to both historians, a tract should not be judged on the amount of pages it has. It could be long but was usually short, because of the instant relevance and hurried nature of the medium of pamphlets. *Een discoers*, for instance, with its sixteen pages is a pamphlet of medium length. Of the pamphlets Harline researched for the period between 1565 and 1606, 23,1% counted nine to sixteen pages.¹⁵

By putting the emphasis on the function rather than the amount of pages of a work, Harline was prompted to define pamphlets as “writings of immediate and direct or indirect political significance and, what might be overlooked, they were printed.”¹⁶ Recently Deen, Onnekink and Reinders opted for the short and manageable definition of a pamphlet as a “topical publication”.¹⁷ Daniel R. Horst gives another but comparable definition, following the Dutch *Van Dale* dictionary. He describes a pamphlet as a printed treatise of a limited size about a current topic. Horst demonstrates that the broadsheet or fly sheet is closely related to the pamphlet, and in name refers to the speed with which the object is printed. This manner of production has the advantage that a pamphlet was always very topical, since it could be printed and disseminated in a limited amount of time.¹⁸ Because of this immediate nature of pamphlets, *Een discoers* could be published so soon after its French counterpart *Discours*. Both pamphlets were published in 1575, which means that the Dutch author had the time to purchase the French pamphlet, read and translate it, write his prologue and afterword and publish within the span of a year. This speed was common in the world of pamphleteering. Harline estimates that the time of preparation for a pamphlet could vary from a day (for a broadsheet) to a couple of months, depending on the volume and elaborateness of the work.¹⁹

Harline acknowledges that the word ‘pamphlet’ is somewhat anachronistic. In the sixteenth century the word ‘pamflet’ was not used in the Netherlands. It became part of the vernacular in England in the later sixteenth century,²⁰ and in the Netherlands it did not surface until around 1700. The collection of

15 Harline, *Pamphlets*, 32. 1-8 pages rendered 39,2%; 17-32 pages 16,2%; 33-64 pages 11,5% and 65 pages or more 10,0%.

16 Harline, *Pamphlets*, 3.

17 Femke Deen, David Onnekink and Michel Reinders, ‘Introduction’, in Femke Deen, David Onnekink and Michel Reinders (eds.), *Pamphlets and Politics in the Dutch Republic* (Leiden 2011) 3-30, 12.

18 Daniel R. Horst, *De Opstand in zwart-wit. Propagandaprenten uit de Nederlandse Opstand 1566-1584* (Zutphen 2003) 23.

19 Harline, *Pamphlets*, 93.

20 Deen, Onnekink, Reinders, ‘Introduction’, 9.

documents we now call pamphlets bore many different names: pasquils, libels, news tidings, little books, little blue books, songs, refrains, tracts, stories, and dialogues.²¹ As these descriptions make clear, pamphlets could take on many different forms. They could be published as songs, edicts, poems, petitions and tracts, for instance. The language of the tracts could differ as well. Pamphlets published in the Netherlands were mostly in Dutch, but there were also an amount of Latin, French, English, German and Italian publications.²² The fact that many languages were used indicates that the propaganda had an international character. The use of both Latin and the vernacular shows that pamphlets addressed a more learned audience as well as the average man in the street.²³ The fact that *Een discoers* was a translation from French into Dutch, might give us some clue what its targeted audience might have been. The pamphlet states to address “all Princes, Counts, Grandees, Nobility, Burgomasters, Councillors, and other good and loyal Netherlanders and vassals of your Majesty”.²⁴ Since it was common for nobility and regents to have knowledge of the French language, it is probable that another, more broad audience was targeted as well. On the other hand, the Dutch author did not only translate the French *Discours*, he also interpreted it and placed it in a Dutch context. The author of the pamphlet meant to urge the reader to be heedful for the kind of discourse that was supposedly held before the French royal council. It might be that the author indeed primarily wanted to target Dutch regents and nobility for they were the public that would encounter such advice.

The thesis that *Een discoers* was also targeted at a broader audience than only regents and nobility would link up to Harline’s findings. From his study it becomes clear that there were many other pamphlets that were addressed to Dutch nobles and rulers.²⁵ Nevertheless, according to him, most pamphlets were directed at “Jan Everyman”. This does not mean that he states that every pamphlet was meant for the common man, or for him exclusively, but he demonstrates that he was regarded as an important part of the audience. Harline suggests that domestic pamphlets were often meant for readers without political power. He states that regents usually communicated among themselves by other means, for instance by letter or by speech. According to him, regents were usually not aware of the pamphlets that were circulating.²⁶ Even though Harline admits that it proves to be very difficult to determine the actual audience of any medium,²⁷ he makes it decidedly probable that pamphlets were generally targeted at a broader audience. He shows, for instance, that pamphleteers tried to make the issues and controversies of the day directly relevant to the general Dutch political public.²⁸ In the course of this study, it will become clear that the

21 Harline, *Pamphlets*, 2.

22 Deen, Onnekink, Reinders, ‘Introduction’, 9-10.

23 Geurts, *De Nederlandse Opstand*, 259.

24 “vvaerom ick het vvel hebbe willen addresseren aen alle Princen, Graven, groote meesters, Edelmannen, Borghmeesteren, vvethouders, ende andere goede ende ghetrouve nederlanders ende vassalen sijnder Maiesteyt”, *Een discoers*, [1v].

25 From the pamphlets Harline studied in the period 1565-1606, 19,8% were addressed to Dutch nobles and rulers; 46,2% had no specification of addressees; 11% was addressed to “Miscellaneous Specific groups”; 13,2% to “the reader” and 9,9% to Foreign Nobles and rulers. Harline, *Pamphlets*, 29.

26 Harline, *Pamphlets*, 25-27.

27 Harline, *Pamphlets*, 57.

28 Harline, *Pamphlets*, 56.

author of *Een discoers* made the content of the French *Discours* directly applicable to Dutch state of affairs. More importantly and more integral to his argument, Harline demonstrates that there was a big appetite for news tidings of current events among the common people in the Low Countries, and that this accompanied a great interest for pamphlets as well.²⁹ Indeed, he claims that there was desire, “at times almost a mania” for news of political or other current events.³⁰ Even people who were illiterate or too poor to afford a pamphlet could also be kept informed about the latest news; pamphlets were often read aloud and discussions could follow such a reading session.³¹ Therefore, we have to take into consideration that *Een discoers* might not only have been meant for the part of society that filled positions in the government or those of noble stature.

Besides general interest in political topics, availability and cost are also important denominators for determining the possible audience for pamphlets. Alastair Duke has argued that pamphlets were astonishingly cheap and printers could make a lot of money by printing political dissident titles. He estimates that most prints or pamphlets would cost about one *stuiver*, while an unskilled labourer would have earned a wage of six or seven *stuivers* per day. Of course, necessities like food stuffs had to be purchased first, but Duke makes it plausible that sometimes money was spent on other goods than necessities, of which a pamphlet or print could be one.³² Even though literacy was not always a prerequisite to stay informed about the latest news presented in pamphlets because there were other means, it is a feature that helped the pamphlet business to become as vast as it did. In the Netherlands the literacy figure was quite high. Harline states that by the end of the sixteenth century many – “perhaps most” – Dutch people could read.³³ Next to availability and cost, literacy provided an potentially large audience for the blue little books in the Low Countries. Still, considering cost, literacy and interest, it is probable that on average, more people of the middle class had direct access to the world of pamphleteering than those of the lower class. According to Deen, Onnekink and Reinders conclude that pamphleteering was an urban middle class undertaking.³⁴ Harline makes a similar point. According to him, people of the “middling” rank were often reading about and discussing the latest controversy.³⁵ People of the lower classes of society would have access to the news tidings conveyed in pamphlets, but more in an indirect manner.

Compared to England and France, the Netherlands had a climate that was favourable to the development of the publishing industry. According to Deen, Onnekink and Reinders this Dutch characteristic was above all the fact that censorship was unsuccessful in the Netherlands. When a particular province

29 Harline, *Pamphlets*, 67-71.

30 Harline, *Pamphlets*, 71, 78.

31 Harline, *Pamphlets*, 64-65.

32 Alastair Duke, *Dissident Identities in the Early Modern Low Countries* (Ashgate 2009) 167-171.

33 Harline, *Pamphlets*, 57.

34 Deen, Onnekink, Reinders, ‘Introduction’, 11.

35 Harline, *Pamphlets*, 71.

would ban a certain treatise, another province might license it nonetheless. Consequently, the Netherlands became a mass-producer of illegal pamphlets and books. The country had a central position and as such could function as an information crossroads and storehouse. The existing paper-and-letter production was exceptional in the Low Countries. This made it not only easier to print in the Netherlands because of the relative press freedom; it also provided its consumers with a better quality standard as well.³⁶

Duke determines that until the mid-1560s political pamphlets were almost absent in the Netherlands, while printing had become a constituent of everyday life in the Low Countries at the same time. According to him, there existed no desire to vent political grievances in print before the mid-sixties of the sixteenth century. The explanation for this can be found in the relative stability of the reign of Charles V. After 1559, when a new bishopric organisation was established in the Netherlands, opposition to Philip II's policy rose and political pamphlets on the subject started to appear, Duke writes.³⁷ P.A.M. Geurts reports that William of Orange commenced producing pamphlets in order to legitimise his military campaign in 1568. He chose to write pamphlets for a more sophisticated audience and more to-the-point pamphlets for a 'simpler' audience.³⁸ Geurts identifies several kinds of pamphlets that were disseminated during the Dutch Revolt. Official pamphlets carry the form of "statements", in which the author only focusses on his audience in the preface of the pamphlet. The compiler leaves it to the reader to interpret the contents of these official documents. In another category of pamphlets the compiler does not limit himself to focus on his audience only in a preface. These pamphlets bear many commentaries and annotations accompanying the official documents. It is in these commentaries that one may find propagandistic values. Other pamphlets have the form of commentaries on official documents. Lastly, institutions published statements about their point of view in the case of notable events.³⁹

In this regard, it is relevant to keep in mind that official publications should be treated as pamphlets as well, since they contributed to the political debate of the time. Political information was often spread by office holders to a public of citizens. The importance of this kind of political communication grew in the sixteenth century. Office holders could be held accountable for their actions, so governors informed their public on what they were doing.⁴⁰ In this respect, Andrew Pettegree shows that rulers both had to invoke a sense of awe and simultaneously persuade their citizens, as ruling was always about co-operation. Pettegree sets out to examine the role of print in an active, politically aware and co-operative public. Governments were actively concerned with shaping the way in which current events were discussed and interpreted among their citizens. This was especially relevant for the cities that liked to stress their independence, as was the case in the Netherlands.⁴¹ Moreover, descriptive "reports" were not objective

36 Deen, Onnekink, Reinders, 'Introduction', 15-16.

37 Duke, *Dissident Identities*, 163-164.

38 Geurts, *De Nederlandse Opstand*, 28.

39 Geurts, *De Nederlandse Opstand*, 260.

40 Deen, Onnekink, Reinders, 'Introduction', 12-13.

41 Andrew Pettegree, 'A Provincial News Community in Sixteenth-Century Europe', in Judith Pollmann and Andrew Spicer (eds.), *Public Opinion and Changing Identities in the Early Modern Netherlands* (Leiden 2007) 33-48, 34-35.

accounts of events or a decision, they also pointed readers in a specific direction because of interpretative comments accompanying such pamphlets. For instance, a victory of a battle could serve as governmental propaganda.⁴²

Geurts recounts several similarities in composition and form in Dutch pamphlets during the Revolt. Opening words were often similar and themes of love for the fatherland and the duty of charity were regularly present. In *Een discoers* the author also refers to the love he owes to his fatherland.⁴³ Geurts also demonstrates that there exist many pamphlets written out of the love of history. In that case, authors wanted to describe the events of the Revolt in order to hand it down to posterity.⁴⁴ Moreover, a pamphlet often begins with a display of general modesties or with a proverb or a fable. Pagan themes from antiquity were also much used, as were passages from Scripture, often in combination.⁴⁵ Geurts also determines that in some pamphlets connections are drawn between the history of the Revolt and to the history of Germany and France.⁴⁶ *Een discoers* does not bear any classical or biblical references, nor does the author refer to the love he feels for history, nor does he open his pamphlets with modesties or fables. He does, however, connect the events he encountered in the French pamphlet *Discours* to the situation in the Netherlands. If his readers are not mindful of the warning implied by the speech held before the French king Charles IX and his council, the situation in the Netherlands might just as well deteriorate in the same direction. Internal evidence suggests the author of *Een discoers* is aware of the situation in France.⁴⁷

Another important question we have to ask when examining sixteenth-century pamphlets is that of authorship. We do not know who the author of *Een discoers* might have been or how exactly the pamphlet came into being. We cannot take for granted that the author was the driving force behind the pamphlet. In the pamphlet business of the sixteenth-century Netherlands, often a bookseller functioned as the producer of a pamphlet. He would have an idea and he would search for a writer and a printer for the execution of that idea. In other cases, the printer could function as a producer and of course, an author himself could be the instigator behind the publication of a pamphlet. Thus, with all these possibilities, we find ourselves on thin ice if we want to reconstruct the genesis of *Een discoers*. On the other hand, as will become clear below, the pamphlet expresses distress about the situation the author found himself in. It is likely that the author found it expedient to write the pamphlet in order to warn his readers and, therefore, that the initiative to produce the pamphlet came from the author himself. We do not have any hard proof for this assumption, however. A printer or bookseller might just as well have had

42 Harline, *Pamphlets*, 44.

43 “om my eenichsins te quijten, van de liefde die ick mijne vaderlant schuldig ben”, *Een discoers*, [1v].

44 Geurts, *De Nederlandse Opstand*, 263-265.

45 Geurts, *De Nederlandse Opstand*, 266-272.

46 Geurts, *De Nederlandse Opstand*, 291, 294.

47 The discourse conveyed in the French and Dutch pamphlet is said to have been presented to Charles IX and his council a few months before the massacres of St. Bartholomew's Day. Attendant to this council was the brother of the king, the Duke of Anjou. Both French pamphlets refer to him superficially as “monsieur le Duc” (*Discours*, VII; *La France-Turquie*, 6), while the Dutch author identifies him as “[the king's] brother Duke of Anjou” (“synen broer den Hertoghe van Aniou”), *Een discoers*, [Aij r].

the same idea and gave the commission for the translation of the French *Discours* to a contracted author.

The background of the publication could be triplicate. The reasons for producing a pamphlet could either be commercial, ideological or both. The one reason did not always exclude the other: a person could write for money while being committed ideologically.⁴⁸ Deen, Onnekink and Reinders indicate that it is hard to make any generalisations about the authors of pamphlets. They conclude that pamphleteering was a business that “encompassed all social, political, religious and economic positions within Dutch society”, even though some groups would be more represented than others. Most often pamphlets were published anonymously, as in the case of *Een discoers*. There are several reasons for doing so. If the author wanted to evade censorship and avoid persecution, he would write his pamphlet anonymously. Moreover, someone could produce a publication anonymously should he like to be able to argue a different opinion at a later time. This follows from the fact that paid authors could render their services for both sides in an ideological struggle.⁴⁹ It is very probable that the author of *Een discoers* deemed the content of the pamphlet too controversial to attach his name to it freely. The pamphlet bears direct critique on Spanish rule, and as such was dangerous to be associated with.

Another important aspect of pamphlet literature is its aim. Geurts demonstrates that there were two kinds of purposes in the pamphlets of the Dutch Revolt. The first had the aim to legitimise the Revolt and urge others to join therein. The other group of pamphlets were those in which hatred against de Spaniards en their institutions was fanned, directed at a more ‘simple’ audience.⁵⁰ *Een discoers* definitely belongs to the second category, even though we cannot ultimately decide whether the pamphleteer had primarily a ‘simple’ audience in mind when he published it. Deen, Onnekink and Reinders give a comparable description of the function of pamphlets in general, which they describe as a means to persuade and convince the audience for political ends. Pamphlets reflected on current events and meant to criticise, support or polarise people and groups in general.⁵¹ Harline also states that the main function of pamphlets was to persuade. According to him, pamphleteers had the feeling that something was amiss and had to be put right. Authors, printers and booksellers had the idea that something must be done, and putting their sentiments in print was a good way to start. Contemporaries acknowledged the advantageous attributes of print, like the increased output and a potentially large audience.⁵² When one reads *Een discoers*, one gets a similar idea. The author wanted to save his country from “more misery, destruction and utter ruination”, by urging his readers to heed the pamphlet “well and attentively”.⁵³ At the end of the pamphlet the author implores his readers directly:

48 Deen, Onnekink, Reinders, ‘Introduction’, 19-20.

49 Deen, Onnekink, Reinders, ‘Introduction’, 22.

50 Geurts, *De Nederlandse Opstand*, 35.

51 Deen, Onnekink, Reinders, ‘Introduction’, 12.

52 Harline, *Pamphlets*, 11.

53 “voor meerder catiuiicheit, destructie, ende vverlicke ruine, behouden vvorden, so hierop vvel ende rijpelic ghelettet vierde.”, *Een discoers*, [1v].

Therefore, wake up and be watchful now that there is still time, because it concerns him and his prosperity, yes, even for those who think themselves triumphant and think they are in safety and in good recommendation with the Spaniard, who will shower his nature and cruelty over the them as well as over others⁵⁴

Thus, the author aimed at warning his readers for the nature of the Spaniard, which would ultimately show, and persuade them to reject the kind of advice conveyed in the discourse that is presented in the pamphlet.

1.2 Other forms of popular communication in the sixteenth-century Netherlands

It has recently been stressed that pamphlets were not the only form of popular communication in the early modern era. Where Geurts, Harline and Van Gelderen took the exchange of pamphlets as the central medium to understand the propaganda of the Dutch Revolt, in recent years other historians have analysed other media in which the propaganda of the period took shape. In order to reconstruct the climate in which *Een discoers* was published, in this part of the chapter we consider other political expressions that existed beside the world of pamphlets.

As Andrew Sawyer demonstrates, prints and engravings bore political messages as well. He claims that politics and power were more easily portrayed in images than they could be described in words. Consequently, prints were a good medium to define the nature of certain political problems.⁵⁵ Horst states that the only difference between a pamphlet or a print is the amount of text in relation to the size of the image – which can be etched, engraved or woodcut. Both in the case of a pamphlet and a print there is multiplicity involved, so identical copies can be created.⁵⁶ Sawyer also stresses the similarities between pamphlets and prints. Next to similar techniques that are used to produce many copies, he states that when pamphlets bear illustrations and prints have significant amount of text, the boundaries between the two media fade.⁵⁷ In parallel with the pamphlets discussed above, there was not much dissident visual propaganda before the mid-1560s.⁵⁸ From the second half of the sixties of the sixteenth century the first cartoons were published in which political and religious events and persons were featured.⁵⁹

Another medium that should not be underestimated is the manuscript. Femke Deen convincingly shows that letters and pamphlets existed alongside each other in persuading certain groups

54 “Daeromme een yghelick ontslaepe ende lette op syn stuck binnen dien dat het noch tijt is, want het hem aengaet ende syne weluaert betreft, iae selfs deghene die nv ter tijdt triumpheren ende duncken in sekerheyt ende goede recommandacie by den Spaengeart te syne, die synen aert ende wreetheyt so wel ouer hen als ouer eenighe andere tooghen sal”, *Een discoers*, [8v].

55 Andrew Sawyer, ‘Medium and Message. Political Prints in the Dutch Republic 1568-1632’, in Judith Pollmann and Andrew Spicer (eds.), *Public Opinion and Changing Identities in the Early Modern Netherlands* (Leiden 2007) 163-187, 164.

56 Horst, *De Opstand in zwart-wit*, 23.

57 Sawyer, ‘Medium and Message’, 166.

58 Sawyer, ‘Medium and Message’, 165.

59 Horst, *De Opstand in zwart-wit*, 12.

in society.⁶⁰ Indeed, she argues that correspondence could be even more effective than pamphlets in certain circumstances. Deen demonstrates that pamphlets hardly played a role in Amsterdam in the period of 1572-1578 compared to letter-writing. Letters could function as a personalised and localised extension of a broader propaganda campaign.⁶¹ Local business contacts, former neighbours, families and friends could be reached through correspondence by refugees from outside the city, in order to urge them to join the revolt. Unlike more 'national' propaganda campaigns, letters could be used to address local matters. Exiles knew the sensitivities of the city and could draw on their contacts.⁶²

Correspondence was of vital importance in an urban surrounding like the city of Amsterdam. It connected business partners, various levels of government and family to each other, conveying important information and connecting like-minded individuals together. Letters were not only read by the recipient: letter-reading was not a private matter; it was shared with others by reading the letters out loud. Moreover, manuscripts were much harder to control for the authorities than printed works, since they were more easily copied and lacked a central point of distribution. Furthermore, the former had the advantage over the latter by being less expensive and less time-consuming. This is why handwritten copies were accessible to a large audience. Written letters showed striking similarities to printed propaganda in content. They both were part of the development of the political thought of the Revolt.⁶³

Henk van Nierop reminds us that the world of oral communication should also not be forgotten when we deal with popular communication.⁶⁴ Even in a literate place such as the Low Countries, oral sources remained one of the most important sources of information. Indeed, Van Nierop demonstrates that the world of scripture was important in the sixteenth century, but it was not the primary source of information. People who wanted to stay up-to-date relied almost completely on hearsay. For their supply of news, people were almost totally dependant on rumours. The world of print and the world of rumours were not neatly separated from each other. Often rumours interacted in various ways with several forms of script culture, especially in the highly literate urban Netherlands. Script was used to verify the information that was conveyed by rumours. Chroniclers and diary writers tried to check their information against other independent sources, which were mostly written.⁶⁵

The authorities were sensitive to rumours as well. Persistent rumours, whether they were true or false, could lead to public unrest, violence, and rebellion. Authorities sometimes tried to suppress rumours, to no avail. Regardless, they attempted to make sure that official announcements were clearly communicated separated from rumours.⁶⁶ Rumours were so important for authorities as they could

60 Femke Deen, 'Handwritten propaganda. Letters and pamphlets in Amsterdam during the Dutch Revolt (1572-1578)', in Femke Deen, David Onnekink and Michel Reinders (eds.), *Pamphlets and Politics in the Dutch Republic* (Leiden 2011) 207-226.

61 Deen, 'Handwritten propaganda', 211-212.

62 Deen, 'Handwritten propaganda', 222-224.

63 Deen, 'Handwritten propaganda', 212-215.

64 Henk van Nierop, "'And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars". Rumour and the Revolt of the Netherlands', in Judith Pollmann and Andrew Spicer (eds.), *Public Opinion and Changing Identities in the Early Modern Netherlands* (Leiden 2007) 69-86.

65 Van Nierop, "'And ye shall hear of wars', 70-75.

66 Van Nierop, "'And ye shall hear of wars', 76.

mobilise people into action.⁶⁷ A good example is the rumours that were spread concerning the Spanish Inquisition from 1559 onwards, triggered by the new bishopric plans Cardinal Granvelle set out to implement. The idea emerged that these ecclesiastical changes would bolster the power of the Inquisition, the institution that – or so the rumour had it – would be introduced in the Netherlands just like in Spain. In this case, rumours became historical fact, because people felt urged to act upon them. It has been demonstrated by historians that the Spaniards did not seek to introduce the Inquisition in the Low Countries; it was a myth. Nevertheless, the persistent rumours about the growing authority of the Spanish Inquisition in the Netherlands triggered the Compromise to present their grievances to Margaret of Parma in April 1566, which in itself set in motion key events of the Revolt. Van Nierop sums them up convincingly: moderation of the placards, Calvinist hedge preaching, iconoclastic riots, repression, Protestant exiles and military conflict.⁶⁸ All because rumours played such a large role in the lives of sixteenth-century Netherlanders. Van Nierop also stresses the importance rumours had in the spread of the Iconoclastic Fury; they were often the catalyst for the spread of the Fury to other towns.⁶⁹

Considering Van Nierop's findings on the importance of rumours in early modern society, it is very probable that the reports regarding the events occurring in France at the time were passed by word-of-mouth. It is tenable that alongside the publication of *Een discoers* there existed a rich world of rumours as well. For instance, in 1572 rumour got around that the Spanish would attack the city of Antwerp like the French had attacked one another in Paris during the massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day in August that year.⁷⁰ Likewise, *Een discoers* was also part of a larger corpus of media and could have been influenced by rumours such as these. Besides pamphlets, other forms of popular communication helped people make up their minds about ongoing discussions. Rumours could influence the publication of pamphlets as well: a news topic that was spread through a rumour could, for instance, get published in a pamphlet. Comparable to our own day and age, the world of communication consisted of a dynamic interaction between media.⁷¹

1.3 Propaganda in the Dutch Revolt

The word 'persuasion' has appeared quite frequently in the text above. It is a central concept in defining of what propaganda is. Horst has presented a thorough definition of propaganda. For him, propaganda has a purposeful character. It originates as a well-devised plan that is prepared in advance, and has a purpose that has been determined on the outset as well. According to Horst, propaganda has an ideological element: the propagandist tries to find support for his ideological standpoint. In this process, a subjective

67 Van Nierop, "And ye shall hear of wars", 86.

68 Van Nierop, "And ye shall hear of wars", 82-83.

69 Van Nierop, "And ye shall hear of wars", 84.

70 Judith Pollmann, 'Countering the Reformation in France and the Netherlands: Clerical Leadership and Catholic Violence 1560-1585', *Past & Present* 190 (2006) 83-120, 83.

71 Van Nierop, "And ye shall hear of wars", 80.

viewpoint is expressed as truth. In a propaganda campaign the way in which a message is conveyed is dependent on the audience. The full definition of propaganda in Horst's study is: "The total of activities performed with a fixed aim in order to manipulate opinions, viewpoints and actions of people on a certain ideological ground."⁷² The question is, however, if we can use the term 'ideology' when discussing sixteenth-century propaganda. In this period a lot of publications were reactions on the political practice of the time and were not forethought ideological products. Pamphlets proclaimed several arguments in a certain ongoing political discussion and did not necessarily fit within a clearly defined ideology.

In the Dutch Revolt there are several themes which can be listed under the umbrella of propaganda. They are too numerous to recount them all here, so we will only list those that have relevance for *Een discoers*. First of all, the argument that the Revolt was not directed against Philip II but against his 'evil advisors' was frequently invoked. Critique on Philip II's policies was aimed at his advisors instead of directly at the king himself.⁷³ Philip's councillors were allegedly not acting for the benefit of the common good, but they were motivated by their own ambitions. They acted without the king's knowledge despite his good intentions.⁷⁴ By focussing the critique on the king's advisors instead of directly at the king himself, Orange and his supporters could still claim to be loyal subjects of the Spanish king.⁷⁵ Moreover, by maintaining this position, the door to negotiation was always kept ajar. It was also a way to steer clear from the suspicion of being rebellious.⁷⁶ This stance is apparent in *Een discoers*, where the author addresses his pamphlet not only to "all Princes, Counts, Grandees, Nobility, Burgomasters, Councillors", but also to "other good and loyal Netherlanders and vassals of your Majesty".⁷⁷ This seems to indicate that the author is loyal to the Spanish king, even though he expresses critique on the administration of the country. Considering that *Een discoers* relays a speech that would have contributed to the deterioration of the country into a "Turkish tyranny" first in France and then in the Netherlands, its argument revolves around the influence of advisors to the royal council. Moreover, the breakdown of the Low Countries into a "Turkish slavery" can be circumvented as long as "God, the mercy of the King, the Princes, Lords, cities and States General of the country without delay provide therein."⁷⁸

Secondly, the so-called Black Legend and the myth of the Spanish Inquisition were also frequently used propaganda tools. This theme has first been construed in historiography in the work of Julián Juderías

72 Horst, *De Opstand in zwart-wit*, 15-17.

73 Judith Pollmann, 'Eine natürliche Feindschaft: Ursprung und Funktion der schwarzen Legende über Spanien in den Niederlanden, 1566-1581', in Franz Bosbach (ed.), *Feindbilder. Die Darstellung des Gegners in der politischen Publizistik des Mittelalters und der Neuzeit* (Köln 1992) 73-93, 88; Geurts, *De Nederlandse Opstand*, 131.

74 Geurts, *De Nederlandse Opstand*, 132.

75 Jonathan Israel, *The Dutch Republic. Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall, 1477-1806* (Oxford 1995) 183.

76 Geurts, *De Nederlandse Opstand*, 136.

77 "vvaerom ick het vvel hebbe willen addresseren aen alle Princen, Graven, groote meesters, Edelmannen, Borghmeesteren, vvhouders, ende andere goede ende ghetrouwe nederlanders ende vassalen sijnder Maiesteyt", *Een discoers*, [iv].

78 My italics. "ten sy datter Godt, des Conincks goederentierenheyt, de Princen, Heeren, steden ende generaele staeten vanden lande sonder delay in voorsien.", *Een discoers*, [8v].

when he published his *La Leyenda Negra* in 1914.⁷⁹ In this work Juderías tries to promote Spain's good name by showing that his fatherland had been unjustly portrayed in history as a barbaric, intolerant and culturally underdeveloped country.⁸⁰ His argument is concentrated mainly on the contribution made by protestant pamphlets, especially Dutch, regarding the legend that Spain was a brutal and cruel country by nature.⁸¹ Even though it is acknowledged that Juderías' story is one-sided⁸² and very apologetic in character, the actual existence of the Black Legend is not controversial: it is generally assumed that anti-Spanish propaganda existed in the sixteenth century and onwards, and that protestant pamphlets formed a major contribution.⁸³ With its reference of Spanish government as a "Turkish tyranny", *Een discoers* can be placed into this tradition as well.

As the full title of *Een discoers* demonstrates, the image of the Ottoman Turk was also used as a method of argumentation in propaganda. Alongside the pope and his followers, the devil and the Spanish Inquisition, the Turks were depicted as biggest enemies of Christendom.⁸⁴ The Spaniards were often presented as even "crueler than the Turks" in comparisons, however.⁸⁵ Mout has pointed out that in sixteenth-century Europe Turks were frequently portrayed as barbaric, cruel and inhuman.⁸⁶ Nevertheless, she has also argued that a change in this image took place from an absolute negative representation in the fifteenth century to a more positive and more realistic image in the sixteenth century.⁸⁷ According to Mout, this shift may have been brought about by the increasingly negative portrayal of the 'Spanish enemy'. The focus on the Turks as a most prominent enemy of Christendom shifted towards the more pressing conflict with the Spaniards.⁸⁸ Moreover, Joan-Pau Rubiés has asserted that the Turks were used as a propaganda mechanism in order to illustrate the domestic political situation, for instance in the case when a ruler was seen as tyrannical.⁸⁹

Rubiés also draws attention to the fact that from the 1580s onwards, European authors started to write about despotism in terms of European freedom as opposed to Oriental despotism. He states that rulers were depicted as despots when there was no aristocracy that could control and legally limit the power of a monarch, as was the case in the Ottoman Empire.⁹⁰ In this line of thinking a strong estate of nobles was required in order stop the monarchy deteriorating in tyranny. Mout has demonstrated that since the 1576 Pacification of Ghent, the Revolt was pursued more explicitly by the States General. The rebels began to

79 Julián Juderías, *La Leyenda Negra* (Salamanca 1997, first ed. 1914).

80 G.J. Geers, *De zwarte legende van Spanje* (Groningen 1947) 8.

81 Pollmann, 'Eine natürliche Feindschaft', 73.

82 Geers., *De zwarte legende van Spanje*, 8.

83 Pollmann, 'Eine natürliche Feindschaft', 73.

84 Horst, *De Opstand in zwart-wit*, 68-70.

85 Horst, *De Opstand in zwart-wit*, 86, 177.

86 M.E.H.N. Mout, 'Turken in het nieuws. Beeldvorming en publieke opinie in de zestiende-eeuwse Nederlanden', *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 97 (1984) 362-381, 363.

87 Mout, 'Turken in het nieuws', 368.

88 Mout, 'Turken in het nieuws', 380.

89 Joan-Pau Rubiés, 'Oriental despotism and European Orientalism: Botero to Montesquieu', *Journal of Early Modern History* 9:1-2 (Leiden 2005) 109-180, 110.

90 Rubiés, 'Oriental despotism', 119, 130.

emphasise the power of the estates as opposed to the influence of the central government. It was made clear that the ruler needed the Estates in order to make political, financial and religious decisions.⁹¹

In the above only pro-Revolt propaganda has been highlighted. In historiography the idea seemed to exist that there was no pro-Habsburg propaganda at all, and if it was acknowledged that it existed, it was presented as very inefficient.⁹² Recently, however, loyalist propaganda has received some attention in historiography, for instance regarding the impact of the Iconoclastic fury on Spanish Catholic sentiment.⁹³ Nevertheless, it is striking that historians have dealt with pro-Revolt propaganda to a much greater extent than pro-Habsburg propaganda. Was there no anti-Revolt or pro-Habsburg camp in the propaganda of the Dutch Revolt? An explanation of the absence of a large corpus of Spanish loyalist sentiments could be found in the aversion that was caused by Alva and the presence of his troops of soldiers, as Peter Arnade shows.⁹⁴ Indeed, Pollmann very recently demonstrated that without Catholic support the Revolt would probably have been less successful than it eventually was. We should not forget, however, that there were Netherlanders, especially Catholics, who disapproved of the proceedings of the Revolt and had an inclination towards supporting the central government because of it.⁹⁵

1.4 Outline for research

This introductory chapter makes clear that *Een Discoers* was part of a rich tradition of the different media that existed in the sixteenth-century Low Countries. It gave us some clues as to what the practical background of the pamphlet was. Moreover, we have observed that the pamphlet clearly connects to several themes which arise when we look at the propaganda of the time. The pamphlet raises several questions which will be dealt with in subsequent chapters.

The second chapter forms the heart of the thesis. It investigates the bibliographical background of the Dutch and French pamphlets. It focusses on the question how the two French versions are related to one another and which of the two probably formed the basis for the Dutch translation. Moreover, we have to look at the translation from French into Dutch very carefully. Did the Dutch translator change the contents of the pamphlet or did he make an exact copy of the French one? How much was lost or added in translation and what does that mean for the intentions of the Dutch author? By answering these questions we will be able to reconstruct the way in which the French situation was used by the Dutch author interpret his own experiences in the Low Countries.

The third chapter examines the situation of both France and the Netherlands at the time of the publication of the pamphlets. This chapter provides us with a framework in which we can place the pam-

91 Mout, 'Van arm vaderland', 356.

92 Geurts, *De Nederlandse Opstand*, 30.

93 Arnade, Peter, *Beggars, Iconoclasts, & Civic Patriots. The Political Culture of the Dutch Revolt* (Ithaca and London 2008) 166.

94 Arnade, *Beggars*, 176-177.

95 Judith Pollmann, *Catholic Identity and the Revolt of the Netherlands, 1520-1635* (Oxford 2011) 2 ; Geurts, *De Nederlandse Opstand*, 233-235.

phlets. The historical contexts of both countries help us understand the circumstances in which the pamphlets were created. Moreover, in *Een discoers* a comparison is made between the Dutch and French political situation at the time, and contemporaries made this comparison more often. Nevertheless, by investigating the history of both countries, we learn that the contexts of France and the Netherlands differed from each other greatly. This did not stop the author of *Een discoers* to adopt the French *Discours* in order for it to fit Dutch circumstances, however. Chapter three therefore demonstrates how political ideas transcends geographical and contextual borders.

Chapter four considers the use of the image of the Ottoman Turk on the one hand and the myth of the ‘cruel Spaniard’ on the other. In propaganda both the Ottoman Turk and the Spaniards were depicted as enemies of the ‘true’ Christian religion. In this chapter the history of the so-called Black Legend is recounted and the image of the Ottoman Turk in European history is examined as well. We will see that the notion of tyranny proves to be central in the representation of both enemy stereotypes. Both the Turks and the Spaniards were characterised as cruel tyrants oppressing their subjects into submission. This chapter attempts to explain how and why these particular images of both enemies existed and the way in which *Een discoers* refers to these images. The chapter investigates how the image of the ‘Turk’ was used in order to describe Spanish rule.

In the fifth chapter the concept of tyranny is investigated in the context of the political thought of the period. Because the term “Turkish Tyranny” is so prominently present in *Een discoers*, the conceptualisation of ‘tyranny’ is recounted from the time of Aristotle to that of Jean Bodin. The aim is to understand what the terminology of ‘tyranny’ might have signified for the French and Dutch authors. We will see that the concept developed during time and differed from theorist to theorist. It was not a concept that was always applied consistently. The use of the concept of ‘tyranny’ in the case of the Ottoman Empire will be considered on the basis on what we find in *Een discoers* and its French counterparts. Subsequently, we observe that in *Een discoers* the importance of the nobility and the Estates to set limits to the power of the king is emphasised. Therefore, will explore the theories which historians have come to term ‘constitutionalism’. We will see that the Dutch and French pamphlets were part of a world in which the limits of monarchy were thoroughly discussed.

In the end this thesis aims to provide us with an idea on how a political argument could be constructed in a pamphlet during the Dutch Revolt. It revolves around the question how ideas that originated in the European political debate at the time were deployed in *Een discoers*, and how the Dutch author adapted the themes which were presented in the French pamphlet in order to interpret his experiences with Spanish rule. We will see that the specific contexts of France and the Low Countries determined the way in which the French and Dutch authors wrote about their respective governments. Moreover, it will become clear that despite the differences of these historical contexts, there existed a pan-European debate about the nature of political authority. How can we place *Een discoers* and its French counterparts within this political debate? We will also consider the question regarding the place of the image of the Ottoman Empire and subsequent ideas on ‘Turkish tyranny’ in this political debate, and why was this specific

concept used? *Een discoers* presents us with a case study which can be used to reconstruct political argumentation of the time and to examine how political ideas could be adapted and adjusted to fit the Dutch state of affairs. This study does not claim to research *the* political thought of the Dutch Revolt like other historians have set out to do. It is an example of how an early modern Dutch pamphleteer was able to interpret his situation by encroaching on several themes that were important at the time. It shows that ideas have their own dynamic in history and that they function differently in distinct contexts, while simultaneously belonging to one and the same political discussion. This study shows how in early modern Dutch political thought arguments were reshaped in order to fit prevailing circumstances.

LA
FRANCE-TURQUIE,

C'est à dire,
CONSEILS ET MOYENS
tenus par les ennemis de la Cour-
ronne de France,

POUR REDVIRE LE
ROYAUME EN
tel estat que la Tyrânie
Turquesque.

A ORLEANS,

De l'Imprimerie de Thibaut des Murs.

M. D. LXXVI.

II.

A triangular relationship of pamphlets

Introduction

In our quest for the interpretation of the Dutch pamphlet *Een discoers*¹ (1575) we first have to reconstruct the history of printing for the pamphlets involved. We have to piece together the way in which the pamphlets relate to each other, in order to determine how the Dutch author interpreted his French source. *Een discoers* is a translation of a French original. There are two candidate pamphlets on which the Dutch translation might be based. First there is the pamphlet *Discours traduit d'italien en francois, Contenant aulcuns moyens pour reduire la France à vne entiere obeissance à son Roy*, said to be printed in Augsburg in 1575. Secondly, there is a pamphlet that is almost identical in content to that of the *Discours*, namely the *Conseil Du Cheualier Poncet*, printed in the collection of three pamphlets, together titled *La France-Turquie, C'est à dire, conseils et moyens tenus par les ennemis de la Couronne de France, pour reduire le royaume en tel estat que la Tyran[n]ie Turquesque*, supposedly printed in Orléans in 1576. It would seem logical to assume that *Een discoers* is based on the first pamphlet, considering that both were printed in 1575. However, in order to be able to make that assumption we must look very closely at the printing history of the three pamphlets separately and subsequently attempt to discover their mutual relationship. We conclude this chapter with interpreting the Dutch translation *Een discoers* in order to investigate how it corresponds to its French 'parent'. By doing so, we will be able to establish what was lost and added in translation, and how the French pamphlet was adopted to Dutch circumstances.

1 *Een discoers ofte Vertoogh ghedaen voor den Coninck van Vrankerijke ende ettelycke van zijnen raet, vvaerin verclaert vvort met wat middelen men soude connen Vranckerije in een Turksche slavernije bringhen. Verclarende insghelycks hoe de Spaense Nacie den saluen boosen raet ende middelen ghebruyckt om onse Nederlanden in een Turckse slavernije ende tyrannije te bringhen.* Knuttel 232 (1575). My own translation reads: A discourse or exposition held before the French King and some of his council, in which is declared with which means France could be turned into a Turkish slavery, declaring likewise how the Spanish Nation uses the same evil council to bring our Netherlands in a Turkish slavery and tyranny.

SHORT TITLE	YEAR OF PUBLICATION	PLACE OF PUBLICATION
<i>discours</i>	1575	Augsburg
<i>Een Discoers</i>	1575	-
<i>La France-Turquie</i> , consisting of:	1576	Orléans, Thibaut des Murs
<i>Conseil Du Cheualier Poncet</i>	1576	Orléans, Thibaut des Murs
<i>L'Antipharmaque</i>	1575	Paris, Federic Morel, Imprimeur du Roy
<i>Lunettes de Christal de Roche</i>	1576	Orléans, Thibaut des Murs

2.1 *La France-Turquie*

La France-Turquie is a triptych containing the *Conseil Du Cheualier Poncet*, *L'Antipharmaque* and the *Lunettes de Christal de Roche*.² The three works are printed together in one publication titled *La France-Turquie*. The page numbering continues all along the work, and *L'Antipharmaque* continues on the same section on which *Conseil Du Cheualier Poncet* is printed. On the verso side of the title page of *La France-Turquie* all three works are announced to be part of the book. The fonts used for the printing of the three works are identical as well. We can, therefore, conclude that the three pamphlets are printed simultaneously. Although *L'Antipharmaque* is part of *La France Turquie*, it bears a different printer on its individual title page, namely Paris, Federic Morel, Imprimeur du Roy. Whereas *La France-Turquie* itself and *Lunettes de Christal de Roche* carry the same printer name. For both latter works Orléans, Thibaut des Murs is provided as the place of publishing. The given dates of printing differ as well. *La France-Turquie* and *Lunettes de Christal de Roche* are said to be printed in 1576, while *L'Antipharmaque* appears to be printed in 1575. At the end of *Lunettes de Christal de Roche* it is stated that the writing of this work was finished in September 1575.³ This means that there are two different printers and publication dates given, while the works were obviously printed by one impresser on one occasion: either 1575 or 1576. Consequently, we must conclude that one of the given printers is fictional, or that both printers are fictional. The printer Thibaut des Murs is classified as fictitious in the catalog of the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF). This seems to be accurate information, if we consider that the name of the printer was used only in the case of *La France-Turquie*. Instead, the BnF suggest Geneva or Lyon as the places of publishing.

2 On the verso side of the title page the contents of *La France-Turquie* are given as follows: "Sommaire du contenu en ce liure. Conseil Du Cheualier Poncet, donné en presence de la Roynne mere & du Conte de Retz, pour reduire la France en mesme estat que la Turquie. L'Antipharmaque du Cheualier Poncet. Lunettes de Christal de Roche, par lesquelles on void clairement le chemin tenu pour subiuguer la France à mesme obeissance que la Turquie: adresses à tous Princes, Seigneurs, Gentil hommes & autres d'vne & d'autre Religion, bons & legitimes François. Pour seruir aussi de contre-poison à L'Antipharmaque du Cheualier Poncet.", *La France-Turquie*, C'est à dire, conseils et moyens tenus par les ennemis de la Couronne de France, pour reduire le royaume en tel estat que la Tyran[n]ie Turquesque (Orleans, Thibaut des Murs 1576) [A1]v.

3 *La France-Turquie*, 71.

This information comes from a nineteenth-century bibliography of imaginary printers, in which is demonstrated that Thibaut der Murs is an imaginary printer and that *La France-Turquie* was probably published in Geneva. The author does not explain why he pinpoints Geneva as a place of publishing, however.⁴

As is stated above, on the individual title page of *L'Antipharmaque* in *La France-Turquie* it is said to have been printed in 1575 by Fédéric Morel in Paris, while the other two treatises appear to have been published in Orléans in 1576. Fédéric Morel was indeed royal printer in Paris from 1571 to 1583,⁵ and as such published the official documents privileged by the French king, like edicts for instance. We have established that, despite the differences in place of publishing, *L'Antipharmaque* was printed in *La France-Turquie* together with the other two treatises *Conseil Du Cheualier Poncet* and the *Lunettes de Christal de Roche*. Mona Garloff has argued that all three works were printed independently, but it is not clear what the basis of this assumption is.⁶ In any case, *L'Antipharmaque* was indeed published individually at the printing office of Fédéric Morel in 1575. The biographer of Fédéric Morel, Joseph Dumoulin, included bibliographical references of the works Morel printed in his day, and *L'Antipharmaque* is listed with an individual title page differing from the version in *La France-Turquie*.⁷

The question remains why the name of Fédéric Morel was included as a printer in *La France-Turquie*, and why only for *L'Antipharmaque* and not for the other two works. Why is the cover of the fictional printer of Thibaut des Murs only used for *La France-Turquie* and *Lunettes de Christal de Roche*? The answer to this question might be found in the content of the treatises. *Conseil Du Cheualier Poncet* is identical to the *Discours*, save for some spelling differences. This work is about a speech supposedly held before the French king and his council in 1572, a few months before the massacres of St Bartholomew.⁸ According to the author, the speech was aimed at changing the French polity into a tyrannical system comparable to that of the Ottoman Empire. The speaker, the so-called “Chevalier Poncet”, would have advised the French king to rule his country in the way the Ottoman Sultan ruled his. To achieve this end, Poncet presents three points which the French king should follow. The first issue that should be adopted from Ottoman rule is that the princes and the nobility should never be granted any substantial power. Secondly, the nobility should be reformed after the institution of the Janissaries. In this way noblemen would be fully dependent on their king for their position and as such would be obedient to him.⁹ The third point considers religion. The French King should not allow any other religion than his own, as was the case in the Ottoman Empire, or so the speaker claims.¹⁰

4 Gustave Brunet, *Imprimeurs Imaginaires et liberaires supposés* (Paris 1866) 188.

5 Philippe Renouard, *Répertoire de imprimeurs Parisiens, libraires, fondateurs de caractères et correcteurs d'imprimerie* (Paris 1965) 315.

6 Mona Garloff, “Chassez loin de nous les Italiens qu'on hait tant” Antiitalianismus in politischen Streitschriften im Umfeld der Bartholomäusnacht (1573-76), *LMU-Publikationen/ Geschichts- und Kunstwissenschaften* 24 (2007) 61.

7 Joseph Dumoulin, *Vie et oeuvres de Fédéric Morel, imprimeur à Paris depuis 1557 jusqu'à 1583* (1901) 215.

8 *La France-Turquie*, 6. The speech is said to be given at the court at Blois when Johanna of Albret (1528-1572), queen of Navarre, visited the court. She died on 9 June 1572, so it must have been a few months before that time. Garloff dates the supposed speech in February 1572. See Garloff, “Chassez loin de nous les Italiens qu'on hait tant”, 61.

9 *La France-Turquie*, 7.

10 *La France-Turquie*, 8.

The speech was allegedly written in Italian and later translated in the French language. In the preface of the *Conseil*, the French translator claims he got the text from a Florentine nobleman, whom he visited in 1574.¹¹ The Florentine was supposedly part of the conspiracy that plotted against the French king and French nobility. On second thought, he regretted his course of action and wanted to warn the French for the conspiracy by giving the text to the French translator.¹² The author of the *Conseil*, i.e. the French translator, turns against the arguments that Chevalier Poncet put forward. He wanted to warn the French “princes, seigneurs, gentils-hommes, & autres bons & legitimes François” against this kind of advice.¹³ Indeed, the treatise has previously been aptly called “une satire d’absolutisme”.¹⁴ It is an articulate warning against the kind of conspiratorial advice presented at the French court which would promote absolute kingship.

L’Antipharmaque seems to be a response to *Conseil Du Cheualier Poncet*. It claims to be written by Chevalier Poncet himself, who denies having presented the arguments of the *Conseil* before the French king. Instead, he claims, his name was abused in order to sow confusion.¹⁵ He is unjustly associated with the conspiracy against the French king.¹⁶ He claims to have always been honest in his diligence towards God, the king and the public.¹⁷ In *L’Antipharmaque* Chevalier Poncet defends the king and states that the latter would never eradicate the princes nor the nobility. Indeed, according to him, the king exists for the conservation and glorification of the nobility. Instead of what was stated in the *Conseil*, he argued that there had never been a more liberal king. The king endeavours to unify his subjects with every means possible and shows mercy, kindness and generosity. Because of human, divine and natural law, the king is inclined to do good.¹⁸ *L’Antipharmaque* is presented as an antidote against the hatred and bloodlust of the times.¹⁹ Considering this defensive stance towards the king, it may not be surprising that *L’Antipharmaque* was originally printed by Frédéric Morel, the royal printer. It might be the case that, to highlight this background of *L’Antipharmaque*, the anonymous printer of *La France-Turquie* chose to include the original printer and place of publishing to contrast them with the other two treatises *Conseil Du Cheualier Poncet* and *Lunettes de Christal de Roche*. In this regard it would seem plausible to conclude that the printer of *La France-Turquie* reproduced the original title page of *L’Antipharmaque* printed by Frédéric Morel in 1575 in order to stress the different approach of the *L’Antipharmaque* as opposed to the *Conseil* and *Lunettes de Christal de Roche*.

Lunettes de Christal de Roche has a similar tone as the *Conseil Du Cheualier Poncet*. It stresses the cruelty with which the queen-mother Catharine de Medici followed the kind of advice propagated by Chevalier

11 *La France-Turquie*, 3.

12 *La France-Turquie*, 3-5; also see Henry Heller, *Anti-Italianism in sixteenth-century France* (Toronto 2003) 125.

13 *La France-Turquie*, 3.

14 Jean Balsamo, ‘Les lieux communs de l’italophobie en France à la fin de XVI siècle’, in Madaleine Bertaud (ed.), *Le grandes Peurs* (vol. 2) (Nancy 2004) 281.

15 *La France-Turquie*, 18-19.

16 *La France-Turquie*, 22.

17 *La France-Turquie*, 20.

18 *La France-Turquie*, 24-26.

19 *La France-Turquie*, 17.

Poncet during and after the St. Bartholomew massacres. It claims that France is ruled by foreigners – especially Italians – and women, and that the king is manipulated and effectively incapacitated by them. The aim of these evil advisers would be to eradicate the old nobility that had become too independent and hostile to the crown. Instead, a new order of nobility should be created, which would subsequently be under the power of the conspirators. This was to be accomplished by creating new posts and intermarriages with Italians. This way Italians could, bit by bit, eventually dominate the French polity. Consequently, France would change into a “Turkish tyranny” as proposed by Chevalier Poncet.²⁰ *Lunettes de Christal de Roche* expands on the theme presented in the *Conseil* and has a similar feel to it. This might explain why these works both bear the same fictitious printer.

Another conclusion can be drawn from the information the history of the publication of the three works provides. As has been stated above, *L'Antipharmaque* seems to be a response on *Conseil Du Cheualier Poncet*. Nevertheless, *L'Antipharmaque* was first printed by Frédéric Morel in 1575. If we accept that *La France-Turquie* was printed in 1576, *L'Antipharmaque* could not have been a response on the *Conseil*, considering that the former was printed a year earlier. Either the year of publication of *La France-Turquie* is false, or *L'Antipharmaque* is based on *Discours traduit d'italien en francois, Contenant aulcuns moyens pour reduire la France à vne entiere obeissance à son Roy* instead of the *Conseil Du Cheualier Poncet*. As has been noted earlier, the contents of both works are almost identical, save for some spelling differences. It is tenable that Chevalier Poncet based himself on the *Discours* instead of the *Conseil* while preparing his apology in the form of *L'Antipharmaque*. These findings seem to be affirmed in *Lunettes de Christal de Roche*, where the *Discours* is mentioned as the basis for *La France-Turquie*.²¹

2.2 *Een discoers, Discours and Conseil Du Chevalier Poncet*

The Dutch pamphlet *Een discoers* bears on its title page 1575 as the year of publishing. No name or place of publication are given. There is a woodcut illustration on the title page, but it does not seem to be a printer's mark of any kind.²² Thus, we can make no conclusions as to where and by whom it was printed. We can infer, however, that the pamphlet was probably printed in the Netherlands, considering that the pamphlet was translated from the French into the Dutch language.

If we assume that the date of 1576 is correct for the printing of *La France-Turquie*, it would be safe to conjecture that *Een discoers* is probably based on the text of the French pamphlet *Discours traduit d'italien en francois, Contenant aulcuns moyens pour reduire la France à vne entiere obeissance à son Roy* instead of the *Conseil Du Cheualier Poncet*, which itself is probably based on the text of *Discours* as well, considering that their

20 Garloff, “Chassez loin de nous les Italiens qu'on hait tant”, 62-64.

21 *La France-Turquie*, 36.

22 The woodcut is not listed in Frank Vandeweghe and Bart Op de Beeck, *Marques typographiques employées aux XVe et XVIe siècles dans les limites géographiques de la Belgique actuelle* (Nieuwkoop 1993) and P. van Huisstede and J.P.J. Brandhorst, *Dutch Printer's Devices 15th-17th century* (Nieuwkoop, 1999).

contents correspond to each other almost verbatim. The *Discours* is said to have been printed in Augsburg in 1575, but there is no publisher mentioned. It is interesting to question why a French pamphlet dealing with the domestic situation in France would be published in a German town. Even though seemingly unlikely, we can not dismiss Augsburg as the place of publishing. It might be that the author had the idea that it would be too dangerous to print the *Discours* in France itself and the printer in Augsburg might have been interested in printing the work for financial reasons. Moreover, as we observe in the case of the Dutch pamphlet *Een discoers*, the content of the *Discours* attracted the interest from authors from other countries than France itself. As such, it does not seem impossible that the pamphlet might be printed in Augsburg.

The Dutch pamphlet *Een discoers* does not include the content of *L'Antipharmaque* or *Lunettes de Christal de Roche*; it is a translation of the text of either *Discours* or the *Conseil*. The fact that *L'Antipharmaque* or *Lunettes de Christal de Roche* are not included in *Een discoers* itself does not prove that *Een discoers* was based on the *Discours* in stead of the *Conseil* of *La France-Turquie*. The Dutch author could just as well have selected only the content of the *Conseil Du Cheualier Poncet* and discarded the rest of *La France-Turquie*. Nevertheless, the fact that the other works are not included in *Een discoers* makes it it probable that the latter was based on the French *Discours* in stead of *La France-Turquie*, especially when we consider the dates given for the publications. If we assume that *La France-Turquie* was published in 1576, the *Conseil* could not have been the basis of *Een discoers*.

It is worth mentioning is the fact that both *Een discoers* and *La France-Turquie* reveal the matter of the Turks in the title page; the *Discours* does not. Based on this fact one might be tempted to conclude that the Dutch translation is based on the *Conseil Du Cheualier Poncet* instead of *Discours*, especially if we take into consideration the fact that the date of printing might be fictional. Otherwise we might immediately eliminate the possibility that *Een discoers* could be based on *La France-Turquie*, granting that the former would be printed in 1575 and the latter in 1576. As has been alluded to above, we do not know for sure in which year *La France-Turquie* was printed: either in 1575 or 1576, since both years are mentioned in the work. Consequently, we can never indisputably make inferences based on the dates of the treatises, even though we might make conclusions that are the most plausible. It is most probable that *Een discoers* was based on the French *Discours* and that both pamphlets were published in 1575, whereas the *Conseil*, which was probably also based on the *Discours*, was printed in 1576 in *La France-Turquie*. Considering the content of *Discours* the Dutch translator might as well have independently identified the significance of the comparison with the Ottoman Empire and may, on this basis, have chosen the title independently. As such it should not necessarily be tied to the text of *La France-Turquie*. Thus, considering the title of *Een discoers*, we can probably dismiss the idea that it was based on the *Conseil* of *La France-Turquie*, but it is important to note that it is one of the possibilities provided by the triangular relationship between the pamphlets, which we cannot dismiss unquestioned.

10
DISCOVRS TRA-
DVICT D'ITALIEN
EN FRANCOIS,

Contenant aulcuns moyens
pour reduire la France à
vne entiere obeissance à
son Roy.

Imprimé à Augsburg, L'an de grace
M. D. LXXV.

E E N

DISCOERS OFTE

Vertooch ghedaen voor den

Coninck van Vranckerijcke ende ettelycke

van zynen raet, waerin verclaert wort mee

wat middelen men soude gonne Vrancke-

rijcke in een Turcksche sla-

verijde bringhen.

verclarende inghelycks hoe de Spaen-

sche Nacie den seluen boosen raet ende

middelen ghebruyckt om onse Neder-

landen in een Turcksche sla-

verijde ende tyrannijde

te bringhen.



1575

Leve
vanden, of
sc-

2.3 Authorship

The French pamphlets both seem to be creating a double alibi for the author. Even though the name of “Chevalier Poncet” is connected to the treatises, the *Discours* and *La France-Turquie* were both published anonymously. The authors obviously did not want their name connected to the topic of the pamphlets. Moreover, in the preface of both the *Discours* and *Conseil Du Cheualier Poncet* it is claimed that a Florentine nobleman gave the Italian discourse to the French translator in May “of last year” 1574.²³ It seems that the French author was hiding behind the cover of the Italian nobleman. This idea is supported by the fact that in the preface of the French translator gives all kinds of peculiar details concerning the contact the two men are said to have had when they met in Florence in 1574. Details are included about the money the Florentine allegedly lent the Frenchman.²⁴ Also, the image is constructed of the Florentine retrieving the Italian discourse from a little box in the form of two leaves.²⁵ These detailed facts seem highly dubious, as if the French author wanted to hide behind them. It looks as though what is claimed in the pamphlets appears to be so controversial that the translator did not want to get associated with its content himself.

Even though the claims made in the preface of the French translator seem rather dubious, we cannot dismiss the possibility that the meeting between the Florentine and the French translator had actually taken place. There is some internal evidence that suggests it. In the preface of the French author, he states that he had seen the Florentine a couple of times in the French court and in Paris.²⁶ The Florentine himself states in his own preface that he had lived in France for eighteen years,²⁷ and that he had fled Paris because of the St. Bartholomew massacres.²⁸ Of course, this could have been part of the cover of the French author, but it could also be the truth. Moreover, the Dutch author of *Een discoers* also seems to assume that the discourse was “first described by a Nobleman of Florence in Italian, and thereafter, according to his wishes, translated in French”.²⁹ The Dutch author implores his audience to be thankful for the “will and diligence of the Author, as well as both translators”.³⁰ Thus, the Dutch translator seemed to assume that the Florentine existed. This makes a meeting between the Florentine and the French translator at least a possibility, but we can never be sure. It could also have served as a cover for the French author, given the sensitive content of the pamphlet.

Garloff claims that the works in *La France-Turquie* have been written by the same anonymous author.³¹ Even though all three treatises are connected to the same Chevalier Poncet, it is questionable that all the treatises were actually written by him. Once again, the contents of the pamphlets may help

23 *Discours traduit d'italien en françois, Contenant aulcuns moyens pour reduire la France à vne entiere obeissance à son Roy* (Augsburg 1575) III; *La France-Turquie*, 3.

24 *Discours*, IIII; *La France-Turquie*, 3.

25 *Discours*, V; *La France-Turquie*, 4.

26 *Discours*, III; *La France-Turquie*, 3.

27 *Discours*, VIII; *La France-Turquie*, 6; *Een discoers*, Aij v.

28 *Discours*, VII; *La France-Turquie*, 6; *Een discoers*, Aij r.

29 “eerst beschreuen door eenen Edelman van Florencen in Italiensche, ende daerna tot de begheerte des selues ouerghestelt in het Fransoysche”, *Een discoers*, [1v].

30 “sullen den goeden vville ende yuer, also vvel des Autheurs, als van beyde de ouersetters, in dancke nemen”, *Een discoers*, [1v].

31 Garloff, “Chassez loin de nous les Italiens qu'on hait tant”, 61.

us solve this matter. The *Conseil Du Cheualier Poncet* is recorded by the unknown French translator of the alleged Italian discourse and, together with the preface of the Florentine nobleman, warns for counsel like that issued by Chevalier Poncet. *L'Antipharmaque* might indeed be written by the mysterious Chevalier Poncet, if we take his defence of the French Crown seriously. The work differs in tone from the *Conseil* in that it offers an apology of the issues stated in the *Conseil*. Contrastingly, the *Lunettes de Christal de Roche* turns against the advice such as allegedly voiced by Chevalier Poncet and could have been written by the same author as the *Conseil*, or an author with comparable aims.

It is unknown who the French translator of the *Discours* and the *Conseil* was, but it is likely that he was a Protestant.³² *La France-Turquie* is considered to be part of the Protestant propaganda following the St. Bartholomew massacres.³³ There are historians that have been able to place *La France-Turquie* in more specific context, however. They understand the triptych to belong to the literature of the so-called 'Malcontents'.³⁴ This term dates back to the fifth civil war in France (February 1574-May 1576), and reflects a unique moment in the French wars of Religion. This period differed from the earlier civil wars, because French Protestants and Catholics began to work together in the struggle against the royal armies. Their religious differences were not forgotten, but became a second priority. Protestants and Catholics collaborated in order to defeat the regime that was regarded as tyrannical. This association of the government with tyranny was enough to provoke an ultimate rejection of the regime, and mask the differences that existed between Catholics and Protestants. Arlette Jouanna demonstrates that there are several manifests and pamphlets that express the theories of the Malcontents, of which *La France-Turquie* is one.³⁵ On the basis of this knowledge, we cannot with any certainty determine whether the French translator was a Catholic or Protestant, because both denominations were represented in the ranks of the Malcontents.

Now that we have been able to reconstruct the background of *La France-Turquie* somewhat, we turn to the question who "Chevalier Poncet" might be, with whom the pamphlets are associated. Scholars have not yet decided on the identity of this mysterious Chevalier Poncet. Some have identified him as Maurice Poncet, a Benedictine priest and theologian in Paris, who is called "one of the most famous preachers of the 16th century" by Pierre Bayle.³⁶ Maurice Poncet published several of his own sermons³⁷ and his most famous

32 Mark Greengrass, 'A day in the Life of the Third Estate: Blois, 26th December 1576', in Adrianna E. Bakos (ed.), *Politics, Ideology ad Law in Early Modern Europe. Essays in honor of J.H.M. Salmon* (Rochester 1994) 73-90, 89.

33 Balsamo, 'Les lieux communs de L'italophobie en France', 281; Nicolas le Roux, *La faveur du Roi* (Seyssel 2001) 627-628.

34 Paul-Alexis Mellet, *Les traités monarchomachs. Confusion des temps, résistance armée et monarchie parfaite (1560-1600)* (Geneve 2007) 84.

35 Arlette Jouanna, 'Un programme politique nobilaire: les Mécontents et l'Etat (1574-1576)' in Philippe Contamine (ed.), *l'état et les aristocraties XXIIe-XVII siècle France, Agleterre, Ecosse* (Paris 1989) 247-277, 247-249.

36 Pierre Bayle, *The dictionary historical and critical of Mr. Peter Bayle, Volume 4* (J.J. and P. Knapton 1737) 722.

37 *Deux traitez en forme de démonstration, desquels l'un contient les fondemens de la vérité de la sainte Eucharistie, et l'autre enseigne que la sainte messe est l'institution de Nostre Seigneur Jésus-Christ et de la pratique des apôtres, par Fr. Maurice Poncet* (Paris, M. Sonnius, 1567); *Oraison funèbre prononcée le dernier jour d'aoust, mil cinq cens soixante quatre en l'église de Breçy le Buysson, aux funérailles de... Messire Eustache de Conflans, vicomte d'Auchy... par F. M. Poncet...* (Paris, M. Sonnius, 1574); *Méditations familières sur l'histoire de l'Incarnation du fils de Dieu, descrite par S. Luc en l'évangile, "Missus est Angelus Gabriel a Deo, et caet.", avec ample explication de ce texte, par F. Maurice Poncet...* (Rheims, de J. de Foigny, 1574).

treatise may have been the one in which he argues against the translation of the Bible in the vernacular.³⁸ He also wrote a treatise in which he proposed a reform for the nobility in France.³⁹ In this regard it would seem probable to identify Maurice Poncet as Chevalier Poncet, considering the fact that nobility plays an important role in the pamphlet and the advice is obviously recited by a skilful orator.⁴⁰ At the other hand, there are also many clues that contradict this view. In the pamphlet Poncet is indicated as a nobleman,⁴¹ which is confirmed if we look at the title he has been given: “chevalier”, in stead of “docteur”, for instance.⁴² Moreover, Pierre Bayle lists many of Poncet’s works, but does not mention *La France-Turquie*, nor does he mention the fact that he visited the Ottoman Empire, which Chevalier Poncet allegedly had done according to the pamphlet.⁴³ Who would have been the advisor who was responsible for the content of the pamphlet, then? Considering that Poncet is signified as “chevalier”, *La France-Turquie* is not listed among Poncet’s works by Bayle, and he is not said to have travelled to the Ottoman Empire, I am of the opinion that the position of Mark Greengrass is most tenable. He identifies Chevalier Poncet as a confidant of the queen mother, a minor nobleman who had spent some time in Florence and the Ottoman Empire.⁴⁴

As we have observed in the previous chapter, the name and person of the Dutch translator of the *Discours* remains unknown to us as well. Similar to the case of the French translator we know nothing about the identity of the author. Considering that the French pamphlet might have had a Protestant background may lead to the conclusion that the Dutch author might have had a similar background as well, but we cannot determine this with any certainty. It could also be argued that the Dutch author, like the French Malcontents, would have wanted to address a broader audience than only appeal to Protestant ranks. As will be demonstrated in chapter three of this thesis, the French and Dutch authors adopted a moderate stance in order to attract a broad audience. The fact that the author remained anonymous may be explained by the contents of *Een Discoers*: It contains a direct critique on the influence of the Spanish “oppression”. Like in the case of the French pamphlets, the author would be wise not to tie his name to the controversial treatise.

38 *Discours de l’avis donné à... Pierre de Gondy, évêque de Paris sur la proposition qu’il fit aux théologiens, touchant la traduction de la sainte Bible en langage vulgaire, par M. Poncet...* (Paris, P. Cavellat, 1578). Pierre Bayle made a lot of the fact that Poncet thought the Bible to difficult for laymen: Pierre Bayle, *A general dictionary: historical and critical: in which a new and accurate translation of that of the celebrated Mr. Bayle, with the corrections and observations printed in the late edition at Paris, is included; and interspersed with several thousand lives never before published. The ..., Volume 8* (Printed by J. Bettenham 1739) 469.

39 *Remonstrance à la noblesse de France, de l’utilité et repos que le roy apporte à son peuple: & dell’instruction qu’il doit auroir pour le bien gouverner* (Paris, M. Sonnius, 1572).

40 Jean Balsamo is a scholar that associates Maurice Poncet with the pamphlet. See Jean Balsamo, ‘Les lieux communs de L’italophobie en France’, 281; Also see Jouanna, ‘Un programme politique nobilaire’, 265.

41 *Een discoers*, [2r].

42 I thank Mark Greengrass of FRIAS School of History, Albert-Ludwigs Universität Freiburg for pointing this out to me by e-mail.

43 Pierre Bayle, *A general dictionary*, 469.

44 Greengrass, ‘A day in the Life of the Third Estate’, 89, n. 82; The French scholar Thierry Amalou (Sorbonne Paris-1) also agrees that Chevalier Poncet is not the same person as Maurice Poncet, and stated to me in e-mail that confusion about the surname exist among historians.

2.4 *Lost in translation: Aims*

The focus of this study is on the Dutch pamphlet titled *Een discoers*. Because the treatise is a translation, it is important to ask ourselves what was lost in translation. *Een discoers* differs from its French counterparts in that the preface of the French translator is omitted in the Dutch pamphlet. It might be the case that the Dutch author had doubts on the validity of the preface of the French translator and chose not to include it. As we have seen, in the preface of the French author it is explained that the Florentine nobleman had given the Italian text to the French translator because he was worried about the political situation in France. The French author claimed that the Florentine extracted the two pieces of paper on which was written the Italian discourse from a little box before giving it to the French author. The Italian nobleman was said to have given the documents to the Frenchman in order for him to translate them and distribute the copies among his friends so that they might be warned of the contents of the discourse.⁴⁵ As suggested above, it is a possibility that the French author made the story about the Florentine nobleman up in order to prevent his person from being tied to the content of the pamphlet. The fact that the Italian gave the discourse to the French translator provided a cover for the author: He himself did not come up with the speech; it was actually held before the Royal council two years earlier, and now he got the chance to share it with his fellow Frenchmen. The description of the meeting between the French author and the Florentine could be dismissed as fictional. The author includes all kinds of details in order to make the meeting seem plausible, for instance about money that the Florentine would have lent the author. Maybe the Dutch pamphleteer had the very same idea that the meeting and thus the preface was fictional and consequently discarded it in *Een discoers*. We do know that the Dutch author did have knowledge of the preface of the French translator. He referred to the “Nobleman of Florence” and his wish that the Italian discourse would be translated in French.⁴⁶ Moreover, the French author had a very specific way to address his audience in the preface, and the Dutch translator – even though he did not include the preface – chose to adopt this ‘formula’.⁴⁷

The French *Discours* and *La France-Turquie* are often mentioned in historiography concerning the ‘Italiophobia’ that existed in sixteenth-century France.⁴⁸ We have seen that in *La France-Turquie* the Italians are incriminated especially in *Lunettes de Christal de Roche*, but also in the *Conseil* and the *Discours* the Italians are considered part of the conspiracy against the French king and nobility. This already becomes clear when one flips the title page of *La France-Turquie*. On the verso side of the title page the contents of

45 *Discours*, III-VII; *La France-Turquie*, 3-5.

46 *Een discoers*, [1v].

47 The French preface reads: “i’ai bien voullu adresser à tous mes Seigneurs les Princes du sang, aultres Princes, grands seigneurs, Gentil-hommes & autres de quelque conditio[n] & qualité qu’ils soye[n]t, d’vne & d’autre religion, bons & legitimes François”, *Discours*, VI; *La France-Turquie*, 5; The Dutch reads: “vvaerom ick het vvel hebbe willen addresseren aen alle Princen, Graven, groote meesters, Edelmannen, Borghmeesteren, vvethouders, ende andere goede ende ghetrouvve nederlanders ende vassalen sijnder Maiesteyt, so vvel van deen religie als van dandere, supplicerende allen ende een ghelicken van vvat state, conditie of qualityt hy sy”, *Een discoers*, [1v]; My translation reads: “I wanted to address all Princes, Counts, Grandees, Nobility, Burgomasters, Councillors, and other good and loyal Netherlanders and vassals of your Majesty, whether from the one religion or the other, supplicating all equal on what state or quality they may be”.

48 See for instance Jean Balsamo, ‘Les lieux communs de L’italiophobie en France’; Mona Garloff, “Chassez loin de nous les Italiens qu’ou hait tant”; Henry Heller, *Anti-Italianism in sixteenth-century France* (Toronto 2003).

the book are announced. The *Conseil du Chevalier Poncet* is said to have been presented in the presence of “de la Royne mere & du Conte de Retz”, meaning the Italian Queen Mother, Catherine de Medici and the Italian Count Albert de Gondi. Because they are explicitly mentioned, their ‘Italianess’ is being emphasised. In the preface of both the *Discours* and the *Conseil* it is stated that Italians were involved in “les plus cruels & tyranniques desseings, qui furent iamais faicts en Chrestienté”.⁴⁹ The Florentine nobleman that tried to warn the French for the conspiracy was an exception to the rule.

Because the Dutch pamphlet discards the introduction by the French author, the significance of the Italians being the cause of the decline of the country falls away. Of course, the Dutch were not preoccupied with the Italians in the way the French were, considering the history of both countries. Anti-Italianism in France had increased in the sixteenth century because of the constant immigration of Italians since the fifteenth century. The massacres of St. Bartholomew only enlarged this anti-Italian attitude: the Italians were seen as the instigators of the violence of the massacres.⁵⁰ Contrastingly, like the full title of *Een discoers* suggests,⁵¹ the Dutch were occupied more with the Spanish influence on their country. In the epilogue of *Een discoers* written by the Dutch translator, the Spanish are considered to be the harbingers of tyranny. The Spanish are said to have brought about the destruction of Dutch nobility and have been replacing them with foreign troops. They have driven out, banished and executed Dutch-born gentlemen so that there were barely any noblemen left.⁵² Thus, while in the French case the Italians are said to destroy French nobility by introducing a political system based on a Turkish model, in the Dutch pamphlet the Spaniards take up this role. Here we might find a solution to the problem why the Dutch translator abandoned the preface of the French author. Because the situation in the Netherlands did not give rise to anti-Italian sentiments, the preface is omitted in order for the Dutch author to transform the contents of the *Discours* for a Dutch reading audience.

Because of the preface and afterword of the Dutch translator, *Een discoers* is not a one-to-one translation. The Dutch author interprets the French situation in a Dutch context. “Not less, yes, even more so do I encounter the same in our Netherlands carried out by the Spanish nation.”, he writes.⁵³ The aim is to warn his fellow Netherlanders, especially all “Princes, Counts, Gentlemen, Noblemen, Burgomasters, Councillors”.⁵⁴ In the French case, the aim of the pamphlets is to warn the French nobility for the threat of the advisors of the king – especially the Italians. As such, the pamphlets belong to a specific propagandistic genre of the time. The Dutch pamphlet *Een Discoers* belongs to the propaganda existing in the Netherlands against the Spanish Crown in its own right. This Dutch propaganda theme will be further elaborated on in chapter four of this thesis. For now it suffices to stress that the French text was applied to the Dutch

49 *Discours*, VI; *La France-Turquie*, 5.

50 Garloff, “Chassez loin de nous les Italiens qu’on hait tant”, 4; Heller, *Anti-Italianism*, 3-4.

51 See note 1 of this chapter.

52 *Een discoers*, [8r].

53 “Niet min, iae, veel meer beuinde ick het selue in onsen nederlanden van de Spaensche nacie te wercke gheleyt te wesen.”, *Een discoers*, [8r].

54 *Een discoers*, [1v].

situation by the translator. In the process it lost its original implications concerning the influence of the (Italian) advisors on French domestic politics. Instead, these ramifications were used to measure the Dutch situation, transforming them into a warning against the Spanish influence on the country. The “Turkish tyranny” would not be introduced by corrupted advisors to the French Crown, but by the Spaniards who had systematically tried to eradicate the Dutch nobility.

The adaptation of the French argument to the Dutch situation can also be observed in the addressees of the pamphlets. The Dutch author copied, but also elaborated on the persons addressed in the French pamphlet. In the French case, the nobility (“Seigneurs les Princes du sang, aultres Princes, grands seigneurs, Gentil-hommes”)⁵⁵ is explicitly mentioned when the author addresses his audience, while in case of the Dutch pamphlet, the nobility (“Princes, Counts, Grandees, Nobility”) is expanded with the regents of the country (“Burgomasters, Councillors”).⁵⁶ We see that the content of the French pamphlet is expressly adopted to fit Dutch circumstances, where the regents of the cities traditionally had more influence in matters of state, which we will discern in chapter three of this thesis.

Conclusion

We have observed that the Dutch pamphlet *Een Discoers* was based on the French *Discours*, and evidence indicates that the latter provided for the *Conseil Du Chevalier Poncet* of the elaborate treatise *La France-Turquie* as well. The theme of the pamphlet – the threat of the influence of Italian advisors in matters of State – was expanded on further in the collection of the three pamphlets that together formed *La France Turquie*. *L’Antipharmaque* takes up an exceptional position in the triptych in that it is an apology of what is stated in the first part of the treatise; it is a direct response to the *Discours*. The *Lunettes de Christal de Roche* has similar content to that of the *Conseil*: it warns that a “Turkish tyranny” will be introduced in France when the contents of the discourse held before the king will be taken to heart and consequently, Italians would be able to spread their influence over the French crown. About the authorship of both the Dutch and the French pamphlets we have limited information, but we have been able to establish that the aim of the pamphlets are to be found in a particular current of propaganda in both cases.

In the case of the French pamphlets the propaganda was targeted at the Italian influence on French politics. In the case of the Dutch pamphlet this anti-Italian theme was entirely abandoned. The emphasis that was put on Italian influence by the French author would probably have been lost on the Dutch reader completely. Instead, the emphasis was put on the influence of Spanish rule on Dutch society. Not the Italians were the mastermind behind the transformation of the country into a “Turkish tyranny and slavery”, but the Spaniards. In the process of translation, the Dutch author transported the French situation to the Dutch by adjusting the argument in the fore- and afterword of *Een discoers*. The Dutch author did not only

⁵⁵ *Discours*, VI; *La France-Turquie*, 5.

⁵⁶ *Een discoers*, [iv].

translate the *Discours*: he added his own fore- and afterword to show that Spanish rule would introduce a ‘Turkish tyranny’ in the Netherlands. In the anti-Spanish fore- and afterword he elucidated on the cruelty of Spanish rule, and showed that if Dutch regents would allow such influence in Dutch politics, a ‘Turkish slavery’ would soon follow.

III.

Civil war and Revolt.

How a political idea transcends borders in the second half of sixteenth-century Europe

Introduction

In 1575, the anonymous Dutch pamphleteer had taken it upon himself to translate the French *Discours* because the pamphlet would “not only serve the prosperity of France, but also the perpetuation of our Netherlands especially well.”¹ In the preface of the Dutch pamphlet *Een Discoers* the author observes that “the affaires and situations of these two countries are in a sorry state”,² which made it sensible to compare the two realms. The Dutch translator decided to pick up his pen in order to save his country from “utter ruination”; if people would heed the warning presented by the French political situation, the country might be rescued after all.³ In an era where most people primarily felt a connection with their fellow city- or country-dwellers at most,⁴ let alone that they identified themselves with the region or country they belonged to, it is interesting that foreign states of affairs is used in order to interpret the domestic condition.

The comparison between France and the Netherlands does not seem to be far-fetched, however. Contemporaries made the connection quite often.⁵ For instance, in 1572 rumour got around that the Spanish would attack the city of Antwerp like French Catholics had attacked Protestants in Paris during the

1 “niet alleenlick tot de vveluaert van vrancekerijke, maer oock tot de behoudinge onser Nederlanden wonderlicker vvel soude dienen, gernerck de affairen ende ghelegghenthey van beyde dese landen, nv seer in eenen staet sijn, soo en hebbe ick niet vwillen naelaten of ick en soude het in onser sprake ouersetten”, *Een discoers ofte Vertoogh ghedaen voor den Coninck van Vranckerijke ende ettelyke van zynen raet, vvaerin verclaert voort met wat middelen men soude connen Vranckerijke in een Turksche slavernije bringhen, verclarende insghelycks hoe de Spaense Nacie den saluen boosen raet ende middelen ghebruyckt om onse Nederlanden in een Turckse slavernije ende tyrannije te bringhen*, Knuttel 232 (1575) [1v].

2 “gernerck de affairen ende ghelegghenthey van beyde dese landen, nv seer in eenen staet sijn”, *Een discoers*, [1v].

3 “ende voor meerder catiicheit, destructie, ende vverlicke ruine, behouden vvorden, so hierop vvel ende rijpelick ghelettet vvierde.”, *Een discoers*, [1v].

4 Simon Groenveld, *De kogel door de kerk? De Opstand in de Nederlanden, 1559-1609* (Zutphen 1983) 10.

5 Henk van Nierop, ‘Similar problems, different outcomes: the Revolt of the Netherlands and the Wars of Religion in France’, in Karel Davids and Jan Lucassen (eds.), *A Miracle mirrored. The Dutch Republic in European Perspective* (Cambridge 1995) 26-56, 27.

massacres that began on St. Bartholomew's Day in August that same year.⁶ Moreover, there were frequent commercial, cultural and intellectual contacts between France and the Netherlands.⁷ The history of the Dutch Revolt and the French Wars of Religion interlocked as well: Philip II backed the Catholics in France at the outbreak of the first civil war in 1562. William of Orange, the rebel leader in the Netherlands, entered a formal alliance with the prince of Condé and admiral Coligny in 1568, and in turn the Huguenots – how French Calvinists were called – provided assistance to William of Orange in 1568 and 1572.⁸ In this setting it does not seem surprising that the French political situation was reflected on the Dutch to make sense of the astonishing events of the Dutch Revolt.

However, the situation in France was also unmistakably different than the circumstances in the Netherlands. Even though recent historians emphasise the fact that the conflicts in the Netherlands were part of a pan-European development, and that they are comparable to the civil wars in France,⁹ there are fundamental differences. In the Netherlands there was a Spanish army present since the arrival of Ferdinand Alvarez de Toledo, duke of Alva, in 1567 and subsequently, an armed conflict between the rebel provinces and the Spanish forces ensued. Secondly, the political structures of the two countries differed as well. The French monarch was king over all his provinces (except Brittany, where he was duke), while the Habsburg king had different titles for all the various territorial possessions in the Low Countries. The Netherlands were part of the Spanish Habsburg Empire, and had the same status as Spanish possessions in Italy and the colonies in the America's.¹⁰ This had consequences for the shape of the Dutch conflict, as we will see below. In the Low countries a discourse arose on ancient rights and privileges because of the way the country was structured and the manner in which the relationship to the Habsburg Empire was shaped. Nevertheless, we see that in case of *Een discoers*, despite these substantial differences, the French situation is projected on the Dutch nonetheless. It is interesting that the Dutch translator chose to utilise the French situation in order to explain how the Spaniards “bring our Netherlands in a Turkish slavery and tyranny”,¹¹ while the circumstances in which the French civil wars took place were so different from the Dutch situation.

The identification of these differences may be regarded as somewhat anachronistic. We must not forget that contemporaries especially recognised the similarities between the circumstances in France and the Netherlands. While this chapter makes clear that actual political institutions and historical events, and the nature of the conflicts differed in both countries, the contemporary political

6 Judith Pollmann, 'Countering the Reformation in France and the Netherlands: Clerical Leadership and Catholic Violence 1560-1585', *Past & Present* 190 (2006) 83-120, 83.

7 Van Nierop, 'Similar problems', 28-29.

8 Philip Benedict, 'Introduction', in Philip Benedict (ed.), *Reformation, Revolt and Civil War in France and the Netherlands 1555-1585* (Amsterdam 1999) 1.

9 J.J. Woltjer, *Tussen vrijheidsstrijd en burgeroorlog. Over de Nederlandse Opstand 1555-1580* (Amsterdam 1994) 9; Henk van Nierop, *Het verraad van het Noorderkwartier. Oorlog, terreur en recht in de Nederlandse Opstand* (Amsterdam 2005) 23.

10 Van Nierop, 'Similar problems' 32.

11 The title of the pamphlet reads: *A discourse or exposition held before the French King and some of his council, in which is declared with which means France could be turned into a Turkish slavery, declaring likewise how the Spanish Nation uses the same evil council to bring our Netherlands in a Turkish slavery and tyranny.* (my translation).

observations and the way reality was perceived did not always take these differences into account. For the historian, with the luxury of hindsight and ability to analyse historical contexts, it is important to remember that the situation in the past might have been perceived differently than the historical analysis teaches us. Dutchmen would have regarded the issues with which the French were dealing in the second half of the sixteenth century as similar to their own state of affairs, despite the fact that we know that they differed. As has been pointed out above, there were many contacts between France and the Low Countries at the time, and William of Orange hoped the Huguenots in France would offer support for the Revolt. This only contributed to the idea that the fate of the Dutch and the French was shared. The perception of reality and consequent political observation that the situations in both countries were similar resulted in a political debate that was similar in nature as well. In chapter five of this thesis it will be demonstrated that a political discussion about the nature of monarchical authority and the limitations thereof was present both in France as in the Netherlands. *Een discoers* and its French source could be read in this light. The fact that the situations were regarded as homogeneous facilitated the existence of this constitutionalist debate by the so-called Monarchomachs in both countries at the same time.

The aim of this chapter is twofold. One, it aims to sketch the historical context in which the French and the Dutch pamphlets were created. It helps us place the pamphlets in the wider context of the French Wars of Religion and the Dutch Revolt respectively. We do so first by looking at the most relevant events in the French civil wars and subsequently recount the most significant circumstances in the Dutch Revolt, in order to flesh out the historical context in which the pamphlets we focus on in this study were published. We will consider the importance of religion in both conflicts. It will be demonstrated that the Catholics in France had a fundamentally different reaction to Calvinist aggression than in the Low Countries. Secondly, in this chapter it will be made clear that the differences between the two conflicts did not stop the Dutch author from projecting the alleged French counsel relayed in *Een discoers* on the Dutch political situation. *Een discoers* serves as an example how political arguments were reshaped in order to be used in a completely different context and form a new and different argument. This chapter shows that ideas and political thought have their own dynamic in history. In case of *Een discoers*, we see that the history of ideas transcends contextual differences. Even though the history of both countries differ significantly and the nature of the conflict in France and the Netherlands diverged strongly, an idea that was created in France was transmitted to the distinct Dutch context nonetheless.

3.1 Civil war and Revolt

3.1.1 Civil war in France

“[...] the most horrific, brutal and most cruel murder that ever came to pass in the world”.¹² It is with these words that the Florentine¹³ allegedly begins his preface in the pamphlet we focus on in this study, *Een discoers*. With these words he refers to one of the most shocking events in French history: the St. Bartholomew massacres, which signalled the beginning of the fourth civil war (1572-1573) in France. The night of 23 August to the early morning of 24 August 1572 – the day of St. Bartholomew – heralded the killing of thousands of Protestants which lasted for another three weeks in Paris and in the provinces for weeks to come. According to the author of the preface, “the said murder [of St. Bartholomew] has risen from this [discourse] more than from any other counsel or resolution that would have been decided in advance.”¹⁴ Contemporaries – as well as modern historians – have often hinted at the possibility that the popular violence that ensued from the early morning of Sunday 24 August 1572 onwards was a plot planned well in advance.¹⁵ The alleged speech relayed in *Een discoers* that would have contributed to the massacres following St. Bartholomew’s Day “more than from any other counsel or resolution” would have been held a few months before the day in question.¹⁶ However, the evidence for the claim that the events were premeditated before 23 August 1572 is lacking.¹⁷ Below will be made clear that the events that led to the massacres were more tragically coincidental than premeditated – even though they reflected mounted tensions in Paris for nearly more than a decade.

In Paris, on 22 August 1572, the Huguenot Admiral Gaspard de Coligny was shot in the arm and hand from an upper-story window of a house nearby.¹⁸ He was a protagonist in the French civil wars, as he furthered the Protestant cause. As one of the Châtillon brothers, he was one of the nephews of the Constable of France, Anne de Montmorency, who as head of the French army (Constable) and the Grand Master (head of the court) was very powerful¹⁹ but had died in the second civil war (1567- March 1568) in 1567.

12 “[...] den dach van Sinte Bartholomeus [...] de grouwelicste, onmenshelickste ende alderwreedste moort die oyt op aerden geschiet is”, *Een discoers*, Aij r; “[...] la iournee saint Barthelemy que l’orreur des execrables plus inhumains & plus detestables massacres qui fure[n]t iamais [fai]cts auparau[n]t au monde”, *Discours traduit Italien en François convenant aucuns moyens pour reduire la France à une entière obeissance à son Roy* (Augsburg, 1575) VII; *La France-Turquie, C’est à dire, conseils et moyens tenus par les ennemis de la Couronne de France, pour reduire le royaume en tel estat que la Tyran[n]ie Turquesque* (Orleans, Thibaut des Murs 1576) 6.

13 In both French pamphlets the preface is attributed to the Florentine nobleman who allegedly gave the Italian speech to the French translator (“Preface Dv Florentin”, *Discours*, VII; *La France-Turquie*, 6). In the Dutch pamphlet it is just stated “Preface of the author” (“Voorreden des Autheurs”, *Een discoers*, Aij), but the Florentine nobleman (“Edelman van Florencen”, *Een discoers*, [iv]) is mentioned in the preface of the Dutch translator as the one who first penned down the speech in Italian. For more bibliographical information see Chapter Two of this study.

14 “dat de voors. moort meer hier vvt geresen is, dan vvt eenigen anderen raet ofte resolucie die te voren soude moghen besloten geweest hebben.”, *Een discoers*, Aij r; “l’ayant plusieurs fois co[n]sideré en moy mesmes, i’ay trouué que lesdicts massacres en peuue[n]t en partie aus si tost estre sortiz que de nulle autre resolution precedente.”, *Discours*, VIII; *La France-Turquie*, 6.

15 R.J. Knecht, *The French Wars of Religion 1559-1598* (Longman 2010, first ed. 1989) 50.

16 See Chapter 2, note 8.

17 Mack P. Holt, *The French Wars of Religion, 1562-1629* (Cambridge 1995) 85.

18 Holt, *The French Wars of Religion*, 82.

19 For the influence and wealth of Anne de Montmorency, see Knecht, *The French Wars of Religion*, 18.

Coligny, who had filled the office of Admiral of France from 1552 onwards and was a member of the royal council, had extensive landholdings in Normandy. This region became a stronghold of Protestantism as it had a high degree of aristocratic protection from the Coligny's.²⁰ It is clear that the assassination attempt on Coligny was an endeavour with the aim to murder only one man not to bring about the killings that would ensue in the days to come. When Coligny was shot, the royal council feared that the Huguenots would want to revenge the attempt on his life, and decided to carry out a pre-emptive attack against Huguenot leadership. The fear that the capital would be invaded by a Protestant army was greatly felt. It is not sure who was the first to propose the plan to eliminate Huguenot leadership, but in any case the queen regent Catherine de' Medici (1519-1589) and her son king Charles IX (1550-1574) supported it. They felt they had no other choice.²¹ The decision to eradicate Huguenot leadership was a reaction on the attack on Coligny, and thus it is not very likely that it was planned months in advance. Little did they know that the planned strike against Huguenot leadership would evolve into the popular killings that made the St. Bartholomew a massacre on such a large scale.

The attack on Huguenot leadership was to be carried out by about a hundred men, mostly of the Swiss guard, in the dead of night. The strike was led by Henry, duke of Guise, and other Catholic captains.²² Alongside the fact that the Guises were the most militant Catholic aristocrats of France, they had been a family with much influence in royal affairs during the times of the civil wars. Francis, duke of Guise, had been fatally wounded during the first civil war (1562-1563) in 1563,²³ but had been a very powerful noble and one of the most fervent defenders of the Catholic religion and persecutor of heresy in all of France.²⁴ Even after his death, the family remained in a very powerful position. Francis, duke of Guise's two brothers, Claude, duke of Aumale but especially Charles, cardinal of Lorraine, were very influential as well.²⁵ The latter had already been the most wealthiest and most powerful cleric in the whole of France during the short reign of Francis II (r. 1559-1560),²⁶ and even had become the leader of the royal council by 1566.²⁷ That year marked the end of the royal tour (March 1564-March 1566) made by Catherine de' Medici and her son, king Charles IX, in order to consolidate the edicts that they had issued throughout the country. These edicts, on which we will concentrate further below, provoked much resistance in the *Parlement* of Paris, as well as among the judges of the provincial *parlements*. It meant an official juridical acceptance of Huguenots in France and this was something they were not willing to condone. In order for a royal edict to be enforced the *parlements* had to register it. The judges of the *parlements* were by their office required to register all royal edicts. They could issue their objections towards a royal edict in the form of a

²⁰ Holt, *The French Wars of Religion*, 40.

²¹ Holt, *The French Wars of Religion*, 84.

²² Knecht, *The French Wars of Religion*, 49.

²³ During the siege of Orléans in February 1563, see Holt, *The French Wars of Religion*, 55.

²⁴ Holt, *The French Wars of Religion*, 41.

²⁵ Holt, *The French Wars of Religion*, 63.

²⁶ Holt, *The French Wars of Religion*, 41.

²⁷ Holt, *The French Wars of Religion*, 63.

remonstrance – which they repeatedly did – but the refusal to register the edicts was a serious offence.²⁸ With the royal tour Charles IX and Catherine sought to put the parliaments in their place by means of the *lit de justice*, symbolising the place where the king sat whenever he visited a *parlement* explicitly to enforce the registration of a declaration, law or edict.²⁹ The royal tour, which a historian recently called “a campaign of royal propaganda”,³⁰ served the purposes of Catherine politically but a lot of grievances remained throughout the country which we will address below.

The influence of the Guises on royal policy was not unchallenged. Especially Catherine de’ Medici, who had been queen regent after her husband Henry II died because of a jousting accident in 1559 and subsequently lost her eldest son Francis II because of an ear abscess in December 1560, regarded the influence of de Guises with suspicion. She felt that Guise domination over the Crown did not contribute to a strong and independent reign.³¹ During the reign of Francis II, the Guises had a lot of influence over the king, but as soon as the young Charles IX became king at the age of eleven and Catherine was instated as queen regent of France, the Guises were dismissed from the royal council in order to diminish their sway over royal affairs. Catherine hoped that in this way the Crown could steer an independent course, free from all faction.³² Later on it became clear that neither Charles IX nor Catherine could undermine Guise domination of the council because of the political power of the family.³³ We have seen that when the Queen Mother – as Catherine de’ Medici was referred to – and Charles returned from their royal tour, Charles, cardinal of Lorraine had managed to secure a leading position on the royal council and thus, happened exactly what Catherine sought to avoid.³⁴ The power of the Guises was rising and falling during the history of the civil wars, however, for in August 1570 Charles, cardinal of Lorraine fell out of grace when it became clear that his plans to exterminate heresy at home and abroad did not effectuate the desired result: the only thing it achieved was igniting the third civil war (1568-1570). Consequently, Lorraine was forced off the royal council.³⁵ Nevertheless, as we have seen, Henry, duke of Guise had a leading role in the elimination of Huguenot leadership by assassinating Gaspard de Coligny on his sickbed in August 1572. In this regard it is significant that the Guises are not mentioned to be part of the council to which the speech of *Een discoers* was allegedly given. In the argument of evil councillors having corrupted the king’s judgement, the Guises are normally frequently mentioned.³⁶ In *Een discoers*, however, the council is said to be made up only of “the King, the queen his mother, his brother the Duke of Anjou, presently King of Poland, and the Count of Retz”³⁷; there

28 Holt, *The French Wars of Religion*, 57.

29 Holt, *The French Wars of Religion*, 58-59.

30 Holt, *The French Wars of Religion*, 59.

31 Holt, *The French Wars of Religion*, 41, 45.

32 Holt, *The French Wars of Religion*, 45.

33 Holt, *The French Wars of Religion*, 66.

34 Holt, *The French Wars of Religion*, 63.

35 Holt, *The French Wars of Religion*, 69-70.

36 Van Nierop, ‘Similar problems’, 29.

37 “in de presentie van den Coninck, de coningine syne moeder, synen broer Hertoghe van Aniou present Coninck van Polen, ende den Graue van Rets”, *Een discoers*, Aij r; “deuant le Roy, la Royne mere, monsieur le Duc à present Roy de Pologne, & monsieur le Conte de Retz”, *Discours*, VII; *La France-Turquie*, 6.

is no mention of the Guises, neither in the French nor the Dutch pamphlet. It could be that either the Guises were not part of the royal council at the time the pamphlet was written, or – and this is more likely – that the author of the pamphlet did not want to emphasise the conflict with the Catholics but wanted to emphasise the Italian background of the council members, as is demonstrated in the second chapter of this study.

Next to Coligny and Catherine de' Medici, other opponents of the Guises during the civil wars were Antoine de Bourbon, king of Navarre, and his brother Louis de Bourbon, prince of Condé. The latter was one of the most important converts among the noble houses of France, and the former's wife, Jeanne d'Albret, queen of Navarre, also played a pivotal role in the Protestant movement of France.³⁸ Antoine de Bourbon, king of Navarre, was – together with his brother Louis, prince of Condé, after him – *Prince du sang* (the first prince of the blood) which meant that they were a legitimate member of the reigning dynasty and heir to the throne after the children of Henry II. In late 1561 Francis, duke of Guise, the constable Anne de Montmorency, and an army marshal sieur de St-André formed a military 'triumvirate' with the aim of seeking aid from Philip II of Spain in order to drive out all Protestants from France. Even though the first civil war broke out officially in March 1562, the aim of the triumvirate threatened civil war.³⁹ During the first civil war, de Guise had managed to get Antoine de Bourbon, king of Navarre, into the fold of the Catholic triumvirate by convincing him to abandon the Protestant movement.⁴⁰ The triumvirate dealt with heavy losses during the first civil war, as Antoine de Bourbon and marshal St-André were killed, the constable Montmorency was captured and Francis, duke of Guise was assassinated as well. With three of the four military leaders dead and most of the Protestant communities in the south still standing, a complete victory over the Calvinists proved impossible.⁴¹

Louis de Bourbon, prince of Condé, would face many hardships as well. In 1560 he had been imprisoned on the initiative of the Guises and would have been executed if not for the death of Francis II. When Charles IX became king and Catherine de' Medici became queen regent, not only were the Guises dismissed from the royal council, Condé was released from prison as well.⁴² Catherine tried to uphold a policy of moderation, but already in an early stage of the troubles in France, French Calvinism became politicised. The religious issue, on which we will focus in the next part of this chapter, became engrossed in the political struggle at court between the Guises on the one hand and the Bourbons and the Châtillons on the other.⁴³ By the time the first civil war broke out, the kingdom of France was divided against itself: Condé was requested by the Protestant churches of France to protect them from further persecution in order to oppose the Guises and the triumvirate.⁴⁴ The French Calvinists held their third national synod just after the outbreak of the first civil war, and it was there that the prince of Condé

38 Holt, *The French Wars of Religion*, 39, 41.

39 Holt, *The French Wars of Religion*, 46-47.

40 Holt, *The French Wars of Religion*, 52.

41 Holt, *The French Wars of Religion*, 55.

42 Holt, *The French Wars of Religion*, 45.

43 Holt, *The French Wars of Religion*, 43.

44 Holt, *The French Wars of Religion*, 49.

was proclaimed protector of all the Calvinist churches in the kingdom and the protector and defender of the house and crown of France. Catherine de' Medici could do nothing but watch helplessly as both Catholic and Huguenot armies began to mobilise, as the factions operated largely without her consent. Therefore she could also do nothing else than to accept Condé's claim of being the protector and defender of the house and crown of France as he was the first prince of the blood and her only option to stand in the way of the Guise-dominated triumvirate. However, because of Protestant successes she had no choice but to turn to the Catholic triumvirate in order to put down Huguenot insurrections and she found herself forced to support a war.⁴⁵ During the first civil war, Condé was captured by Catholic forces again,⁴⁶ and in the third civil war he died in 1569, leaving only Coligny in charge, advised by Jeanne d'Albret, her young son Henry of Navarre and Condé's fifteen-year old heir, Henry de Bourbon-Condé.⁴⁷

Thus we see that by the time of the St. Bartholomew massacres in August 1572 a lot had transpired in France, and that tension had been building up. The Huguenots and Catholics had been engaged in their fourth civil war, and there would be four more to come. The tension was increased not in the least by the edicts Catherine de' Medici had issued that were so heavily contested.⁴⁸ With her moderation policy, she inverted previous conduct of the French crown. Under Henry II the Edict of Châteaubriant in June 1551 had heralded a comprehensive and legalistic ban on Protestantism. This edict did not only have the aim of combatting heresy, but also of preventing rebellion. Protestants were associated with sedition and regarded as a dangerous threat to the social order. Thus, the edict of 1551 prohibited the printing, sale and possession of Protestant opinion, but was also issued to avert illicit assemblies of Protestants.⁴⁹ When Henry II died in 1559, it seemed that royal policy of the suppression of Protestantism would only continue because of the influence of the duke of Guise on military matters and the Cardinal of Lorraine on ecclesiastical affairs.⁵⁰ The Queen Mother, on the other hand, hoped on reconciliation within the Gallican church and kept a policy of rapprochement towards the Huguenots. In line of this policy, Catherine pronounced the Edict of St.-Germain on 17 January 1562, also called the 'Edict of January' or the 'edict of toleration'. This edict horrified the Guises and many militant Catholics with them, since it entailed the legal recognition of the Huguenots.⁵¹ With the Edict of St.-Germain Huguenots were allowed to hold their assemblies in the countryside, but forbade them in walled towns.⁵² It was an attempt of Catherine to settle the religious issue without civil war, but it eventually only resulted in more tension. This is the reason why the magistrates of the *Parlement* of Paris and the provincial *parlements* showed so much reluctance to register the edict, as was set out above. The *Parlement* of Paris eventually registered the edict 6 March 1562 with

45 Holt, *The French Wars of Religion*, 52-54.

46 Holt, *The French Wars of Religion*, 55.

47 Holt, *The French Wars of Religion*, 69.

48 For the conviction that the 'edicts of toleration' contributed most to the unrest in France, see Knecht, *The French Wars of Religion*, especially 46-47.

49 Holt, *The French Wars of Religion*, 29-30.

50 Holt, *The French Wars of Religion*, 42.

51 Holt, *The French Wars of Religion*, 47.

52 Knecht, *The French Wars of Religion*, 33.

the explicit amendment that it did so against its will and only at the king's command. A few days earlier, on 1 March 1562, a violent confrontation between Huguenots and Catholics had already ensued when Francis, duke of Guise, stumbled upon a group of Protestants worshipping within the town of Vassy. The resulting 'massacre' – as the Huguenots would call it – marked the beginning of a long period of armed struggle over the issue of religion.⁵³

The first civil war was ended on 19 March 1563 with the Edict of Amboise, again an edict that did not find much approval among both Catholics and Protestants. Huguenots were granted freedom of conscience, but were regulated in their rights according to social status. This meant that men of high status were free in worshipping the Calvinist faith openly on their estates, while men of lower rank could only worship in their homes. Protestant worship was allowed in the towns held by the Huguenots before 7 March and in one town of each *balliage*. For Catholics these stipulations were much too permissive, and for the Huguenots they did not go far enough.⁵⁴ The Edict of Amboise set a pattern that was to be repeated seven times during the next forty years: a military campaign in which neither side could defeat the other, followed by a compromise peace which was unsatisfactory for all the parties involved and which the crown could neither administer or enforce.⁵⁵ At the time the French pamphlet *Discours* and its Dutch counterpart *Een discoers* were published in 1575, four civil wars had been ended with such 'edicts of toleration' and the fifth civil (1575-1576) war was well under way.⁵⁶

To conclude, we have seen that the St. Bartholomew massacres were not premeditated, but tension had been building up nonetheless. The outbreak of the massacres was not an isolated unique event; it was a climax of long series of popular disturbances in Paris and elsewhere. Despite the 'edicts of toleration' that ended each civil war, the two years of formal peace between the third and fourth civil war were marked by frequent outbreaks of violence committed by the Huguenots as well as militant Catholics.⁵⁷ When the marriage arranged by Catherine between her Catholic daughter Marguerite of Valois and Protestant Henry, king of Navarre, proceeded and the marriage was celebrated on 18 August 1572, many saw it as a culmination of Catherine's abhorrent moderation policy.⁵⁸ It was a symbol of the policy of which many did not approve: the existence of two faiths along side each other. The atmosphere in Paris was volatile as numerous Huguenots came to the capital to attend the marriage, and the Guises were also present with their large entourage.⁵⁹ Thus, the situation in France at the time of the St. Bartholomew massacre had been unstable and it remained to be violent in the rest of the civil wars yet to come, as was the case during the publishing of the French pamphlet *Discours* in 1575.

53 Holt, *The French Wars of Religion*, 48-49.

54 Knecht, *The French Wars of Religion*, 37.

55 Holt, *The French Wars of Religion*, 56.

56 The fifth civil war began in September 1575; we do not know in which months the pamphlets were published exactly.

57 Knecht, *The French Wars of Religion*, 47.

58 Holt, *The French Wars of Religion*, 76, 81.

59 Knecht, *The French Wars of Religion*, 46.

3.1.2 *The Dutch Revolt*

The fact that the political structure of the Low Countries differed so much from the French monarchy is pivotal in understanding the conflict of the Dutch Revolt. While in France the monarch was king over almost all his provinces, in the sixteenth century the Low Countries were made up of seventeen separate states, each with their own ruler, regulations and jurisdictions. Through marriage, inheritance, conquest, and political machinations the dukes of the Low Countries acquired one territory after the next.⁶⁰ When Mary the Rich (1457-1482) – the last of the House of Burgundy – married the future Emperor Maximilian of Habsburg (1459-1519) in 1477, it secured Burgundian policy. Maximilian's son Philip the Handsome (1478-1506) married queen Joanna of Castile (1479-1555) and heiress of Aragon in 1496 and consequently, their son Charles V (1500-1558) inherited the Dutch provinces, both Spanish kingdoms and became Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire.⁶¹ At his abdication, however, his possessions were divided. Philip II succeeded his father in the Low Countries in 1555 and the Spanish kingdoms in 1556. Because of the structural make-up of the Low Countries, he succeeded his father as duke of Brabant, count of Holland and fifteen other separate titles. This yielded many problems. Philip had to represent various regional interests at the same time and act justly when contradictory demands were made of him. Reason enough to centralise the government over the Dutch provinces. Charles V had already started this process, but it proved hard to implement. It was difficult to replace the existing rights and privileges with one coherent legal system. What they did manage to implement was a new centre of government in Brussels that could coordinate the policy of the regime.⁶²

The consequences of the problems with governance of the Low Countries were great. It meant that Philip II had to negotiate every administrative affair with all the different provinces, while they all relied on their provincial independence. Where Charles V and Philip II wanted to modernise the administration of the Low Countries, each province wanted to hold on to old privileges.⁶³ Another structural problem of the Spanish king was logistical in nature. Because the Spanish Habsburg Empire was made up of many possessions in Spain, the Low Countries, Italy and the colonies of the New World, the sovereign could not be present in all his territories at once, this hindered decision-making. Even though a regency government was set up in Brussels, all important matters were transferred to Castile. Even though France was a huge country, the monarch had the relative advantage of being available in the whole of his kingdom. The Habsburg territories were much more fragmented. Consequently, French royal administration had a tighter grip on town governments and provincial assemblies.⁶⁴ As we have seen in chapter two of this study, in the Netherlands, therefore, the cities traditionally had more authority in the Netherlands. This was why the Dutch author included “Burgomasters” and

60 Groenveld, *De kogel door de kerk*, 12.

61 Martin van Gelderen, *The Political Thought of the Dutch Revolt 1555-1590* (Cambridge 1992) 17.

62 Groenveld, *De kogel door de kerk*, 14.

63 Woltjer, *Tussen vrijheidsstrijd*, 11; Van Gelderen, *The Political Thought*, 23.

64 Van Nierop, ‘Similar problems’ 32-33.

“Councillors” in his list of addressees, where the French author limited himself to members of the noble estate.

The fact that the French administration was less fragmented than the Dutch provinces, however, does not mean that there was unity in France. It only meant that the French king was not in the ability to transfer his lands in the way a duke could give up his territories in the Burgundian lands. There was more cohesion between the different French provinces because it was clear that each province belonged to the French crown. Language and culture nevertheless differed from region to region, so there was hardly any unity in this regard. Moreover, economy of scale also mattered. France was ten times as large in population than the Netherlands. France counted twenty million people, where the Netherlands counted a mere two. This called for a different management of the country. It meant that the political structure of France was very complex. For comparison, a province could consist of two million people, where in the Netherlands, this made up the whole country. For such a large and complex political system like that of France, only a monarchy was deemed sufficient.⁶⁵ A system of deliberation like that in the Low Countries was not feasible in such a large monarchy like France. However, as we have seen, it became problematic in the Low Countries as well.

In the resistance against Philips II from the 1560s onwards, arguments about rights and privileges played a prominent role.⁶⁶ First these arguments revolved about the matter of ecclesiastical reform. When Philip II left the Low Countries in 1559 to return to Spain, he transferred the administration to his half-sister Margaret of Parma, who as Governor-General was his substitute in the Netherlands. Officially she was assisted by the Council of State (of which nobles like William of Orange and the count of Egmont were members) but in reality authority rested with Philip’s trusted counsellor, Antoine Perrenot, later known as the Cardinal of Granvelle. In the same year that Philip left the Low Countries, the pope issued a bull on Philip’s request in which he prescribed an ecclesiastical reform in the Dutch lands. The Low Countries of old had five bishoprics which were tied to the German countries and France. Philip wanted to disengage the Netherlands from German and French influence, and introduced eighteen arch- and bishoprics in order to have more control over the clergy. This fitted within the line of Catholic reform of the time, but it had social implications as well. The new bishops had to be university-trained theologians. Previously, the nobility filled these lucrative ecclesiastical positions, but now they were exempted from doing so, as younger aristocratic sons usually did not obtain a university degree. Moreover, the new bishops would be members of the Estates as well. Thus, high nobles would lose a part of their income and privileges to these new bishops. At this background there was a lot of protest against the reorganisation of the bishoprics. What only made matters worse for the high nobles was that Granvelle became Primate of the Netherlands. Tension between Granvelle and the high nobility had risen to such a level that William of Orange and the Count of Egmont decided to turn to the king. They demanded to have a say in matters of state or else they would resign. In May 1562 the high nobility formed the *League of the Great*, which eventually resulted in the resignation of Granvelle in March 1564. After Granvelle left the Low Countries, the noblemen returned to

65 Robert von Friedeburg, *Self-Defence and Religious Strife in Early Modern Europe. England and Germany, 1530-1680* (Aldershot 2002) 21.

66 Van Gelderen, *The Political Thought*, 110.

the Council of State.⁶⁷ Thus, nobles such as the count of Egmont and William of Orange had felt that Granvelle had been usurping their power; the matter can be interpreted as a confrontation of local nobles with the attempt of the Spanish government to centralise and modernise the affairs in the Low Countries.⁶⁸

The affair with Granvelle was also significant because of the implications it had regarding the policy of persecuting heretics. The country was subject to the most severe heresy legislation in Europe and the organisation of the new bishoprics was instated in order to make the persecution of heretics even more effective.⁶⁹ Charles V had already started persecuting heretics – mostly Anabaptists and Mennonites – as early as 1520 and his campaign of repression would be unrivalled.⁷⁰ In 1550 a new *placard* came out which summarised previous heresy legislation. The publication of this *placard* reminded the subjects of the Low Countries how harsh the measures and subsequent punishments were.⁷¹ When Philip became ruler over the Netherlands in 1555, he set out to continue what his father had started.⁷² When Granvelle was dismissed from the Netherlands, a more moderate stance towards heretics was assumed. There had been a lot of resistance against the severe measures. For instance, in October 1564 during the execution of a Calvinist preacher in Antwerp, an insurrection took place on a large scale because of it. In that same year the high nobles and the Council of State decided to send the count of Egmont to the king in an attempt to change his policy. Orange held an oration in the Council of State in which he stated that the severe heresy *placards* were impossible to implement and that rulers do not have the right to influence the consciences of their subjects. This view was the exact opposite of their king: Philip wanted to eradicate the malady of heresy completely.⁷³ The actions that were undertaken in order to rid the country of heretics, the heresy *placards*, were also seen in the light of old privileges that were being breached because of the centralisation of Dutch rulership. According to this argument, Philips' religious policy conflicted with the old liberties and freedom of the country, which he would have sworn to protect when he became sovereign over the Low Countries.⁷⁴

When Ferdinand Alvarez de Toledo, duke of Alva arrived in the Netherlands in late summer of 1567 the situation did not get any better. Alva had been sent to the Low Countries with the aim of restoring order after the events of 1566. In that year the nobility that had previously assembled in the *League of the Great* now formed the *Compromise of Nobles*, made up from a few hundred higher and lower nobles. The *Compromise of Nobles* requested the relief of the heresy *placards*. On 5 April 1566 the *Compromise*, led by Henry, Lord of Brederode, presented a petition to Margaret of Parma, in which the nobles demanded that the heresy *plac-*

67 Woltjer, *Tussen vrijheidsstrijd*, 24-27.

68 Van Gelderen, *The Political Thought*, 34.

69 Pollmann, 'Countering the Reformation', 89; Woltjer, *Tussen vrijheidsstrijd*, 24.

70 Andrew Pettegree, 'Religion and the revolt', in Graham Darby (ed.), *The Origins and Development of the Dutch Revolt* (London and New York 2001) 67-83, 68-69; J.J. Woltjer, 'Political Moderates and Religious Moderates in the Revolt of the Netherlands', in Philip Benedict (ed.), *Reformation, Revolt and Civil War in France and the Netherlands 1555-1585* (Amsterdam 1999) 185-200, 187.

71 Woltjer, 'Political Moderates', 186.

72 Van Gelderen, *The Political Thought*, 36.

73 Woltjer, *Tussen vrijheidsstrijd*, 29-30.

74 Van Gelderen, *The Political Thought*, 111-112.

ards would be suspended and that a new policy for the religious issue would be formulated in consultation with the States-General. This put Margaret in a difficult position: under such circumstances it was almost impossible to reject the petition, but at the same time, she could not approve of it either because it would undermine her and her brother's authority. So she promised the nobles moderation, but left undecided what this might mean exactly. The Protestants interpreted the situation as if they were granted more freedom. Religious exiles returned to the Netherlands, and Protestants held their assemblies more out in the open. This was not exactly what Margaret had intended, and she tried to prohibit the so-called hedge preaches – where Protestants preached out in the open – but she was not obeyed. In the meantime, tensions rose because of the rumours that Philip would send an army in order to quell the unrest in the Low Countries. On 22 August 1566 the tensions came to a head when Protestants plundered churches and Catholic services were interrupted. This heralded the turmoil that is known as the Iconoclastic Fury (*Beeldenstorm*). The destruction of ecclesiastical icons started in Antwerp but spread through the rest of the Southern Netherlands quickly.⁷⁵

Even though Margaret was able to get control over the situation by the summer of 1567, Philip did not anticipate this and decided on a different course. The Iconoclastic Fury proved to Philip that strict repression would be the only viable option for his government. In order to adopt a more stringent policy he sent Spanish troops led by Alva, who had always opted for a more repressive policy in the Spanish Council of State.⁷⁶ Philips gave Alva the instructions to leave for the Low Countries in November 1566 and in the spring of 1567 the latter made his preparations. He could not have known that Margaret already regained authority by the summer of that year, and Alva left Spain as a commander of an army, not as an upcoming Governor-General as a replacement for Margaret of Parma. Moreover, he was sent to the Netherlands to set matters straight before the king would arrive in the Low Countries himself. In the end, Margaret resigned in the same month Alva reached the Netherlands in August because she could not approve of the military display Alva was ordered to establish, and Philip would never arrive because other business kept him in Spain. This meant that the provinces would have a Governor-General over them who was not of royal blood and consequently, Alva did not obtain authority automatically. From the beginning he was regarded as a foreign intruder.⁷⁷

Alva immediately began with disciplining those who were involved with the turmoil of 1566 and 1567. In his Council of Troubles (*Raad van Beroerte*) Alva did not only sentence Protestants but also those who had turned against Philip's policy. The Counts of Egmont and Horne had remained in the Netherlands out of the conviction that they had served the king and country well, while Orange had fled to Dillenburg. On 5 June 1568 Egmont and Horne were beheaded. This shocked many in the Low Countries, and a large number fled.⁷⁸ While some nobles were caught, most of them who were active in the upheavals of 1566-1567 managed to escape and later returned to participate in the main revolt. In the spring of 1567 after Margaret

75 Woltjer, *Tussen vrijheidsstrijd*, 31-33.

76 Woltjer, *Tussen vrijheidsstrijd*, 39.

77 Groenveld, *De kogel door de kerk*, 102.

78 Woltjer, *Tussen vrijheidsstrijd*, 39-40.

had abandoned her moderate course, and in the winter of 1567-1568 many had fled after a wave of arrests, mainly to Germany and England.⁷⁹ Van Gelderen estimates that as much as 12.000 people were put to trial, 9.000 of whom possessions were confiscated (including William of Orange) and 1.000 were executed (including Egmont and Horne).⁸⁰ *Een discoers* indirectly refers to the Council of Troubles when the author emphasises that the Spaniards have actively sought to destroy Dutch nobility. He writes that “[the Spanish nation] already killed the largest part of the native Lords of the country, and the Nobility, partly by expulsions and bans, partly by executions by form of justice, partly by damned commissions, and command of captains.”⁸¹ The Council of Troubles was viewed by many as a violation of local privileges.⁸² *Een discoers* also refers to these “all old privileges of the country and the cities”.⁸³ In the sixteenth-century Low Countries subjects had the right to be tried in their region of origin. One of the most important privileges of town- and city-dwellers was to be tried in their own town or city before a court made up of their fellow citizens. This privilege was called *ius de non evocando* and was often invoked in arguments against Habsburg policy.⁸⁴

Arguments about the violation of rights and old privileges also revolved around Alva’s financial policy. In 1569 Alva commenced the States General – which had not been summoned since 1559 – in order to introduce a new system of taxes. The so-called hundredth penny that was a 1% tax on assessed wealth was soon implemented, but the twentieth penny (5% on property) and the tenth penny (10% on sales) – which were permanent taxes – met with a lot of resistance. The new taxes implicated that the king did not need to negotiate with the States General when he needed money, and it gave the crown the means to keep a standing army in order to maintain the country under subjection. The States General and Alva agreed on a temporary subsidy for two years. In 1571 Alva renewed his insistence on the tenth and twentieth penny, but to no avail. In the end the dreaded taxes were never collected, but they had the effect as if they were. The local magistrates that had to collect the taxes were put under pressure and they got estranged from their own city militia.⁸⁵ Moreover, the taxes were regarded as too much of a burden for a trading nation like the Low Countries. The taxes led to the idea that Alva would severely affect important sources of wealth for contemporaries and they blamed him for the economic stagnation that occurred in 1571 mainly because of crop failure in large parts of Europe. Alva’s lack of money meant that he was not able to pay the soldiers that were garrisoned in the Low Countries. They had to be quartered among civilians, which also raised a lot of tension.⁸⁶

It is against this culmination of tensions that the Dutch Revolt took place. In 1568 William of Orange

79 Jonathan I. Israel, *The Dutch Republic. Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall, 1477-1806* (Oxford 1995) 157, 160.

80 Van Gelderen, *The Political Thought*, 40.

81 “[de Spaensche nacie] alreede den meesten deel der ingeborene Heeren vanden lande, ende des Edeldoms, eensdeels veriaegt ende verbannen, eensdeels by forme van iustitie geexecuteert, eensdeels door schorfde commissien, ende beuel van Capiteynschappen ommegebracht hebben.” *Een discoers*, [8r].

82 Van Nierop, *Het verraad*, 67; Groenveld, *De kogel door de kerk*, 104.

83 “alle oude priuilegien van landen ende steden”, *Een discoers*, [8r].

84 Van Nierop, *Het verraad*, 185; Groenveld, *De kogel door de kerk*, 104.

85 Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 166-168.

86 Woltjer, *Tussen vrijheidsstrijd*, 43-44.

had tried to launch an attack on the Spanish troops in the south from France and in the east and centre of the country from the German lands – where Orange had his base – but it did not succeed. Orange's brother Louis of Nassau managed to achieve a measure of success at the battle of Heiligerlee in May 1568, but soon many defeats occurred as well.⁸⁷ In 1572 Orange again had plans for an invasion. The plan included an attack from France in the south led by Nassau, who had made La Rochelle his base of operation, with the help of the Huguenots. Orange himself would attack the south-east and his brother-in-law William van den Bergh would launch his attack on the north-east. The Sea Beggars would attack from the sea.⁸⁸ Since 1568 the Sea Beggars had been a force to reckon with. Alva had garrisoned substantial forces to deal with them, but at this time many had been dispatched to the French border.⁸⁹ Their arrival in Brill on 1 April 1572 was more or less a coincidence. The Sea Beggars had been operating from English ports, but because of political and economical reasons, queen Elizabeth of England could not condone their presence any longer. They sailed out and because of a north-western storm they arrived at Brill.⁹⁰ When they arrived, they realised that the town was easily captured. From there on the Sea Beggars pillaged churches and arrested Catholics. The pillaging of churches and molesting of Catholics did not take place on orders of Orange, but rather of the more radical William de la Marck, Lord of Lummen – in short referred to as Lumey – who had become the leader of the Sea Beggars since 1571. The relationship between Orange and the Sea Beggars was problematical, since Orange intended to adopt a more moderate course.⁹¹ Nevertheless, soon other towns in Zeeland fell to rebels hands, Gelderland and Overijssel followed, and after a few months also North Holland (except for Amsterdam) went over to the rebels. Enkhuizen in North Holland became the nerve-centre of rebel operations.⁹²

In most provinces Alva managed to quell the Revolt from August 1572 onwards, however. Because of the St-Bartholomew massacre, the Huguenots were hindered to come to the aid of Nassau, and the attack from the south collapsed. In Mechelen, even though the city had opened its gates for the Spanish troops voluntarily, Alva let his soldiers plunder the city and murder its inhabitants. Soon Brabant's cities surrendered; the same happened in the east of the Netherlands. Zutphen witnessed a massacre on 14 November 1572. Here Alva gave the order to leave no one alive, and resistance in the east was put down as well. Alva had the same strategy for regaining Holland and Zeeland. In order to win these provinces back, Naarden experienced a massacre similar to that of Zutphen on 1 December 1572. While Naarden was reduced to ashes, it did not have the result Alva had hoped for. Because the soldiers did not distinguish between citizens, loyalists and rebels, Hollanders decided to defend themselves all the way to the end. The siege of Haarlem (11 December 1572), Alkmaar (21 August 1573) and Leiden (October 1573) proved as much. During four years of battle, until the Pacification of Gent of November 1576, Holland and Zeeland stood their ground.⁹³

87 Groenveld, *De kogel door de kerk*, 108.

88 Woltjer, *Tussen vrijheidsstrijd*, 48.

89 Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 171.

90 Groenveld, *De kogel door de kerk*, 111.

91 Woltjer, *Tussen vrijheidsstrijd*, 47-49.

92 Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 172-173; Van Nierop, *Het verraad*, esp. Chapter 2.

93 Van Nierop, *Het verraad*, 81-83; Woltjer, *Tussen vrijheidsstrijd*, 59-60.

Even though in the year when the Dutch pamphlet *Een discoers* was published peace negotiations took place with Alva's successor Requesens,⁹⁴ against the background portrayed above it is not surprising that the Dutch author refers to the violence of the Spanish soldiers. In the epilogue of the pamphlet he writes that Spanish soldiers would "eat up" the "poor people" both in towns and in villages "to the bone".⁹⁵ The author describes that the Spanish troops ruin, plunder and pillage whole cities and towns.⁹⁶ By carrying out this violence, he writes, "all old privileges of the country and the cities" are "violated and taken away."⁹⁷ We see that the language of *Een discoers* is reminiscent of the events taken place in the Dutch Revolt. Like in France, the tension in the Low Countries had risen to enormous heights, but the background of the problems were very different. Spanish troops were garrisoned in the Netherlands and this caused a lot of anxiety among the population. The argument of the violation of old rights and privileges by the Spanish king formed a leitmotif in the language of the Revolt. In France, on the other hand, disturbances mostly flared up between Catholic and Protestant factions of society, while Catherine de' Medici desperately tried to solve matters with 'edicts of toleration'.

3.2 Religion

In the preface of the Dutch translator, the author of *Een discoers* makes clear that the pamphlet is written for adherents of both religions that were prevailing at the time:

[...]I wanted to address all Princes, Counts, Grandees, Nobility, Burgomasters, Councillors, and other good and loyal Netherlanders and vassals of your Majesty, whether from the one religion or the other.⁹⁸

The warning that is presented in the pamphlet is important for all inhabitants of the Low Countries, no matter their religious background. All, with no exception on religious grounds, should be mindful of the kind of advice given in the discourse that would lead to the "utter ruination" of the country.⁹⁹ Even though the Dutch author chose not to include the preface of the French translator, he takes over this particular 'formula' from it, and projects it on his Dutch audience. The French author of *Discours* even begins the pamphlet with these exact wordings: he dedicates the work "to all princes, lords, grandees

94 The peace negotiations in Breda took place from March until July 1575. They ended in failure because the parties involved could not find agreement about the issue of religion. See Groenveld, *De kogel door de kerk*, 121-122.

95 "het arme volck met soudaeten, so wel in steden als in dorpen totten beene opeten", *Een discoers*, [8r].

96 "met vremde garnisoenen in hen bewelt houden: geheele stede ende dorpen, daersij het minste weten op te segghen, sommige ganschelick ruineren, sommige roouen ende pilgieren", *Een discoers*, [8r].

97 "alle oude priuilegien van landen ende steden violeren ende wechnemen", *Een discoers*, [8r].

98 "vvaerom ick het vvel hebbe willen addresseren aen alle Princen, Graven, groote meesters, Edelmannen, Borghmeesteren, vvethouders, ende andere goede ende ghetrouwve nederlanders ende vassalen sijnder Maiesteyt, so vvel van deen religie als van dandere", *Een discoers*, [1v].

99 "vvterlicke ruine", *Een discoers*, [1v].

and all other good and legitimate Frenchmen, whether from the one religion or the other”, and repeats the phrase later at the end of his preface.¹⁰⁰ Even though we see this theme more often in protestant pamphlets,¹⁰¹ it is interesting that the pamphlet we focus on uses the expression. Considering what we found in the second chapter of this study, namely that the French pamphlet was possibly part of Protestant propaganda and it could be argued that the Dutch pamphlet originated from a comparable tradition, it is compelling that both authors did not choose to emphasise the religious divisions that were tearing the respective societies asunder. Rather, they stress Italian and Spanish influence on matters of government and leave religion out of the equation. They probably did so because they wanted to reach a broad audience, “whether from the one religion or the other.” Indeed, both the French and the Dutch author abhor the fact that their government might “under the causes that have risen from Religion [...] bring about the end of Nobility, and kill them”.¹⁰² The authors bring the fact that religion would be used as a pretext to explain away violence in association with tyrannical behaviour. Thus, religion should be kept out of the equation.

Moreover, when the author of the pamphlet discusses the issues that make the Ottoman empire a tyranny, he points to the toleration of only one religion in the whole of the empire. He writes that the sultan “in his country does not allow any other religion than his own” and he does not “allow that anyone would dispute religion.”¹⁰³ We will observe in chapter four of this thesis that this is not an accurate description of Ottoman policy, but that does not concern us here. What matters is that the authors associated tolerating only one religion in the country to be tyrannical and found that pluralism suited their own countries better. This is an interesting thought, considering that religious unity was regarded as a means to keep society together. The co-existence of two different kinds of faith was problematic in the period, which for a large part explains the violence that occurred in the French Wars of Religion.¹⁰⁴ As we have seen above, the issue of religion was always an issue that brought peace negotiations to a standstill, or made an ‘edict of toleration’ become a dead letter. That the authors of *Een discoers* and *Discours* opt for religious co-existence was not unique in the period discussed here and, as we shall see below, it puts the authors as regards to religious standpoint in a moderate position in the tumult of the times.

In this part of the chapter, we concentrate on the significance of religion both for the French Wars of Religion as the Dutch Revolt. It will become clear that Catholic aggression was much more fierce in France than in the Netherlands and that, even though the development of Calvinism was comparable in both countries, the nature of the conflict was different nonetheless.

100 “A tovs princes, seigneurs, gentilhommes, & autres bons & legitimes François, tant d’vne que d’autre Religion”, *Discours*, III; “i’ay bien voullu adresser à tous mes Seigneurs les Princes du sang, aultres Princes, grands Seigneurs, Gentil-hommes & autres de quelque conditio[n] & qualité qu’ils soye[n]t d’vne & d’autre religions, bons & legitimes François”, *Discours*, VI.

101 For an example see Holt, *The French Wars of Religion*, 103.

102 “soo is het insonderheyt van noode dat men hem behelpe met de troebelen die ten causen van de Religie gheresen zijn [...] om van alle zijden, den Edeldom aen den hals te bringhen, ende te dooden”, *Een discoers*, [5r]; “il est tresnecassaire de se servir des troubles pour la Religion [...] pour en tuer & faire mourir de tous coftez”, *Discours*, XIII; *La France-Turquie*, [10], erroneously numbered 01.

103 “Het derde point was, dat hy in syn lant geen ander religie toe en laet dan de syne [...] Hoe wel hy nochtans niet toe en laet, datter iemand van de religie soude disputeren.” *Een discoers*, Aij v; “Le troisieme estoit qu’il n’enduroit en sa monarchie autre religion que la sienne [...] il est vray qu’il n’estoit permis à aucuns de disputer de la religion”, *Discours*, X; *La France-Turquie*, 8.

104 Holt, *The French Wars of Religion*, 1-2; see below.

3.2.1. Catholic Aggression

For France it has been stated that strife between the Catholics and Huguenots had already begun before the first civil war was 'officially' proclaimed in 1562. The Dutch historian J.J. Woltjer demonstrates that while the number of Protestants increased, tumult started to rise as early as the late 1550s. It differed per region when the tumult started and how severe the conflicts were. In some regions, however, the population was already "divided into two distinctive religious camps" by 1561 and both camps were getting more militant every day. Woltjer argues that before the beginning of the first civil war in 1562, the conflicts between Catholics and Huguenots had had deep roots in society.¹⁰⁵ Even though economical and political circumstances help to interpret the background of the events during the French civil wars, Mack P. Holt argues that the conflicts of the time can primarily be explained in religious terms. In his argument, religion is not to be understood theologically or doctrinally, but as a social phenomenon: as a means to keep society together. According to Holt, this is the way contemporaries regarded religion. They did not fight over differences of religious doctrine, but over concepts about the social order of society. For instance, Catholic aggression in France can be explained by the idea that the body social needed to be cleansed of the pollutant of Protestantism.¹⁰⁶

Recently, much has been written about the differences between the aggressive Catholic response to French Protestants on the one hand and Dutch Catholic passiveness on the other.¹⁰⁷ Outside of France, not many countries experienced the zeal with which the Catholics attacked their Protestant opponents.¹⁰⁸ In brief, it could be stated that the Reformation in France led to extreme Catholic violence, while those who wished for toleration were a minority. In the Netherlands, on the other hand, the Catholic Spanish crown was the force behind the persecutions, while a majority of the Catholics in the Netherlands seemed to reject the violence.¹⁰⁹

Even though both countries had Catholic rulers over them who wanted unity of the Roman Church restored,¹¹⁰ the way the French crown dealt with the religious division in its country differed greatly from the way the Spanish king reacted on Dutch heresy. In general, in France the persecution of heretics was pursued in order to defend the old church and to prevent escalation of the situation. When it was obvious that the French crown did not succeed in the latter, the Queen Mother Catharine de' Medici chose to launch an edict of toleration, to relax the heresy laws and let the Calvinists have their services outside the towns. This policy had the opposite effect: violence broke out between Catholics and Protestants all over the coun-

105 J.J. Woltjer, 'Violence during the wars of religion in France and the Netherlands: A comparison', *Nederlands archief voor kerkgeschiedenis* 76:1 (1996) 26-45, 28-31.

106 Holt, *The French Wars of Religion*, 1-2.

107 For instance, Pollmann, 'Countering the Reformation'; Van Nierop, 'Similar problems'; Woltjer, 'Violence'; Pettegree, 'Religion and the revolt'; Benedict, *Reformation, Revolt and Civil War*.

108 Pollmann, 'Countering the Reformation', 87.

109 Woltjer, 'Violence', 34.

110 Van Nierop, 'Similar problems', 38.

try. Many authorities and large parts of the population refused to accept toleration.¹¹¹ They saw Protestants as a danger to society, who actively disturbed the public peace by damaging theology and as such, they should be ridden from society. In French Catholic eyes the government was not doing enough about the problem of heresy, so they took matters in their own hands.¹¹² Thus, a Protestant reformation was unthinkable for French Catholics.¹¹³ This explains the French Catholic mobs that attacked Calvinist gatherings or individual Huguenots. They were seen as a threat that needed to be removed from society.¹¹⁴ Catholics often started fighting after Protestants had destroyed sacred objects.¹¹⁵ The violence was on its highest point in August 1572 during the St. Bartholomew massacres, but the massacre was not the only incident of violence; on the contrary.

Catharine de Medici had been in a very difficult position. There were noble factions struggling for power, and the country was heavily in debt.¹¹⁶ Considering, it doesn't seem strange that she chose to settle the religious matter with toleration. After each of the French civil wars such an edict of toleration was issued, but it met with strong opposition among large parts of the Catholic population and consequently, they proved hard to implement.¹¹⁷

In the Netherlands the request for toleration did not come from the crown, but from its subjects. The heresy placards were hard to implement. Where the Catholics in France would have welcomed such policy from their rulers, many groups in the Netherlands were of the opinion that such harsh persecution was not necessary.¹¹⁸ In fact, Dutch Catholics hardly reacted actively to the heresy that was manifesting in their midst at all.¹¹⁹ They did want to defend their religion, but for them this did not mean that they wanted to see heretics brought to the stake. It was not the case that Catholics necessarily had great sympathies for Anabaptists or Mennonites, but they had the idea that the heretics believed that they acted virtuously.¹²⁰ Dutch Catholics were not indifferent to Calvinist aggression, but they just did not take action the way French Catholics did.¹²¹ The town magistrates in the Low Countries were reluctant to implement the harsh placards.¹²² Judges who had to sentence dissidents became opposed to persecution.¹²³ Thus, those who were appointed to persecute heresy were of the opinion that the heretics were ultimately well-meaning and peaceful. When it became clear that Calvinists were not always peaceful, it

111 Woltjer, 'Violence', 31.

112 Pollmann, 'Countering the Reformation', 86.

113 Woltjer, 'Violence', 28.

114 Van Nierop, 'Similar problems', 40.

115 Woltjer, 'Violence', 39.

116 Pollmann, 'Countering the Reformation', 88-89.

117 Woltjer, 'Violence', 31.

118 Woltjer, 'Violence', 33.

119 Van Nierop, 'Similar problems', 38; Pollmann, 'Countering the Reformation', 85.

120 Woltjer, 'Political Moderates', 187, 188.

121 Pollmann, 'Countering the Reformation', 94.

122 Pollmann, 'Countering the Reformation', 90.

123 Woltjer, 'Violence', 33.

was already too late.¹²⁴ Most acts of violence¹²⁵ were committed by individuals, not by groups like in France.¹²⁶

The nature of the conflicts in both countries differed from each other greatly, which is to be explained by economy of scale. In France, the Protestants were a much smaller minority than the Protestants in the Low Countries. While in France there existed about 12% Protestants in the time of the French Wars of Religion,¹²⁷ in the Netherlands Calvinism had expanded greatly in the 1550s and 1560s.¹²⁸ While in the 1520s Protestants had been a small minority in the Low Countries, the ranks of Dutch Protestants grew during the 1560s.¹²⁹ Because the population in France was dissected in an almost 90-10% divide, Catholic aggression was more easily sparked. When the French Crown did not seem to react adequately on the problem of Protestantism, the Catholic majority took matters in their own hands. Because in the Netherlands the divide between Catholics and Protestants was less polarised, Catholic aggression was less immediate.

Other reasons for this difference between Dutch and French Catholics have been proposed by historians recently. There are those who seek the answer in the way Catholics perceived their faith in the Netherlands and in France. In this explanation, Dutch Catholics would have a more 'inwardly' religious experience and would care less about 'external' rituals. This would cause Dutch Catholicism to be less spirited and less militant than in France. In this line of thinking, Dutch Catholics did not care as much for the 'outwardly' objects that were destroyed by the Calvinists, so were less bothered to react actively on the damage done.¹³⁰ Others have argued that in France Catholic clergy played an important role in the emergence of religious riots in France, for instance by preaching radically.¹³¹ In the Netherlands these inflammatory preachers were absent, because they had strong doubts whether it was beneficial for lay-people to be educated about heresy.¹³² In France there had developed a new idea of Catholic reform: lay-people were urged to act in order to ward off the sins that were committed. In the Netherlands, on the other hand, the focus was more on one's personal believe and one's own shortcomings, with the emphasis on obedience to God, church and authorities.¹³³ Moreover, the Jesuit orders in France had an important role in the radicalisation of Catholics as well, while in the Netherlands there were only few Jesuits.¹³⁴ It has also been argued that Dutch Catholic clergymen had other things on their minds, considering the ecclesiastical reforms decreed by Philip II, as described above.¹³⁵ Another explanation might be that Catholics in the Netherlands had a more profound sense of civic unity, which was stronger than the existing religious divisions. In order to uphold the peace, Catholics in the Netherlands

124 Woltjer, 'Violence', 38.

125 Some cases of Catholic violence are summed up in Pollmann, 'Countering the Reformation'.

126 Woltjer, 'Violence', 40.

127 Knecht, *The French Wars of Religion*, 10.

128 Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 101-105.

129 Groenveld, *De kogel door de kerk*, 74-80.

130 Woltjer, 'Violence', 41-44.

131 Pollmann, 'Countering the Reformation', 96.

132 Pollmann, 'Countering the Reformation', 102.

133 Pollmann, 'Countering the Reformation', 109-110.

134 Pollmann, 'Countering the Reformation', 107.

135 Pollmann, 'Countering the Reformation', 112-113.

refrained from acting violently towards the Protestants in their midst. Catholics in the Netherlands more or less expected that the government would protect them in the end. It could be argued that, if the majority of the Catholics were not a silent one, the Dutch Revolt would have developed very differently.¹³⁶

3.2.2. Calvinist Aggression

Both in France and in the Netherlands Calvinists became the guardians of the Reformation. Many similarities exist between the Calvinists of the Low Countries and those of France. The differences that occurred in the development of Calvinism are mostly in scale and timing. In the Netherlands the dissemination of the new faith was somewhat later, slower and more fragmented.¹³⁷ Nevertheless, the pattern of the spread of Calvinism was comparable in both countries. In both countries Calvinism had spread from below, gaining the support of a significant minority of the population – lesser nobles, rich city dwellers and artisans.¹³⁸ Even so, without the support of the nobility in France the Protestant community would never have survived. Such members of the French elite could offer protection.¹³⁹ These relationships took shape in the vast clientèle networks that existed in sixteenth-century France. Nobles gathered ‘clients’ around themselves, who emulated their patrons by adopting the Calvinist faith. This resulted in a growing power base of rural nobles.¹⁴⁰ In the Netherlands such a system of clientage also existed.¹⁴¹ Moreover, both in France and the Netherlands the Calvinists found support locally before occupying a city. City magistrates were left alone if they supported the new regime, otherwise they were replaced.¹⁴² In both societies, the Calvinist movement had to go underground, calling their organisations “churches under the cross” because of the persecution they had to endure.¹⁴³ From 1550 onwards clandestine churches were organised in both countries, and they were in close contact with each other.¹⁴⁴ In both countries, Calvinists did not only seek toleration for their own services, but also acted aggressively towards Catholicism.¹⁴⁵ The destruction of Catholic images and churches were comparable for both Calvinist communities, French and Dutch, and they both sought foreign aid.¹⁴⁶

The Huguenots were encouraged by the success of the French Calvinist movement in Geneva. Because of the situation in France, the Dutch, in turn, felt encouraged to defy official repression and the success of Calvinism gave the Dutch Calvinists an idea of providential deliverance. Like their

136 Van Nierop, ‘Similar problems’, 41-44.

137 Van Nierop, ‘Similar problems’, 39.

138 Pollmann, ‘Countering the Reformation’, 84.

139 Holt, *The French Wars of Religion*, 38.

140 Holt, *The French Wars of Religion*, 51.

141 Groenveld, *De kogel door de kerk*, 50.

142 Van Nierop, ‘Similar problems’, 47-48.

143 Woltjer, ‘Violence’, 28.

144 Van Nierop, ‘Similar problems’, 38.

145 Benedict, ‘Introduction’, 7.

146 Van Nierop, ‘Similar problems’, 48.

counterparts in France, they dared to come out in the open. The *Confession of the Faith* that was published in 1561 in the Low Countries, was based on the French model. Likewise, the structure of church government was mirrored to the French Calvinist Church as well. Thus, Dutch Calvinists followed their Huguenot counterparts.¹⁴⁷ In the 1560s and 1570s the Calvinists in the Netherlands displayed comparable behaviour to the Huguenots in the 1550s.¹⁴⁸ The advancement of Dutch Calvinism then, came about partly because of Huguenot support. Moreover, William of Orange's cause was greatly helped by the assistance of the Huguenots. He needed their support in order to resist the troops sent by the Spanish crown. Therefore, the massacres of St. Bartholomew of August 1572 was a great setback both for the Huguenots as for the Dutch Calvinists. Consequently, the Huguenots had to fall back to the Midi and the West of France, while Orange and his followers were confined to Holland.¹⁴⁹

An important force behind the growth of the Calvinists movement in The Netherlands were those who had fled from Charles V's oppression. These refugees banded together while being abroad. The Calvinist faith suited these refugee camps well, with the emphasis on discipline and providential destiny.¹⁵⁰ In exile, these refugees assumed a more dogmatic version of the Calvinist faith.¹⁵¹ Many of them came back after Margaret of Parma was pressured by a large group of lesser nobles in april 1566 to relax the anti-heresy legislation in the Compromise of Nobles.¹⁵² In 1566 therefore, many Calvinists adopted more openness and participated in the hedge preachings.¹⁵³ The situation of the Calvinists seemed to be very positive at this stage. Unfortunately for them, the situation did not last. The aggression of the Calvinists in the Netherlands was manifested in the Iconoclastic Fury of 1566 and as we have seen above, the Calvinists got a fierce blow because of Alva's Council of Troubles and the massive exodus that the Council caused. When these exiles came back to the Low Countries after the resistance gained foothold again around 1572, they assumed important places in town councils and in the Calvinist consistories and participated in the Revolt as well.¹⁵⁴

While studying Catholic and Calvinist aggression in the age of Reformation, we have to remember that not all believers were as zealous as the radicals we have focussed on until now. We should not forget that there were many places in Europe where Protestants and Catholics simply had to live together.¹⁵⁵ As Judith Pollmann so aptly stated: "Even in the sixteenth century it took more than the existence of religious difference to make people start lynching their neighbours."¹⁵⁶ Important parts of the population

147 Pettegree, 'Religion and the revolt', 71-72.

148 Pollmann, 'Countering the Reformation', 84.

149 Van Nierop, 'Similar problems', 30.

150 Pettegree, 'Religion and the revolt', 69-70.

151 Van Nierop, *Het verraad*, 60.

152 Woltjer, 'Political Moderates', 189; Pettegree, 'Religion and the revolt', 75.

153 Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 146.

154 Van Nierop, *Het verraad*, 66, 74, 77; Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 157.

155 Pollmann, 'Countering the Reformation', 87; Also see Benjamin J. Kaplan, *Divided by Faith. Religious Conflict and the Practice of Toleration in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA 2007).

156 Pollmann, 'Countering the Reformation', 119.

both in France and in the Netherlands were not committed to the militant Reformed or Catholic cause.¹⁵⁷ For instance, there were many Catholics in Paris who resented the massacre of St. Bartholomew.¹⁵⁸ Likewise, in the Netherlands, not all Calvinists wanted religious exclusiveness, even though in the end Catholicism was banned when Protestant rule was established.¹⁵⁹ The *Discours* and *Een discoers* should be read in this light as well. As we have seen, both authors of the pamphlets appealed to their readers “whether from the one religion or the other”. The authors chose not to emphasise their religious background, whether they were Protestants as one might expect, or Catholic. Instead, they chose to stress the insidious influence they felt certain elements had in their respective governments. In case of the *Discours* and *La France-Turquie* the authors referred to the influence of Italians in court, especially “la Royne mere”, Catherine de Medici. *Een discoers* adopted the arguments of its French counterpart to Dutch circumstances, as we observed in chapter two of this study. The emphasis was put on the destructive nature of Spanish government, not on its ‘Catholicness’. Minority groups chose to appropriate this strategy in order for them to appeal to broader, moderate groups in society.¹⁶⁰ They were wise not to polarise too explicitly. It is probable that the authors of the French and Dutch pamphlets aimed at a similar result.

Conclusion

We have seen that the situations in which France and the Low Countries found themselves in the second half of the sixteenth century were very different in character, despite the fact that contemporaries mainly noted the similarities. From our survey it becomes abundantly clear that both countries were encountering very difficult periods, with towering tensions and considerable violence related to religious strife. The world in which the French and Dutch pamphleteers lived was violent and was permeated with a lot of anxiety. This can be distilled from the French pamphlet as well as the Dutch. Nevertheless, the contexts in which these tensions mounted were severely different from one another. In the French civil wars Catholics and Protestants were fighting throughout the country, while the queen repeatedly tried to settle the matter with ‘edicts of toleration’. In the Low Countries one of the driving forces behind the fighting was Philips II himself, who had stationed permanent garrisons in his Dutch territories from 1567 onwards, in order to quell the disturbances in his realm. In France one of the hallmarks of the Religious Wars were the noble factions at court, which were strengthened because of the untimely death of Henry II and his son Francis, which resulted in Catharine de’ Medici’s regency and thus, weak royal authority.

Another important difference between the situation in the Low Countries in comparison to the French is the way the countries were structured politically. The French monarch was king over all his territories, except for Brittany. The Habsburg ruler had seventeen different titles according to the various

157 Benedict, ‘Introduction’, 13.

158 Woltjer, ‘Violence’, 32.

159 Woltjer, ‘Political Moderates’, 191.

160 Woltjer, ‘Political Moderates’, 185; Van Nierop, ‘Similar problems’, 50; Benedict, ‘Introduction’, 13-14.

territories in the Low Countries. Thus, political power was much more fragmented than was the case in France. This did not mean that France was a cultural unity. The country had a population ten times as large as the Low Countries and as such the political reality required a strong monarchy. An administration of deliberation between various governmental institutions like in the Netherlands did not function in a country like France, because of its complex political system, which was mainly a result of the country's size. Conversely, the rhetoric of the Dutch conflict was imbued with issues of old privileges and rights, which the monarch would have violated by pushing for political centralisation. This gave the conflict a different dimension than the French civil wars. Moreover, because the Habsburg monarch could not be present in all his dominions at the same time, he had a disadvantageous position compared to the French monarch, who could be 'on the spot' despite the fact that France was such a large country. The French king did not have to cross foreign lands, nor sea to visit parts of his realm. Regarding religion we have seen that Catholics reacted more aggressively to the phenomenon of Calvinism as was the case in the Low Countries, which was also related to economy of scale. In France the population existed of almost 90% Catholics – with the Protestants being a small minority – whereas the Protestants in the Low Countries were a much larger minority.

Yet, despite all these fundamental differences, the Dutch author of *Een discoers* found it perfectly logical to project the French political situation on the Dutch status quo. As we have seen, even though the institutional background and the nature of the conflicts differed greatly, contemporaries regarded the situations as comparable. Consequently, similar political observations were made in the contexts of both countries. As we shall see in chapter five, there existed a similar political discussion about the limits of monarchical power in both countries. Nevertheless, these observations were adapted to fit distinct domestic circumstances. The French pamphlet deals with a discourse held before the French king and his council and was, as we have seen in the previous chapter, an expression of anti-Italianism. This last feature disappears in the Dutch pamphlet to be replaced by an anti-Spanish sentiment. The discourse that would partly have led to the massacres of St. Bartholomew in France would in the Dutch case lead to the "misery, destruction and utter ruin"¹⁶¹ of the country, if people failed to take heed of the danger of the discourse that was held before the French king. Such "evil counsel" would be used by the Spaniards in order to "bring our Netherlands in a Turkish slavery and tyranny",¹⁶² even though the French situation had little to do with the state of affairs in the Low Countries. Thus, in both pamphlets the political idea arose that their respective governments were having tyrannical tendencies comparable to the rule of the Ottoman Empire. Both pamphleteers implore their audience to be mindful of the "evil counsel" that lead to these tyrannical tendencies. That the administration of government in France would be compromised by Italians and that in the Netherlands this place was taken by the Spanish, or that their political circumstances were

161 "ende voor meerder catiuiicheit, destructie, ende vvterlicke ruine, behouden vvorden, so hierop vvvel ende rijpelick ghelettet vvverde" *Een discoers*, [iv].

162 "hoe de Spaense Nacie den saluen boosen raet ende middelen ghebruyckt om onse Nederlanden in een Turckse slavernije ende tyranniije te bringen." *Een discoers*, [ir] (Title page).

completely different did not seem to matter. The relationship between the Dutch and French pamphlet prove that political ideas on tyrannical government could transcend borders and it shows how the original ideas could be used in different way in order to construct a new kind of argument, in this case how Spain introduces a “Turkish tyranny” in the Netherlands. This obviously went beyond the intention the French author might have had for translating the Italian discourse in French. It shows that ideas in history have their own dynamics. In the next chapter we turn to what the pamphleteers understood to be such a “Turkish tyranny”, and how the Dutch author used the image of the Ottoman Turk in depicting Spanish government.

IV.

The Spaniard and the Turk. The concept of tyranny in Dutch imagination

Introduction

The Spaniards and the Turks. When one looks at the title of the pamphlet we focus on in this study, they seem to have something to do with each other in the minds of the author and his contemporaries. The subtitle reads: “how the Spanish Nation uses the same evil council to bring our Netherlands in a Turkish slavery and tyranny.”¹ The Spaniard is portrayed as an oppressor who threatens to introduce a “Turkish tyranny” in the Netherlands. In this chapter we investigate how the image of the Spaniard corresponds with the image of the Ottoman Turk in sixteenth-century Dutch imagination. In the pamphlet we are concentrating on in this thesis, we see that the Turk represents tyrannical behaviour for the Dutch author and it is our current concern to analyse how this representation worked exactly. The “Turk” seems to be instrumental in depicting Spanish rule.

The image of the Ottoman Turk was already evoked in the French *Discours* in order to show how Italian influence would lapse the French Crown into a tyrannical system as supposedly encountered in the Ottoman Empire. The same terminology is used by the Dutch author to depict Spanish influence in the Low Countries. The anti-Italian sentiment was completely lost in the Dutch pamphlet.² Instead, the Spaniard is alleged to introduce a “Turkish slavery and tyranny” in the Netherlands. The language of the “Turkish tyranny” is adopted in *Een discoers*, while the anti-Italian sentiment is exchanged for an anti-Spanish attitude. Thus, the anti-Turkish theme could be adopted in both countries, suiting their specific contexts. The interesting question is why the authors of the pamphlet chose to depict their governments as a “Turkish tyranny” to begin with, and not just ‘tyranny’ or any other kind of possible epithet. In this chapter we aim to find an answer to that question.

1 Dutch original: *hoe de Spaense Nacie den saluen boosen raet ende middelen ghebruyckt om onse Nederlanden in een Turckse slavernije ende tyrannije te bringhen. Een discoers*, Knuttel 232 (1575), title page.

2 See chapter two and three of this thesis, esp. chapter two.

In order to understand the Dutch portrayal of Spanish rule as the harbinger of tyranny, first we look into the phenomenon of the so-called Black Legend of Spain, which revolves around the tradition to present the Spaniard as a cruel and barbaric enemy. Subsequently we look at how the image of the Ottoman Turk is used in this portrayal. We will see that in *Een Discoers* three points that are associated with the Turk are utilised to warn for the tyrannical behaviour of the Spaniard. In this representation of the Ottoman Turk, the author of *Een discoers* follows its French source *Discours* word-for-word, even though the latter implicates Italian influence as contributing to the deterioration of the French government into tyranny and the former incriminates the Spanish instead for the Dutch context. It is not our main purpose here to give a description of the French image of the Ottoman Turk. Instead, our starting point is the Dutch attempt to apply the French account of Turkish rule to the Dutch political situation. We see that it proved possible for the Dutch author to adopt the terminology with which Turkish rule was addressed in the French pamphlet *verbatim*, and this shows that there was a common European image of the Ottoman Turk from which the French and Dutch authors could draw. In the last part of this chapter, we will investigate how the specific image that emerges from the French and Dutch pamphlet can be placed into the broader European phenomenon of representing the Ottoman Turk as a force of evil. This approach allows us to observe that there was a broad European discussion of the ‘Turkish question’ to which both the French and the Dutch author could appeal.

For the Netherlands we see that there are several elements which together amount to the argument that Spanish rule is equivalent to a tyrannical system. The argument revolves around the nature of the Spanish people; that the Spaniards are a people inclined to cruelty and tyranny. In pamphlets of the period there are several examples of the “cruel disposition”³ of the Spaniards, for instance the institution of the Inquisition, the attempt of the Spanish crown and its advisors to establish a universal monarchy and the brutality displayed in the newly discovered Americas. A similar argumentation can be found for the nature of the Ottoman people. There are several constituents in the argument that the Turk is cruel in nature, an arch-enemy of Christendom, and prone to tyranny. A component of the argument that the Ottoman sultan is a tyrant *pur sang*, is the absence of nobility in the Ottoman Empire. Subsequently we discern that in *Een discoers* the description of Ottoman tyranny is transferred onto Spanish rule, which brings all these elements of the argument together. The nature of the Spaniards is regarded to be comparable to that of the Turks, considering that in the argumentation both political systems allegedly tend to tyranny. This chapter aims at reconstructing the elements of the argumentation and attempts to pinpoint when which component of the argument found its way into the literature of the time.

3 Words by Philip Marnix of St. Aldegonde (1578) and William of Orange (1581). See below, note 40.

4.1 The Black Legend

A lot has been written about the so-called Black Legend of Spain. This theme has first been construed in historiography in the work of Julián Juderías when he published his *La Leyenda Negra* in 1914.⁴ In this work Juderías tries to promote Spain's good name by showing that his fatherland had unjustly been portrayed in history as a barbaric, intolerant and culturally underdeveloped country.⁵ His argument concentrates mainly on the influence that protestant pamphlets, especially Dutch, had in creating the legend that Spain was a brute and cruel country in nature.⁶ Even though it is acknowledged that Juderías' story is one-sided⁷ and that it is very apologetic in character, the existence of the Black Legend is not controversial: it is generally assumed that there existed anti-Spanish propaganda in the sixteenth century and onwards, and that protestant pamphlets have contributed to it greatly.⁸

Until the 1970s the focus of Black Legend scholars was on the influence the phenomenon had in Latin-America, as the Spanish colonisation left its marks on the indigenous people of that region. In 1992 Judith Pollmann focused on the influence of the Black Legend in Europe, and surveyed its development in Germany, England, France, and the Netherlands very convincingly.⁹ Pollmann sets out to investigate the influence that propaganda against the Spaniards had in the development of Dutch national awareness.¹⁰ The article expands on a publication by K.W. Swart, who – as the first historian who extensively researched the Dutch Black Legend – argued in 1975 that there were four themes which specifically characterised the Dutch version of the Black Legend. Although Swart acknowledges that the Black Legend has its roots in Italy in the beginning of the sixteenth century, he uncovers four themes that were characteristic for the Netherlands that are barely represented in Italian Hispanophobia. First, the cruelties and arbitrariness of the Spanish Inquisition, secondly the private vices of Philip II, thirdly Spain's 'master plan' for a universal empire and lastly, the innate cruelty of the Spanish people.¹¹ Pollmann, however, traces these four topics back in all the countries she discusses, not only in the Netherlands. Pollmann claims that the only way to understand the Dutch Black Legend is by investigating the Black Legend in other European countries.¹² The Dutch Black Legend, which for Pollmann comes down to the idea that there exists a natural and fundamental difference between the Dutch and Spanish, was also a European phenomenon. The Dutch Black Legend was influenced by the traditional themes as seen in other

4 Julián Juderías, *La Leyenda Negra* (Salamanca 1997, first ed. 1914).

5 G.J. Geers, *De zwarte legende van Spanje* (Groningen 1947) 8.

6 Judith Pollmann, 'Eine natürliche Feindschaft: Ursprung and Funktion der schwarzen Legende über Spanien in den Niederlanden, 1566-1581', in Franz Bisbach (ed.), *Feindbilder. Die Darstellung des Gegners in der politischen Publizistik des Mittelalters und der Neuzeit* (Cologne 1992) 73-93, 73.

7 Geers, *De zwarte legende van Spanje*, 8.

8 Pollmann, 'Eine natürliche Feindschaft', 73.

9 Pollmann, 'Eine natürliche Feindschaft', 73.

10 Pollmann, 'Eine natürliche Feindschaft', 75.

11 K.W. Swart, 'The Black Legend during the Eighty Years War' in J.S. Bromley and E.H. Kossmann, *Britain and the Netherlands. Volume V: Some Political Mythologies. Papers delivered to the fifth Anglo-Dutch Historical Conference* (The Hague 1975) 36-57, 38.

12 Pollmann, 'Eine natürliche Feindschaft', 74.

countries. Where Swart states that certain characteristics of the Black Legend originated in the Netherlands first,¹³ Pollmann states that it proves difficult to determine how this influence developed exactly. Moreover, she writes, the development of the Black Legend was not fixed: the development was different for the countries and periods she discusses and the countries influenced each other in an intricate way.¹⁴

In *Een discoers* we can trace back the most of the issues that are raised by Swart and Pollmann concerning the Black Legend. The Dutch author writes in his epilogue that the “bloody Spanish Inquisition” must be hindered where possible.¹⁵ The myths surrounding the Spanish Inquisition resulted in much unrest during the time of the Dutch Revolt. Alastair Duke shows that the Dutch fear of the Spanish Inquisition faded somewhat after the government had made some concessions in 1550, and that the theme did not resurface until 1559, the same year Philip II left the Low Countries for Spain.¹⁶ By that time it was a powerful image, though. No matter how the king reassured that he was not planning to introduce an Inquisition in the Netherlands based on the Spanish version, there were still persistent rumours about it.¹⁷ The idea existed that the entire policy of religious persecution in the Low Countries by Charles V and Philip II originated from the Spanish Inquisition. The Inquisition was also blamed for the instigation of the Iconoclastic Fury, in order to kindle the king’s anger, which resulted in the arrival of the duke of Alva in the Netherlands in 1567. Charles V and Philip II were depicted as mere puppets of the Inquisition. This image arose from a forged document that was alleged to be composed in the 1550s. Titled *The Articles of the Inquisition*, it ultimately stated that the goal of the Inquisition was to exterminate almost all of the Dutch inhabitants. Around 1570 another forgery made its entrance into anti-Spanish propaganda which even had more influence. In *The Advice of the Inquisition* it was declared that all inhabitants of the Low Countries would be judged guilty of *lese majestatis*, which would mean they had forfeited their lives and property.¹⁸ As we will see in the next chapter of this thesis, the reference to danger to the “persons and goods” of French and Dutch subjects found its way into the pamphlets we focus on here, in depicting the phenomenon of “Turkish tyranny” and the threat of losing “persons and goods” because of the potentially tyrannical behaviour of their respective arguments.

The view of the Inquisition being the main instigator of the Revolt gradually lost its prominent place in Dutch anti-Spanish literature during the 1570s. At the same time another theme was developed, namely that the last hundred years Spanish kings and councillors tried to establish a universal monarchy. This argument was the tool that Orange used in order to get foreign support in his struggle against Spain.¹⁹ In order to find support for the struggle against the powerful Spanish monarchy – which had more resources at its disposal than the rebels would ever be able to muster – the latter had to make their argu-

13 Swart, ‘The Black Legend’, 45.

14 Pollmann, ‘Eine natürliche Feindschaft’, 91.

15 “so verde het moghelick is verhinderen die bloedighe Spaense Inquisitie”, *Een discoers*, [8v].

16 Alastair Duke, *Dissident Identities in the Early Modern Low Countries* (Ashgate 2009) 134.

17 Duke, *Dissident Identities*, 67.

18 Swart, ‘The Black Legend’, 38, 40, 42.

19 Swart, ‘The Black Legend’, 43-44.

ments as convincingly as possible. If their enemy was planning to establish an empire as vast as a universal monarchy, other European countries might be persuaded to help the rebels in their cause.²⁰ However, the propagandistic theme of the universal monarchy was only voiced from 1578 onwards.²¹ In that year William of Orange's most skilful propagandist, Philip Marnix of St. Aldegonde, composed his *Oratio legatorum*, which was also published in Dutch and outlined Spain's imperialistic tendencies.²² In this regard, in 1580 an influential document was translated into Dutch. Originally printed in 1566 in French, and popularly known as the *Legend of the Inquisition*, it was published in 1580 in Dutch as *The Book of the three popes*. The title refers to the claim made in the work that the popes of Rome, the Netherlands (Granvelle) and France (Cardinal Lorraine) had conspired to establish and divide among themselves a European empire.²³ Two years later a pamphlet similarly stated that the Spanish Inquisition used the Netherlands as a means to establish further conquest across the whole of Europe.²⁴ *Een discoers* was published in 1575 and we see that while the theme of the Spanish Inquisition is invoked, the argument of the universal monarchy is nowhere to be found. It is an example that the argument of the Habsburg rulers trying to establish a universal monarchy was not current at the time the pamphlet was published.

In *Een discoers* the private vices of Philip II are not analysed similarly as in other Black Legend material, because the whole argumentation in the pamphlet revolves around the 'evil advice' that would lead to the introduction of the alleged 'Turkish tyranny in the Netherlands'. Not king Philip II himself, but his 'evil advisors' were the malefactors behind the behaviour that would lead to the despised 'slavery' of the Dutch people. The theme of these evil advisors being responsible for the bad conduct of the king can be traced back in the propaganda of the Dutch Revolt. Martin van Gelderen asserts that in decision-making councillors played a very important role at the court of Philip II in Castile. There were always struggling factions at the Spanish court. For instance, Alva was of the opinion that Philip should reign more aggressively and should focus more on centralising his authority. The prince of Eboli, on the other hand, was more moderate and argued for a federalist approach to Philip II's kingdom. Van Gelderen shows that these conflicts influenced decision-making.²⁵ In these circumstances it may not seem very strange that critique on Philip II's policies were directed at his advisors instead of directly at the king himself.²⁶ Geurts demonstrates, however, that for the leaders of the Revolt, like William of Orange, these sentiments were hardly sincere. For ordinary people it might have been a way to keep a clean conscience, but the rebel leaders of the Revolt used it as a tool of propaganda. Moreover, by maintaining this position, negotiation always remained a possibility. It was also a strategy to steer clear of the suspicion of being rebellious.²⁷ Even though Geurts

20 Benjamin Schmidt, *Innocence Abroad. The Dutch Imagination and the New World, 1570-1670* (Cambridge 2001) 100.

21 Pollmann, 'Eine natürliche Feindschaft', 91; Swart, 'The Black Legend', 44.

22 Swart, 'The Black Legend', 44-45; Pollmann, 'Eine natürliche Feindschaft', 91; Schmidt, *Innocence Abroad*, 101.

23 Schmidt, *Innocence Abroad*, 100-101; Swart, 'The Black Legend', 41.

24 Schmidt, *Innocence Abroad*, 101.

25 Martin van Gelderen, *The Political Thought of the Dutch Revolt 1555-1590* (Cambridge 1992) 32.

26 Pollmann, 'Eine natürliche Feindschaft', 88; Geurts, *De Nederlandse Opstand*, 131.

27 P.A.M. Geurts, *De Nederlandse Opstand in de pamfletten 1566-1584* (Utrecht 1983, first ed. Nijmegen 1956) 136.

claims the propagandistic tool of the role of bad advisors was very effective because its language would be accessible to many, it is difficult to ascertain how effective such an argument really was.

Philip's advisors would have influenced him to refrain from relaxing the anti-heresy *placards*. The councillors would not be acting for the common good, but out of their own ambitions. Geurts states that before the 1580s, William of Orange was the most skilled propagandist in portraying the king as innocent and misled by his advisors. For the enforcements of the *placards* Granvelle was blamed. Alva was also blamed to have acted contrary to the king's good intentions. This line of thinking also explains why in 1576 the mutinous soldiers who were under the king's banner could be proclaimed rebels and enemies of the country and the king himself. They acted without the king's knowledge and despite his good intentions.²⁸ By blaming the king's advisors instead of the king himself, Orange and his supporters could still claim to be loyal subjects of the Spanish king.²⁹ Geurts asserts that these sentiments can be found in pamphlets as late as 1584, three years after the official separation of the king with the Act of Abjuration of 26 July 1581.³⁰ In *Een discoers* we find a similar outlook when the author describes the audience he tries to reach. Among them are "loyal Netherlanders and vassals of your Majesty."³¹ Even though the author states that a "Turkish slavery" would soon be upon him and his fellow subjects,³² he does not criticise the Spanish king directly, and keeps appealing to "loyal Netherlanders" and "vassals of your Majesty". Direct critique on Philip II, however, was voiced in William of Orange's famous *Apology* of 1581. From that moment on, the accusation of Philip being the direct cause of the troubles in the Netherlands was no longer shunned in public debate.³³ This does not mean that there was no direct criticism addressed to Philips at all before that time. Geurts identifies a pamphlet in which the king is criticised for ignoring his people and reigning arbitrarily as early as 1574.³⁴

Considering that *Een discoers* was published in 1575, the pamphlet belongs to the tradition in which there is not yet direct critique on king Philips II himself, but on his evil advisors instead. Of course, as we have seen in chapter two, the language of the advisor corrupting the judgement of the king was already provided by the French original *Discours traduit d'italien en françois, Contenant aulcuns moyens pour reduire la France à vne entiere obeissance à son Roy*. It is important to remember that the content of the Dutch pamphlet is, except for the prologue and epilogue, dependent on the French original. However, the argument is reworked by the Dutch translator and transferred on the Dutch political situation. Not Italian, but Spanish influence on the government was deemed potentially tyrannical. Obviously, the argument of the evil advisor being the instigator of bad conduct by the king suited the Dutch translator well.

28 Geurts, *De Nederlandse Opstand*, 132.

29 Jonathan Israel, *The Dutch Republic. Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall, 1477-1806* (Oxford 1995) 183.

30 Geurts, *De Nederlandse Opstand*, 135.

31 "goede ende ghetrouvve nederlanders ende vassalen sijnder Maiesteyt", *Een discoers*, [1v].

32 "volge corts meer dan een Turcksche slauernye", *Een discoers*, [8v].

33 Pollmann, 'Eine natürliche Feindschaft', 90.

34 Geurts, *De Nederlandse Opstand*, 134.

The fourth issue Swart and Pollmann identify in Black Legend propaganda is the innate cruelty of the Spanish people. According to Swart, to the contemporary audience Alva and his soldiers represented the inherent cruelty and greediness of the Spanish people.³⁵ Duke stated that the later axiom among the rebels that there was a ‘natural enmity’ that existed between Spaniards and Netherlanders would not come up until the arrival of Alva and his troops in 1567.³⁶ Pollmann, however, demonstrates that the Black Legend was manifested only after 1568 in the Low Countries. According to her, in 1566 and 1567, Spain was rarely mentioned in Dutch pamphlets and songs. She finds that after 1568, in the writings of Brederode and William of Orange’s propaganda, tendencies begin to occur that are characteristic for the language of the Black Legend.³⁷ For instance, in 1572, Marnix of St. Aldegonde wrote that the Spaniard has always been, in his nature and character, the enemy of the Dutch people. In Orange’s *Apology* (1581) the “natural enmity” between the Dutch and the Spaniards is voiced.³⁸ Pollmann asserts that from 1572 – the second phase in the Revolt – propaganda expressed the Black Legend in full. From this time onwards she detects that the Dutch comment on the “nature of the Spaniard”, for instance in the songs of the Beggars.³⁹ Benjamin Schmidt reports that in 1578 Marnix wrote “tirelessly” about the “cruel disposition” and “natural tyranny” of the Spanish and that in William’s *Apology* (1581) the latter writes about the “natural disposition” of the Spanish soldier, showing him to be “always cruel”.⁴⁰

In the epilogue of *Een discoers* the Dutch author also comments on the cruelty of the Spaniard. The Spanish soldiers would “eat up” the “poor people” both in towns and in villages “to the bone”.⁴¹ The foreign garrisons repress the Dutch people violently and destroy whole towns and villages, while some plunder and pillage them.⁴² Because of the conflict with Spain, in the Netherlands the fictitious themes of the Black Legend became a reality. Propaganda of the Black Legend got mixed with actual Dutch experiences with the Spaniard.⁴³ As we have seen in chapter three of this thesis, 1572 had been a traumatic year for the inhabitants of the Low Countries. In Mechelen, even though the city had opened its gates for the Spanish troops, Alva let his soldiers plunder the city and murder its citizens. Zutphen witnessed a massacre comparable in scale on 14 November 1572. Here Alva gave the order to leave no one alive. Naarden experienced a massacre similar to that of Zutphen on 1 December 1572 and the city was reduced to ashes.⁴⁴

35 Swart, ‘The Black Legend’, 48.

36 Duke, *Dissident Identities*, 134.

37 Pollmann, ‘Eine natürliche Feindschaft’, 76-77.

38 Pollmann, ‘Eine natürliche Feindschaft’, 74.

39 Pollmann, ‘Eine natürliche Feindschaft’, 90. The so-called *Geuzenliedboek* was compiled by Dutch rebels in the 1570s. See Judith Pollmann, “Brabanters do fairly resemble Spaniards after all.” Memory, propaganda and identity in the Twelve Years’ Truce’, in Judith Pollmann and Andrew Spicer (eds.), *Public Opinion and Changing Identities in the Early Modern Netherlands* (Leiden 2007) 211-227, 214.

40 Quoted in Benjamin Schmidt, *Innocence Abroad*, 85.

41 “het arme volck met soudaeten, so wel in steden als in dorpen totten beene opeten”, *Een discoers* [8r].

42 “met vremde garnisoenen in hen bewelt houden: geheele stede ende dorpen, daersij het minste weten op te segghen, sommige ganschelick ruineren, sommige roouen ende pilgieren”, *Een discoers*, [8r].

43 Pollmann, ‘Eine natürliche Feindschaft’, 90.

44 Henk van Nierop, *Het verraad van het Noorderkwartier. Oorlog, terreur en recht in de Nederlandse Opstand* (Amsterdam 2005) 81-83.

In 1575, the year *Een discoers* was published, Oudewater was also sacked.⁴⁵ Moreover, in september 1575 Philip II had announced the bankruptcy of his Empire. This meant that the money supply to the Low Countries was suspended. As a result, soldiers that had not been paid for periods on end started mutinying and terrorising their surroundings.⁴⁶ Thus, the problem of the killing, plundering and pillaging of mutinous soldiers was certainly very actual for the author of the pamphlet and his contemporaries. Considering, it seems understandable that the Dutch depicted the Spaniard as one “who will shower his nature and cruelty over the them as well as over others”.⁴⁷

Even though this tradition cannot be found in *Een discoers*, it is important to mention that the Spanish colonisation of the New World had an important influence on the development of the Dutch Black Legend as well. Benjamin Schmidt shows that from 1566 ‘the abuses in the Indies’ were used to strengthen pamphleteer’s arguments in order to challenge Spanish rule. From that time onwards, the concern was voiced in pamphlets that the Spanish would subject and colonise the Netherlands they same way as the “tyranny in America.”⁴⁸ According to Schmidt, the topic of the New World was very popular in the Netherlands because it appealed to a wide audience. It could be read by a scholarly elite, but was also appealing for the readers of medieval romances. The topic could be adjusted for many kinds of readers.⁴⁹ The image that followed from the so-called genre of *Americana* was one that depicted the Americas as “peaceful, bountiful, utopian”, unspoiled and untouched until the Spanish soldiers arrived. The *Americana* described the situation in which the indigenous people lived by recalling the notion of the classical Golden Age (*area aetas* by Ovidius); a period from human history in which people lived in peace and innocence. This notion is also understood as the ‘state of nature’, wherein people lived in harmony, without property, laws and social conflict. Schmidt states that in the genre of *Americana* it is argued that this all changed when the Spaniards arrived in the Americas. They enslaved the natives, whose situation turned from peace and innocence to warfare and slavery.⁵⁰ Schmidt argues that this myth of native innocence was replaced by the notion of Spanish cruelty as a primary theme: it was the Spanish character that was behind all the atrocities. This would fully develop into the Black Legend in the sixteenth and seventeenth century.⁵¹

At the beginning of the Revolt in the mid-1560s, Schmidt recounts, a group of nobles assembled in Rotterdam formulated the warning that the Spanish sought nothing else but to abuse the Netherlands in the same way they have treated the indigenous people of America.⁵² Schmidt shows that while in the

45 Swart, ‘The Black Legend’, 50-51.

46 J. J. Woltjer, *Tussen vrijheidsstrijd en burgeroorlog. Over de Nederlandse Opstand 1555-1580* (Amsterdam 1994) 71.

47 “den Spaengeart [...] die synen aert ende wreetheyt so wel ouer hen als ouer eenighe andere tooghen sal”, *Een discoers*, [8v].

48 Schmidt, *Innocence Abroad*, xxv. Schmidt presents these words as deriving from “rebel pamphleteers” such as Jacob van Wesembeke, Petrus Dathenus, Philip Marnix van St. Aldegonde and above all, William of Orange. See Schmidt, *Innocence Abroad*, 75.

49 Schmidt, *Innocence Abroad*, 15.

50 Schmidt, *Innocence Abroad*, 17-20.

51 Schmidt, *Innocence Abroad*, 53.

52 Schmidt, *Innocence Abroad*, 68.

1560s and 1570s the enthusiasm for the Habsburg Empire in the Netherlands subsided, criticism about Habsburg abuses in the Indies increased. They served as a warning: it showed the behaviour which the Spanish could also unleash on the Dutch. The rebels' image of America proceeded gradually in the years following the initial Dutch resistance to Habsburg rule from 1566 onwards.⁵³ Schmidt demonstrates that the Indies were used to illustrate the Spaniard's natural disposition towards absolutism, inherent abuse of privileges, instinctive plundering of property and inclination to tyranny.⁵⁴ Thus, the language that was used to describe the Habsburg abuses in the Low Countries was also invoked to recount Spanish misconduct in the Americas and *vice versa*. Instrumental in the formation of this image are several works that were available to the rebel pamphleteers. The theme of the transition from American innocence to Spanish slavery in the New World was narrated by the Milanese scholar Peter Martyr in 1510 in his *Decades*.⁵⁵ It was quickly disseminated in the Netherlands and was seen by many as the guide to the New World *par excellence*.⁵⁶ Its years of publications include 1555, 1574 and 1577.⁵⁷ Another vital work in the development of the image of Spanish cruelty is Girolamo Benzoni's *Historia del mondo nuovo*. Originally printed in 1565, the work is a catalogue of Spanish cruelties: it shows that the Spaniards are cruel in character. *Mondo nuovo* was published seventeen times before the close of the sixteenth century and was translated in Dutch, French, Latin, German, and English.⁵⁸ According to Schmidt, Benzoni introduced many elements which would feed the "assaults on the Spanish character" that would develop into the Black Legend of Spain.⁵⁹ Thus, when the famous *Brevissima relación de la destruyción de las Indias* (*The very brief account of the destruction of the Indies*) (1552) of Bartholomé de Las Casas was translated in Dutch in 1578, the shocking tales of 'Spanish tyranny' added to the already existing Hispanophobia of the rebels. It became one of the most commonly cited texts by the Dutch rebels regarding Spanish abuses in America. On the basis of these works, the Dutch formulated an image of 'Spanish tyranny' in the New World that was meant to serve as an example for readers in the Low Countries: they showed what the Spaniards could have in store for the contemporary Dutch themselves.⁶⁰ Even though we can not find this theme in the blackening of the Spaniard in *Een discoers*, it was nevertheless part of the discussion on the nature of the Spaniard in the time the pamphlet was published.

We have seen that anti-Spanish propaganda developed in the course of the 1560s and 1570s. While the Black Legend had its origins in Italy in the beginning of the sixteenth century, the themes that characterise the arguments that fit the Black Legend – that the Spaniards have a fundamental inclination

53 Schmidt, *Innocence Abroad*, 73-74.

54 Schmidt, *Innocence Abroad*, 87.

55 Schmidt, *Innocence Abroad*, 20.

56 Schmidt, *Innocence Abroad*, 23.

57 Schmidt, *Innocence Abroad*, 99.

58 Schmidt, *Innocence Abroad*, 46.

59 Schmidt, *Innocence Abroad*, 53.

60 Schmidt, *Innocence Abroad*, 95-96, 98-99; also see Swart, 'The Black Legend', 52-53.

to cruelty and tyranny – did not surface in the Netherlands until 1568 and only commenced in full from 1572 onwards. The critique voiced on the Spanish Inquisition subsided around 1550 and resurfaced around 1559. This language gradually lost its prominent place in the 1570s, and by 1578 a new argument had made its way into anti-Spanish propaganda, namely that Spanish rulers and councillors were intent on establishing a universal monarchy in Europe. Also in the 1570s we see that critique is not voiced directly at Philip II himself, but towards his ‘evil advisors’. This outlook changed in the beginning of the 1580s, when direct criticism on the Spanish king and Spanish people were voiced. From the beginning of the Revolt in the mid-1560s, the Spanish abuses in the New World were utilised in order to relate to the events in the Low Countries themselves. We have also seen that *Een discoers* fits within the themes we recounted here. Even though no mention is made of the abuses in the Indies, we analysed that it made a direct reference to the “bloody Spanish Inquisition”, which the author wanted to hinder where possible. The pamphlet also proves to be an example of the fact that before 1578 the argument of Spanish attempts to establish a universal monarchy was not yet currency or at least, it was not mentioned in *Een discoers*, which was printed in 1575. Moreover, the Dutch pamphlet is not an expression of a direct attack on the vices of Philips II, but targets his ‘evil advisors’. Lastly, the pamphlet deals with the cruelties displayed by the Spanish in the Netherlands, which the pamphleteer might have experienced at first-hand at numerous occasions.

4.2 *The Turk in Dutch imagination*

Until now we have focused on the phenomenon of the Black Legend and how the nature of the Spaniard was regarded, specifically in the Netherlands. We have been able to pinpoint when the different elements appeared in the argument that the Spaniards are cruel in nature and inclined to tyranny. Now we turn to the question how the image of the Turk is utilised in order to expand on this propagandistic tradition. Concentrating on *Een discoers*, we see that the pamphlet is not only a reflection of an anti-Spanish position, but the image of the Ottoman Turk is also used in order to interpret Spanish behaviour in the Netherlands. This utilisation is significant, especially if we consider that the Dutch author, as we have seen in chapter two, chose to include the issue of the Turk in the title by himself. The pamphlet is a translation of the French *Discours*, which did not include the topic of the Turks in its title,⁶¹ though the topic itself appears throughout the text, since the content of the pamphlet is more or less the same, except for its preface, foreword and afterword. Thus, the Dutch translator thought it illuminating to present the danger of the “Turkish tyranny” in the title of the Dutch pamphlet himself. By doing so, he emphasised the importance of the image of the Turk for the arguments made in the pamphlet. On the other hand, the genre of the treatises against the Turks were very popular in the sixteenth century, so the author or the publisher might have thought that it would be profitable to use its topic in the title page.⁶²

61 *Discours traduit d'italien en françois, Contenant aulcuns moyens pour reduire la France à vne entiere obeissance à son Roy* (Augsburg 1575).

62 Almost every sixteenth-century writer had something to say about the topic of the Turks. See Michael J. Heath, *Crusading Commonplaces: La Noue, Lucinge and Rhetoric against the Turks* (Geneva 1986) 9.

When dealing with the image of the Ottoman Turk in *Een discoers* we have to keep in mind that the Dutch author adopted the portrayal of the Ottoman rule from the *Discours*, which formed the basis for his translation and adaptation of the French pamphlet. This means that the Dutch author was not the source of the ideas conveyed about Turkish government. However, the fact that the Dutch author decided to take over the French depiction of Ottoman authority might reflect that he thought that the image would appeal to his Dutch readers or that it corresponded to the portrayal of the Turk that already existed in Dutch discourse, maybe as a result of the European image of the Ottoman Turk. In the next part of the chapter we investigate what this European image amounted to and how *Een discoers* can be placed within that tradition. First, however, we are going to look into the representation of the Turk as it is presented in the *Discours* and subsequently assumed in its Dutch offspring *Een discoers*.

The European image of the Turks in sixteenth-century literature is thoroughly investigated in historiography. For almost every European country the topic is described in monographs. For early modern Germany the issue was relevant considering its proximity to the Hungarian lands, where the danger of the Turks was most directly felt.⁶³ Between France and the Ottoman Empire there existed contacts during the early modern period that influenced France's history, thought and literature.⁶⁴ Even for England, a country far away from the direct threat of the advancement of the Ottoman Turk, the topic was important because it helped creating an unifying instrument for Christians during the time of the Reformation.⁶⁵ Considering that in the history of Spain the Muslims played an important role because of their presence in Spain from the eight century until the fall of Granada in 1492 and the war with the Ottomans in the Mediterranean, it seems obvious that this issue is treated in historiography as well.⁶⁶ Also in the case of Italy there is a history of the literature on the Turks to be told, because there the Turks posed a threat to Venetian commerce and the Ottomans also carried out several naval attacks on Italy.⁶⁷ This short survey makes clear that the theme of the Turkish threat to Latin-Christian Europe had a "pan-European character",⁶⁸ even though the image of the Turk differed from country to country.⁶⁹

Historiographical sources dealing with the image of the Turk in the early modern Netherlands are scarce, however.⁷⁰ Let alone that it is investigated how the image of the Turk is deployed in the con-

63 John W. Bonstedt, 'The Infidel Scourge of God: The Turkish Menace as Seen by German Pamphleteers of the Reformation Era', *Transactions of the American Philosophical Societies* 59:9 (1968) 1-58, 3, 10; Senol Özyurt, *Die Türkenlieder und das Türkenbild in der Deutschen Volksüberlieferung vom 16. bis zum 20. Jahrhundert* (München 1972) 22.

64 Clarence Dana Rouillard, *The Turk in French history, thought and literature (1520-1660)* (Paris 1941); Heath, *Crusading Commonplaces*, 9.

65 Norman L. Jones, 'The Adaptation of Tradition: The Image of the Turk in Protestant England', *East European Quarterly* 12:2 (Summer 1978) 161-175, 161; Brandon H. Beck, *From the Rising of the Sun. English Images of the Ottoman Empire to 1715* (New York 1987) 24; Matthew Dimmock, *New Turkes. Dramatizing Islam and the Ottomans in Early Modern England* (Aldershot 2005).

66 Kathleen Gavigan, *The Image of the Turk in Sixteenth Century Spanish Historiography* (1974) 1-2.

67 Mustafa Soykut, *Image of the "Turk" in Italy. A History of the "Other" in Early Modern Europe: 1453-1638* (Berlin 2001).

68 Bonstedt, 'The Infidel Scourge of God', 9.

69 Paul Coles, *The Ottoman impact on Europe* (London 1968) 145.

70 For an exception see M.E.H.N. Mout, 'Turken in het nieuws. Beeldvorming en publieke opinie in de zestiende-eeuwse Nederlanden', *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 97 (1984) 362-381.

text of the Dutch Black Legend of Spain,⁷¹ even though it has been demonstrated that in Dutch prints the Turk – together with the Spaniard and the Pope – have been depicted as the archenemies of the ‘true’ Christian Church around 1570.⁷² The Dutch pamphlet *Een discoers* provides us with an interesting example and case study on how the image of the Turk could be portrayed in a sixteenth-century Dutch source on the rule of the Spanish monarchy. As is made clear before – and it is important to stress the matter again and again – we have to keep in mind that *Een discoers* is a translation of the French *Discours*. This means that the content about the Ottoman Turk was originally conveyed in French. Nevertheless, the Dutch pamphlet is interesting in its own right, considering that in the foreword and afterword the Dutch translator associates what is stated in the French pamphlet with the Dutch political situation. Moreover, the pamphlet was probably published in the Netherlands and most certainly read and digested by a Dutch audience. The translator must have thought that the content would appeal to a Dutch audience. It is probable that the topic of a “Turkish tyranny” threatening to be introduced in the Netherlands would interest contemporary readers. Taking this all into account, it is interesting to have a look at the pamphlet and see what is written about the Turk, in order to gauge how the Turk might have been conceptualised in sixteenth-century Dutch imagination. The aim of this part of the chapter is first to delineate the image that *Een discoers* relays regarding to the Ottoman Empire and secondly, to situate the pamphlet in the broader European context of the literature on the image of the Turk.

Een discoers relays a speech that is allegedly held before the French court in Blois a few months before the St. Bartholomew massacre. The orator of the speech, a certain “Chevalier Poncet” or “Signeur Poncet”, would have advised the French king to rule his country the way the Turkish sultan rules his.⁷³ This advice follows from the many travels this mysterious Poncet would have made throughout “many countries, principalities, Kingdoms and Monarchies”. Never had he witnessed a rulership so “complete” nor had he encountered such “absolute subjection of citizens to their supreme Lord and Prince, than in Turkey.”⁷⁴ In the pamphlet three points are given which the French king should observe in order to be able to rule over the country like the Ottoman sultan. The first measure concerns the lack of power of the nobility. According to the author of the pamphlet, there is no prince nor grandee that does not have his position to thank to the sultan himself. The sultan would “never allow that somebody would become

71 Benjamin Schmidt touches upon the subject briefly. See Schmidt, *Innocence Abroad*, 104-105.

72 In a print titled *De kerk van Christus* (The Church of Christ) (c. 1570) in Daniel R. Horst, *De Opstand in zwart-wit. Propagandaprenten uit de Nederlandse Opstand 1566-1584* (Zutphen 2003) 68.

73 *Een discoers*, Aij r.

74 “by vele landen, prinsdommen, Coninckrycken, ende Monarchien doorwandelt hadde: maer dat hy nerghens geen volmaeckte, nocte absolute onderdanicheyt der ondersaten tot haren oppersten Heere ende Prince geuonden hadde, dan allenlick in Turkijen”, *Een discoers*, Aij v; “plusieurs pays, principaultez, royaumes & monarchies, sans y auoir recogneu vne entiere obeissance au Prince souuerain, sinon en Turquie seullement”, *Discours*, IX; *La France-Turquie*, 7.

as distinguished or powerful” that he could not be kept under control by the sultan.⁷⁵ The Dutch author claimed that the Spaniards had been eradicating the nobility for some time, and as such would introduce a “Turkish slavery” in the Netherlands.⁷⁶ The absence of nobility is a theme that is represented in many other early modern accounts of the Ottoman Empire. The political system of tyranny was associated with this incapacity of the nobility to limit the power of the sultan. Indeed, in the Ottoman Empire an institution like the aristocracy in Europe did not exist; there was no nobility with rights and duties towards the sovereign like European noblemen at the time. Instead, there were *timar*-holders, belonging to the military class. They provided security in Ottoman society and were obligated to join in military campaigns during times of war.⁷⁷ Even though it sounds familiar, this system cannot be compared to European feudalism. For instance, in the Holy Roman Empire, the Emperor had to “beg” the estates to join in military campaigns. Each prince had the right to refuse participation in campaigns; the Emperor could not just command the princes to go to war, while in the Ottoman Empire this was expected of the *timar*-holders.⁷⁸

As *Een discoers* also highlights, the issue of property in the Ottoman Empire also differs from European possession of land. This argument, which is linked to the critique on the lack of nobility, is also used in sixteenth-century sources to describe the Ottoman Empire as a tyrannical system.⁷⁹ We do not exactly know when this element of argumentation was first construed, but we find it in *Een discoers*. According to the pamphlet, there are no “manors or lordships” in the Ottoman Empire. The sultan “owns the whole country, which he – by way of his officers – rents to his subjects for a limited amount of time.”⁸⁰ This practise differs from the European state of affairs in that the *timar*-holders were not allowed to use the land for their own benefit. They were permitted by law to supervise possessions and transfer of lands and were also authorised by law to collect tax-revenues, but they had no specific rights to lands or peasants and had no inheritance rights in land. Ownership of land indeed belonged to the state, but peasants could acquire possessions through sale contracts and fixed tax revenues of the Ottoman state. Peasants could not sell the land, but they could inherit it.⁸¹ The country did indeed lack a nobility class

75 “dat den Turck, noch Prince, noch grootmeester in syn rycke en heeft, die by (om segghen) met syn eyghen hant niet selue ghemaect en heeft, ende door syn liberaelheyt, tot sulcken state ghebrocht: noch nemmermeer toe en laet, datter yemant, soo groot ofte machtich soude worden, of by en soude hem lichtelick connen af stellen, want het hem lust ofte belieft.”, *Een discoers*, Aij r ; “que le Turcq n’auoir prince ne grand seigneur en son empire, qui ne fust sa creature & faict de sa main & liberalité, & ne souffroit iamais qu’aucun d’eulx montast si hault, qu’il ne peust faire descendre & deffiare quant il vouldroit.”, *Discours*, IX ; *La France-Turquie*, 7.

76 *Een discoers*, [8r].

77 Aslı Çırakman, ‘From Tyranny to Despotism: The Enlightenment’s Unenlightened Image of the Turks’, *International journal of Middle East Studies* 33:1 (February 2001) 49-68, 51.

78 Bonstedt, ‘The Infidel Scourge of God’, 38.

79 Çırakman, ‘From Tyranny to Despotism’, 51.

80 “Item dat er geen leenen nocte heerlickheden in gansch zijn rijcke en zijn, maer dat het gansche lant hem toebehoort, het welcke hy door zyne officieren, syne ondersaten geeft in pachte, voor eenen sekeren termijn van iaren”, *Een discoers*, Aij v ; “Qu’il n’y auoit aucuns fiefs ne seigneuries en tous les pays de son obeissance, ains estoye[n]t toutes les terres appartenantes à luy, lesquelles il foisoit bailler à ferme par ses officiers à ses subiects pour quelques annees”, *Discours*, X ; *La France-Turquie*, 8.

81 Çırakman, ‘From Tyranny to Despotism’, 51-52 ; For landownership by the Ottoman state see Halil İnalcık, ‘The Ottoman State: economy and society, 1300-1600’ in Halil İnalcık and Donald Quataert (eds.), *An economic and social history of the Ottoman Empire 1300-1914* (Cambridge 1994) 104-105.

to limit the power of the ruler. There were no intermediate authorities between the sultan and his subjects; there were just soldiers who received fiefs in return for their military service. The lands still belonged to the Ottoman state officially.⁸² Nevertheless, cultivation of the land was reserved for the peasantry, and as has been made clear above, peasants could indeed inherit land. The Ottoman state retained ownership of conquered land, while handing over the rights of possession and usufruct under certain conditions.⁸³

Even though it is difficult to ascertain when exactly the element of the argument on the lack of an independent class of aristocrats was used in order to depict the Ottoman empire as a tyrannical system, its assumptions are already to be found in Niccolò Machiavelli's account on the kingdom of France and his depiction of the Ottoman Empire.⁸⁴ In *The Prince*, which was posthumously published in 1532 but completed in manuscript form already in 1513,⁸⁵ Machiavelli explains why it is more difficult to conquer the type of government of the Ottomans and why it is easier to hold on the long term, while, in contrast, France is easy to conquer but difficult to hold. He writes:

... all principalities known to us are governed in two different ways: either by a prince with all the others his servants, who as ministers (through his favour and permission) assist in governing that kingdom; or by a prince and by barons, who hold that rank not because of any favour of their master but because of the antiquity of their bloodline. Such barons as these have their own dominions and subjects, who recognize them as masters and have natural affection for them. In those states that are governed by a prince and his servants, the prince has greater authority, for in all his territories there is no one else recognized as superior to him; and if the people do obey any other persons, it is because they are his ministers and officials; and they harbour a special affection for him. Contemporary examples of these two different kinds of governments are the Turk and the King of France.⁸⁶

Invoking Machiavelli might help us pinpoint when this certain reasoning became incorporated into the argument on Ottoman tyranny. It is interesting to ask ourselves how Machiavelli came to have this view on Ottoman society, for while he had been to France in 1500 and visited Emperor Maximilian in 1507-1508, he never travelled to the Ottoman Empire. The argument, therefore, must have pre-dated the completion of *The Prince* in 1513.

It should be noted that the absence of the noble class is not always negatively appreciated in European sources that deal with the Ottoman Empire. It is not always equated with tyranny. On the contrary, especially those who were well-informed about the affairs of the Ottoman Empire, associated it with

82 Bonstedt, 'The Infidel Scourge of God', 38.

83 Aslı Çırakman, *From the "Terror of the World" to the "Sick Man of Europe"*. *European Images of Ottoman Empire and Society from the Sixteenth Century to the Nineteenth* (New York 2002) 53.

84 Joan-Pau Rubiés, 'Oriental despotism and European Orientalism: Botero to Montesquieu', *Journal of Early Modern History* 9:1-2 (Leiden 2005) 109-180, 119.

85 For a chronology of Machiavelli's life see Peter Bondanella (translator), Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince* (Oxford 2008) l-li.

86 Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, in Peter Bondanella (translator) (Oxford 2008) Ch. IV, 16.

meritocracy and regarded it as a strength of Ottoman society.⁸⁷ There was no permanent ownership but perpetual circulation of property according to merit. For these authors, in the comparison between the European system and the Turkish situation the outcome was often in favour of the latter. This stance may be explained by the social background of these writers. They often had no title or privileges enjoyed by the aristocracy. According to these authors, the lack of a powerful nobility could explain why there was no faction or rebellion in the Ottoman Empire.⁸⁸ Nevertheless, in case of *Een discoers* the argument could not have been more different. In the speech of Poncet the same line of reasoning is presented. The French king would be wise to eliminate the nobility, so that there would not erupt any “quarrels, nor disputes”.⁸⁹ The Dutch author denounces this position vehemently in his epilogue. He observes that the Spaniard “already destroyed most of the indigenous Lords of the country, and the nobility, partly expelled and banned, partly executed by form of justice, partly by wretched commissions and order of Captains.”⁹⁰ With this, the Dutch author probably refers to the Council of Troubles which Alva had instituted in 1567.⁹¹ In his reasoning, the Spaniard, like the Turk, seeks to destroy the nobility in order to institute a “Turkish tyranny” on the country. Indeed, the Spanish already acted in accordance with much of the advice that was presented by Poncet, so that “alas”, “soon a Turkish slavery would follow.”⁹²

In a certain passage of the pamphlet the speech of Poncet is suspended. It is stated that the members of the French court listening to the speech halt the orator and ask whether such a situation – the destruction of the nobility – could be deployed in France like in the Ottoman Empire.⁹³ Poncet claims this is possible as long as the measures he presents are attended to, which include “the killing of all the Princes and grandees and especially those who are haughty and intelligent and also the rest of the nobility for as far this is possible.”⁹⁴ The French pamphleteer states that in France the nobility is instituted “as of old” to protect and maintain the other two estates and that it is “the strength of the Nobility against the

87 Çırakman, ‘From Tyranny to Despotism’, 52.

88 Çırakman, *From the “Terror of the World”*, 54-55.

89 “datter oock nemmermeer noch quercle noch twist en rijst”, *Een discoers*, Aij r ; “sans qu’il y eust iamais dispute ne querelle”, *Discours*, IX ; *La France-Turquie*, 7.

90 “alreede den meesten deel der ingeborene Heeren vanden lande, ende des Edeldoms, eensdeels veriaegt ende verbannen, eensdeels by forme van iustitie geexecuteert, eensdeels door schorfde commissien, ende beuel van Capiteynschappen omgebracht hebben.”, *Een discoers*, [8r].

91 See Jonathan Israel, *The Dutch Republic. Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall, 1477-1806* (Oxford 1995) 156 ; Martin van Gelderen, *The Political Thought of the Dutch Revolt 1555-1590* (Cambridge 1992) 40.

92 “naeuolghende het discoers vvtrechten, so dat sy gheheel end al schynen eenen ghelycken raet onderlinghe geschoren te hebben, den welcken sy (eylaes) alreede soo verde in effecte ghebrocht hebben dattet onmoghelick is of daerwt en volge corts meer dan een Turcksche slauernye.”, *Een discoers*, [8v].

93 “Ende daerom vraeghden hem, oft hem niet en dochte dat men het selue in Vranckeycke soude connen te weghebringen.”, *Een discoers*, [4r] ; “de luy demander si à son iugeme[n]t le semblable se pourroit faire en France”, *Discours*, XI-XII ; *La France-Turquie*, 9.

94 “Het welcke spraek van het ombringhen van al de Princen ende grootmeesters, ende insonderheyt van deghene die hoochmoedich ende groot [sic] van verstande waren, ende also insglycx van de reste des edeldoms, so verde het moghelyck ware.” *Een discoers*, [4r] ; “qui estoient de se deffaire de tous les Princes & grands Seigneurs, mesmes de ceulx qui estoie[n]t genereux & d’en rendement, & aussi le plus qu’il seroit possible du demeurant de la noblesse.”, *Discours*, XII ; *La France-Turquie*, 9.

will, absolute power and violence of Kings.”⁹⁵ Indeed, “the Princes and grandees are rightly called the controllers and limiters of the will of Kings.”⁹⁶ In order for the French king to regain control over his country, he should – under the guise of “the troubles that erupted from the causes of Religion” – “destroy the said Princes, grandees and the rest in order to regain the two other estates under tighter subjection and use them according to his pleasure and service.”⁹⁷ We have to keep in mind that both the French and the Dutch author distance themselves from these statements and argue the exact opposite. Indeed, as we have seen, the French pamphlet has rightly been described as “une satire d’absolutisme.”⁹⁸

The second measure the French king is advised to take in order to get as much control over his country as the Ottoman sultan has some overlap with the first. The pamphlet states that there is “no Nobility allowed in the empire except for the Janissaries, which are from a young age groomed and raised by the sultan as if they were his own children or of his own making.”⁹⁹ Thus, because the Janissaries fully thank their position to the Ottoman Sultan, they are obedient to him. The *Discours* seems to imply that if the French king would organise the nobility after such fashion, he would also receive absolute obedience from the noble class. The Janissaries “stand so strictly in his service and are so completely bound to him, that every subjection one may wish becomes a reality because of the power and violence of said Janissaries and the authority of his officers and officials.”¹⁰⁰ These officers are “so much feared and honoured that nobody could nor dares to act against the will or command of the Turk.”¹⁰¹ The institute of the Janissaries was raised under sultan Murad I (r. 1362-1389) as a defence against Chris-

95 “Want van de dry staten die van ouden tijden in Vranckericke inghestelt syn, soo is den Edeldom [...] gheacht, ende om segghen ingestelt, tot de bescherminghe ende onderhout der twee ander staten: [...] selue de cracht zijn des Edeldoms, teghen den wille, volle macht ende ghewelt der Coninghen.” *Een discoers*, [4v]; “D’autant que des trois estats qui fure[n]t instituez anciennement en la France, la noblesse [...] fust estimee & comme ordonnee pour la conseruation des deux autres estats [...] sont la force de la noblesse contre les plaisirs & vouldoirs des Roys”, *Discours*, XII; *La France-Turquie*, 9.

96 “Soo dat men de Princen ende groote meesters met de rechte mach noemen controleurders ende beletters des willes der Coninghen”, *Een discoers*, [4v]; “Tellem[n]t que lesdicts Princes & gra[n]ds seigneurs se peuuent à bon droict no[m]mer contrerolleurs & empescheurs des volonte des Roys”, *Discours*, XII; *La France-Turquie*, 9.

97 “Dus dan om de voorseyde Princen, groote meesters ende ouerghebleuenen te beter omme te bringhen, ende alsoo (de hoofden geweert zijnde) de ander twee staten in meerder ende strichter subiectie te houden om met die daer naer tot zijnen pluysire ende dienste te leuen soo is het insonderheyte van noode dat men hem behelpe met de troebelen die ten causen van de Religie gheresen zijn.” *Een discoers*, [4v]-[5r]; “Or doncques pour se deffaire desdicts Princes, grands seigneurs, & demeurant de la noblesse, afin de subiuguer plus estroittement les autres pour en disposer à son plaisir & seruice: il est tresnecessaire de se seruir des troubles pour la Religion à cause”, *Discours*, XIII; *La France-Turquie*, [10] erroneously numbered 01.

98 Jean Balsamo, ‘Les lieux communs de L’italophobie en France à la fin de XVI siècle’, in Madaleine Bertaud (ed.), *Le grandes Peurs* (vol. 2) (Nancy 2004) 281.

99 “Het tweede point was, dat by ghenen anderen Edeldom in syn rycke en bekend dan alleenlick syn Ianissaren, de welcke van ionghs beene af, vanden grooten Turck opghequeeckt ende opgheuoet synde, al of sy zijn kinderen ofte syn maeksel selue waren”, *Een discoers*, Aijj r; “Le second estoit, qui’il ne permettoit en son empire autre noblesse recogneuë que ses genissaires, lesquels estants de leur enfance nourriz & comme ses creatures entretenuz de luy”, *Discours*, IX; *La France-Turquie*, 7.

100 “staen so strichtelick tot synen dienste, ende syn soo vastelyck aen hem verbonden, dat hem door de macht ende het ghewelt der voors. Ianissaren, ende door de autoriteyt van syne officieren ende wet-houders, alle onderdanicheyt die men soude moghen begheer en bewesen wordt”, *Een discoers*, Aijj r; “estoyent tellement obligez à sa deuotion, que par leur forcé & l’auctorité de ses ministres & officiers toute obeissance luy estoit re[n]due entre les mains”, *Discours*, IX; *La France-Turquie*, 7.

101 “daer zijn officiers ende gouerneurs, soo gevreesd zijn ende geeert, datter niemant noch en can en derf, yet roeren teghen den wille ofte ghebot des Turcks.” *Een discoers*, Aijj v – [4r]; “ou ses ministres & officiers estoient tant craints & reuez que nul ne pouuoit & n’osoit atte[n]ter contre le plaisir volonte & commandement dudict Turcq.”, *Discours*, XI; *La France-Turquie*, 8.

tians and in order to deal with the occurrences of domestic rebellion. Especially in combination with the *timar*-system the institution of the Janissaries proved to be an advantage against the enemies of the Empire.¹⁰² They were the first standing army in Europe.¹⁰³

The third and last issue the French king is advised to act upon is remarkable. In the pamphlet it is stated that the Turk “in his country does not allow any other religion than his own, with an exception for the countries he has newly conquered, which he does not want to force to change their religion in order to get more countries under his subjection. Even though he does not allow that anyone would dispute religion.”¹⁰⁴ This, of course, is a direct reference to the French wars of religion and would have struck a chord in the Netherlands as well, considering that there also existed difficulties arising from religious differences, as we have seen in chapter three. During the Wars of Religion and the Dutch Revolt there was a constant struggle between the people that longed for religious toleration and the ones who opted for a strong heresy policy and would allow only one religion in the country.¹⁰⁵ It is remarkable that the French pamphleteer would appropriate this quality to the Ottoman policy, considering that the relative religious toleration practised by the Ottomans was known among Europeans.¹⁰⁶ Even though for Europeans it was a less obvious feature of Ottoman society and they had more attention for military features, the indirect rule over religious communities (*millets*) in the Ottoman empire was recognised by European observers.¹⁰⁷

The *millet*-system had its roots in trade agreements between Ottomans and foreign merchants. *Millets* were more or less autonomous groups organised under a deputy or a consul. Non-Muslims were granted permission to trade freely within the Ottoman Empire, even though their residence was only allowed certain ports in specified quarters.¹⁰⁸ Autonomy was guaranteed in cities as foreigners could administer their own justice.¹⁰⁹ People living in *millets* were mainly concerned with their own internal affairs and engaged only in minimal contact with the outside world.¹¹⁰ Neighbourhoods were segregated according to religion, laws and culture. Fact is that these groups did have a certain amount of autonomy and could practise their own religion relatively independently. It is a feature of Ottoman life that was embedded in the history of Islamic society. In exchange for taxes and other forms of subjection, the so-called ‘People

102 Daniel Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge 2009, first ed. 2002) 47, 50.

103 Inalcık, ‘The Ottoman State’, 16.

104 “Het derde point was, dat hy in syn lant geen ander religie toe en laet dan de syne, vvtgesteken alleene in die landen die hy nieuwelincx gheconquesteert heeft. De welcke hy niet en vvilt bedwingen hare religie te veranderen, om daer door noch ander landen te beter onder syn subiectie te crygen. Hoe wel hy nochtans niet toe en laet, datter iemand van de religie soude disputeren.” *Een discoers*, Aijj v; “Le troisieme estoit qu’il n’enduroit en sa monarchie autre religion que la sienne, excepté seulement aux pays de nouvelle conquete, lesquels il ne vouloit contraindre de charger la leur, afin d’estendre par ce moyen plus facilime[n]t ses limites plus auta[n]t, il est vray qu’il n’estoit permis à aucuns de disputer de la religion.”, *Discours*, X; *La France-Turquie*, 8.

105 See chapter three of this study.

106 Bonstedt, ‘The Infidel Scourge of God’, 20; Schmidt, *Innocence Abroad*, 104.

107 Beck, *From the Rising of the Sun*, 9; Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire*, 110.

108 Inalcık, ‘The Ottoman State’, 190-191.

109 Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire*, 73.

110 Suraiya Faroqhi, ‘Crisis and Change, 1590-1699’ in Halil Inalcık and Donald Quataert (eds.), *An economic and social history of the Ottoman Empire 1300-1914* (Cambridge 1994) 604.

of the Book' – Christians and Jews – were allowed to live according to their own religion. In the history of Islamic societies some governments had been more strict in enforcing this than others. Because of periods of expansion and the consequent heterodoxy of the population, the Ottoman policy was not very strict, even though an equal status for the 'People of the Book' was out of the question.¹¹¹ The Ottoman Empire was a realm which, because of its history, housed many religious, cultural and ethnic elements.¹¹² Thus, the *Discours* – and, by default, *Een discoers* – appropriates a feature to Ottoman society that was not conform to reality. The writer assigns the quality to the Ottomans that they do not allow any other religion than their own, in order to make it sound more tyrannical. Apparently this feature was associated with tyranny and it suited the French pamphleteer well to discuss this point during the tumultuous time of the French wars of religion. This must have appealed to Dutch readers as well, considering the problems they themselves had regarding religion, as we have seen in chapter three.

We have seen that in *Een discoers* an image of the Turk is presented according to three issues. The French king would allegedly have been advised by "Signeur Poncet" to imitate these points in order to get as much control over his country as the Ottoman sultan has over his. First off, the class of the nobility needs to be eradicated. According to Poncet, who is said to have lived in the Ottoman Empire for at least eight years,¹¹³ there is no room in the Ottoman Empire for noblemen or grandees, and consequently, the sultan has full control over his estates. The French king would be in full control if he manages to eliminate the aristocracy. There would be no quarrels or disputes in his country. We have seen that it proves difficult to assign a date to the argument that the Ottoman empire accommodated no aristocracy but it can be found in Machiavelli's *The Prince* of 1513. Secondly, an institute like the Janissaries will help gain control over the country and bind people to the king accordingly. Thirdly, the Ottoman ruler might be emulated by condoning no other religion than the king himself adheres. Even though we have seen that in the Ottoman Empire there existed a form of religious "tolerance" because of the *millet*-system, apparently the writer of the pamphlet had the idea or wanted to convey the idea that the Ottoman sultan did not allow any other religion than his own. The French pamphleteer as well as the Dutch were strongly opposed to the measures that are presented in the speech that was addressed to the French court. According to them it would lead to a "Turkish tyranny" in their respective countries.

4.3 European images of the Ottoman Turk

Een discoers does not stand on its own as a document that equates Ottoman society with tyranny. There is a considerable tradition of pamphlets and treatises that deal with the Ottoman Empire in the early modern

111 Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire*, 170-172.

112 Inalcik, 'The Ottoman State', 11.

113 "midtsgaders dat hy vermaert was voor een man van diepen verstande, groote wysheit ende eruarenheyt, ende dat hy acht ofte neghen iaer in Turkyen gewoont hadde", *Een discoers*, Aij r; "pour auoir ouy parler de luy, comme d'homme de grand entendement, de iugement & de discours, & qui auoit vescu huit ou neuf ans en Turquie", *Discours*, VIII; *La France-Turquie*, 6.

era. As has been made clear above, the topic of the threat of the Turks for Christian countries had a pan-European character. In this part of the chapter we explore the image that existed of the Ottoman Turk in Christian Europe in order to properly place *Een discoers* in its historical and textual context. This survey will make clear that there was a long tradition of the representation of the Ottoman Turk in a certain way. Both the French and the Dutch author could draw from this portrayal in describing their “Turkish tyranny”. Their contemporary audience would have had a direct association when encountering this terminology, because it addressed current topics and popular concerns. This was probably the reason why the Dutch author chose to include the words “Turkish slavery and tyranny” on the title page of the pamphlet, in order for him to appeal to a broad audience. This could also explain why the collection of pamphlets which included the *Discours* in the form of *Conseil Du Cheualier Poncet* was entitled *La France-Turquie*. The terminology of a “Turkish tyranny” immediately left an impression.

Even before the Ottoman state came into existence around 1300,¹¹⁴ the Christian countries were confronted with the reality of Islam. The existence of Islam posed a substantial problem for Latin Europe in the Middle Ages. It raised several questions. The first was practical: the existence of Islam called for action. What could be done about it? Crusades were carried out during the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth century. Secondly, it posed a theological problem. What did the reality of Islam mean for Christianity? Muslims acknowledge the existence of one true God, but they deny the holy trinity. Subsequently the existence of Islam constituted a third, historical, issue: Why did Islam exist in the first place?¹¹⁵ R.W. Southern identifies three phases in the medieval perception of Islam. Between about 650 to 1100 there was a period of ignorance due to geographical separation.¹¹⁶ This ignorant viewpoint did not cease to exist after the first Crusade. After about 1120 ignorance persisted in large part due to popular representations on Muslims in exotic and fantastical terminology.¹¹⁷ At the end of the thirteenth century a shift took place because of contact with the Mongols. From about 1285-1290 the idea came up that Islam could be defeated by working together with the Mongols.¹¹⁸ This sentiment faded as the power of the Mongols waned. Thus, the interest in Muslims dated back before the attacks of the Ottomans on Christian states and the anxiety caused by these attacks.¹¹⁹ The third phase sets in around 1450-1460, when intellectuals from all over Europe sketched a more structured and comprehensive image of Islam than ever before. The image was still biased and distorted, but it was more practical than previous superstitious speculations. Arguments about the problem of Islam became more rational than in the early Middle Ages.¹²⁰

The fall of Constantinople in 1453 came as a shock. The threat of the Ottomans was previously not perceived as very immediate. The Western world did not expect the conquest of Constantinople to happen,

114 Inalcik, ‘The Ottoman State’, 11.

115 R.W. Southern, *Western views of Islam in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge 1962) 3, 5.

116 Southern, *Western views of Islam*, 14.

117 Southern, *Western views of Islam*, 27-28.

118 Southern, *Western views of Islam*, 34, 65.

119 Bonstedt, ‘The Infidel Scourge of God’, 8.

120 Southern, *Western views of Islam*, 65, 103-104, 107.

even though the Ottomans had been expanding in Eastern Europe for at least fifty years. It shows that Western Europeans did not always have a good grasp on the events occurring in the East. After the fall of Constantinople treatises about 'the question of the Turk' mushroomed. These tracts show more than just the shock and the need of a military intervention after the fall of the Eastern city. The advance of the Turk was understood as a 'scourge of God' and confirmed a general feeling of guilt and insecurity. It boosted the call for reform: God was clearly showing his discontent about policies of kings, the pope and regional and local governments. The only way meet the Turkish threat was to get rid of the sinful ways of Christianity.¹²¹ The fall also reinvigorated Crusade rhetoric. Sultan Mehmed II, who conquered Constantinople, was depicted as the greatest enemy of Christian Church, against which the Christian world should be defended.¹²²

The idea of the Turks as a scourge of God was a powerful one. It persisted well into the sixteenth century, when the Ottoman Empire was at the height of its power. This was especially the case under the reign of Suleyman the Magnificent (r. 1520-1566) when Rhodes was seized, Malta and Vienna were besieged, Belgrade was conquered and much of Hungary was overrun. In sixteenth-century perception of the Ottoman Turk fact was combined with legend: the seeming invincibility of the Ottoman armies was enhanced by accounts of their cruelty.¹²³ The image of the Turkish advance as a scourge of God was amplified by Lutheran eschatology. In Protestant tracts the advance of the Turks was associated with the final struggle between God and Satan. The advancement of the Turks was but a link in the chain of events that would lead the the Last Judgement. Only then would the power of the Turks be stopped.¹²⁴ Luther had presented the progress of the Turks as a scourge from God to chastise Christians for their sins. To resist the Turks would mean to resist God. In the early 1520s this was a tenable position, but after the Battle of Mohacs in Hungary in 1526, the Turkish advance into the rest of Europe was feared and Luther's call to meekly undergo the wrath of God diminished somewhat.¹²⁵ Still, because the Turks were viewed in line of God's punishments for Christians' sins, the emphasis was more on the behaviour of Christians than on the actual Turkish threat. The advance of the Turks were thus seen as a strong argument for Christian reform.¹²⁶ As early as 1522, John Bonstedt identifies the portrayal of the Turk as the arch-enemy of Christendom. The Turk is characterised as the "hereditary foe" (*erbfeind*) of the Christian faith. The authors of German pamphlets written in the period 1522-1543 were convinced that the ultimate aim of the Turks was to eradicate Christendom. In order to show that the Turks were tyrants, emphasis is put on the cruelties they committed in the struggle with Christians. They show that the Turk has an insatiable lust for blood.¹²⁷

121 R. Schwoebel, *The shadow of the crescent: the Renaissance image of the Turk (1453-1517)* (Nieuwkoop 1967) 22.

122 Schwoebel, *The shadow of the crescent*, 31.

123 C.A. Partrides, 'The Bloody and Cruell Turke': The Background of a Renaissance Commonplace', *Studies in the Renaissance* 10 (1963) 126-135, 130-131.

124 Bonstedt, 'The Infidel Scourge of God', 23; Mout, 'Turken in het nieuws', 380; for more on Luther's influence on the image of the Turk see Southern, *Western views of Islam*, 105-107.

125 Jones, 'The Adaptation of Tradition', 163.

126 Bonstedt, 'The Infidel Scourge of God', 3.

127 Bonstedt, 'The Infidel Scourge of God', 18-19.

The Reformation breathed new life into the discussion of the Turk. Next to the Turk, Protestants depicted papism as a archenemy of true Christendom. Lutheran authors hated the papacy as much as the Turks and portrayed it as anti-Christian institution along the same lines as they described Islam. Luther stressed the similarities of the Turk and the Pope, not their differences.¹²⁸ In Reformation polemics, Islam was used as a model of heresy. Protestants argued that the Catholics corresponded to the Turks in nature and dogma and depicted Catholics as ‘just as bad’ as the Turks. In historiography this phenomenon is called the ‘turcopapistical polemic’ and this Protestant propaganda gave the old characterisation of the Turk new meaning. Protestants adopted the legends about Islam as a religious weapon in their theological struggle with the Catholics.¹²⁹ We have seen that in the Dutch case the Turks were also portrayed in Protestant prints as the archenemy of the Christian church together with the Pope and his adherents and the Spaniards.¹³⁰ Catholics did something similar. They, in turn, equated Protestants with the Turks and depicted the Protestant faith along the same line as the heresy of Islam.¹³¹

While the author of *Een discoers* does not use this terminology at all, it is important to remember that among the arguments that describe Ottoman society as a tyranny, the sultan is said to allow only one religion in his country, i.e. his own. Thus, religion plays a part in the argument; it is described as a measure that can contribute to the country deteriorating into a tyranny. On the other hand, the Dutch author does not stress the Catholicism of the Spaniards in his preface nor in his epilogue in order to explain their attempt at transforming the Netherlands into a Turkish tyranny, while – as we have seen in chapter two of this thesis – the background of the pamphlet could have been Protestant. Instead he adopts the same formula that is to be found in the French pamphlet. The pamphlet is addressed at “all Princes, Counts, Grandees, Nobility, Burgomasters, Councillors, and other good and loyal Netherlanders and vassals of your Majesty, wether from the one religion or the other.”¹³² In other words, it does not matter of which religious domination his readers are, the author warns all addressees for the danger the behaviour of the Spanish government poses.

To most sixteenth-century contemporaries – both Catholics and Protestants – the conflict between the Habsburgs and the Ottoman Sultan was not perceived as just another political power struggle, but rather as an actual war between Christians and Muslims – based on religion.¹³³ When thinking of Islam, Europeans thought about the Turks. From the fall of Constantinople onwards, Christians identified the Turks as antithesis of the Christian civilisation and everything it represented.¹³⁴ Thus, many authors of

128 Bonstedt, ‘The Infidel Scourge of God’, 24.

129 Jones, ‘The Adaptation of Tradition’, 164-166.

130 Horst, *De Opstand in zwart-wit*, 68.

131 Bonstedt, ‘The Infidel Scourge of God’, 24; Soykut, *Image of the “Turk”*, 5.

132 “vvaerom ick het vvel hebbe willen addresseren aen alle Princen, Graven, groote meesters, Edelmannen, Borghmeesteren, vvetouders, ende andere goede ende ghetrouvve nederlanders ende vassalen sijnder Maiesteit, so vvel van deen religie als van dandere”, *Een discoers*, [1v].

133 Bonstedt, ‘The Infidel Scourge of God’, 5.

134 Soykut, *Image of the “Turk”*, 1.

treatises against the Ottomans saw the conflict in theological terms.¹³⁵ In this light, it is interesting that in *Een discoers* this religious element has no place at all. The pamphleteer does not describe the Turks along theological lines; he analyses Turkish society along the three points discussed above and depicts it as a tyrannical political system. It has been argued that towards the end of the sixteenth century, the discussion of the Ottoman threat was shifting from the realm of theology to that of a political discourse. At the end of the century, the Ottoman Empire was recognised as a sovereign state, rather than a religious foe.¹³⁶ Even though incompatibility of Christianity and Islam was still emphasised, instead of a clash of religions as was the case after the fall of Constantinople, throughout the sixteenth century the rhetoric of the crusades faded and was replaced by the recognition of the Ottoman Empire as a political force.¹³⁷ *Een discoers* is part of that shift as well. The Ottoman Empire is depicted as a political system of tyranny according to three points of argument: the absence of nobility, the institution of the Janissaries and the fact that there would be only one religion allowed in the Ottoman Empire.

Just as we have seen in the case of *Een discoers*, early modern observers in Europe more often associated the system of Ottoman tyranny with the absence of a noble class and the arbitrary management of private property.¹³⁸ As we have seen, sixteenth century authors believed that there was no private property in the Ottoman Empire and that this often indicated tyranny or the absolute rule of the Ottoman emperor for these writers.¹³⁹ European liberties could be juxtaposed to the absence of aristocracy in Ottoman society. The existence of a nobility class to limit the power of a monarch was perceived as a constituent of classical European liberty.¹⁴⁰ On the other hand, these features of Ottoman society could also be interpreted as just another form of government, deemed efficient and effective when compared to European examples of government.¹⁴¹ Joan-Pau Rubiés has argued that the Ottoman Empire was perceived as despotic in nature from the 1580s onwards, and was depicted as tyrannical from the 1570s.¹⁴² In chapter five of this thesis we will go further into the political thought of the conceptions of tyranny and despotism. For now it is enough to demonstrate that *Een discoers* has a place in a wider context of tracts about the Ottoman Empire.

What should not be forgotten as well is the influence of the printing press for the European image of the Ottoman Turk.¹⁴³ From the very beginning of the shaping of the image of the Ottoman Turk as a consequence of the Ottoman advance into Europe, scholars made use of the printing press in order to disseminate their views of the Turk as a bloodthirsty enemy of religion. In this way, the threat of the Turks was kept alive under a ever growing audience. Fear of the Turk was not a result of the tracts that were

135 Bonstedt, 'The Infidel Scourge of God', 35.

136 Heath, *Crusading Commonplaces*, 21.

137 Çırakman, *From the "Terror of the World"*, 37.

138 Çırakman, 'From Tyranny to Despotism', 51.

139 Çırakman, *From the "Terror of the World"*, 53.

140 Rubiés, 'Oriental despotism', 119.

141 Çırakman, *From the "Terror of the World"*, 53.

142 Rubiés, 'Oriental despotism', 130.

143 Mout, 'Turken in het nieuws', 364.

printed but they could invigorate the feeling of crisis nonetheless, not in the least because of their wide dissemination and large volumes. Consequently, the Turk was not only regarded as a direct threat because of geographical proximity, but also because of the effects of the technical revolution of the printing press.¹⁴⁴ Nevertheless, the advancement of the printing press did not automatically mean that people were fully and immediately informed about the Turkish enemy. The information that circulated about the Turk was not always up to date and often not out of first-hand.¹⁴⁵ Sixteenth-century commentary and propaganda on the Ottoman Turk contained more contempt and hostility than curiosity. The goal was not to inform the Christian public about the authenticity of Ottoman society but rather to inform them about alleged Ottoman might, failures and successes.¹⁴⁶ This outlook differs somewhat in case of travellers' accounts. Travellers could be more open-minded and perceptive than propagandists. They had an apparent desire for information and had a more mild attitude towards the Turks than "armchair travellers", who got their information only from second-hand.¹⁴⁷ Nevertheless, as Ezel Kural Shaw has so aptly stated metaphorically, there also existed a "veil" of prejudices through which the Ottomans were viewed in European travellers' accounts. This clouded many of the judgements and observations of commenters on Ottoman society.¹⁴⁸ What travellers observed made sense to them in the context of the prejudices and preconceptions they already had, which could regularly result in exaggerations, distortion and contradictions.¹⁴⁹ As we have seen, in *Een discoers* some features of Ottoman society were misunderstood because of the uninformed nature of the knowledge that pamphleteers had of Ottoman institutions, for instance concerning religious policy in the Empire. It is also possible that the pamphleteers had knowledge of Ottoman society but chose to present it differently to make it conform their argument. In any case, the sixteenth-century reader would be confronted with an image of the Ottoman Empire that did not correspond to reality.

The combination of travel accounts and second-hand sources resulted in an ambivalent image of Ottoman society. Consequently, characteristic of the image of the Ottoman Empire that arises from the tracts written about the Turk in the sixteenth century is its ambiguity. The Ottoman Turk could be portrayed in negative as well as positive terms. Early modern Europeans emphasised both admirable and disturbing elements of Ottoman might.¹⁵⁰ They could have impressions of Ottoman society like sympathy, admiration, amazement, anxiety, fear and hatred simultaneously.¹⁵¹ Towards the end of the sixteenth century there is a growing interest in Ottoman history, government, customs manners and religion as a result

144 Schwoebel, *The shadow of the crescent*, 166.

145 Soykut, *Image of the "Turk"*, 4.

146 Çırakman, *From the "Terror of the World"*, 72.

147 Çırakman, *From the "Terror of the World"*, 41-43.

148 Ezel Kural Shaw, 'The Double Veil: Travelers' Views of the Ottoman Empire, Sixteenth through Eighteenth Centuries', in Ezel Kural Shaw and C.J. Heywood, *English and Continental Views of the Ottoman Empire 1500-1800. Papers Read at a Clark Library Seminar January 24, 1970* (Los Angeles 1972) 3-29, 13.

149 Çırakman, *From the "Terror of the World"*, 41.

150 Çırakman, 'From Tyranny to Despotism', 49.

151 Çırakman, *From the "Terror of the World"*, 3.

of trade, diplomatic relations and publications of travel accounts.¹⁵² On the one hand, there were themes about the stable social order, endurance, humanity, sobriety, cleanliness, hospitality and loyalty of the Turks, while on the other hand they could be portrayed as barbaric, infidel or archenemy of Christian civilisation.¹⁵³ In *Een discoers* we find nothing of this ambiguity concerning “Turkish tyranny”. While “Signeur Poncet” is depicted as someone appreciating Ottoman government for its subservience, the authors of the French and Dutch pamphlet distance themselves from this viewpoint and warn for such influence in their own society instead. Turkish government is negatively portrayed in *Een discoers*; the readers of the pamphlet are called to be vigilant for behaviour that resembles a “Turkish tyranny”.

Several elements constituted the argument that the Ottoman empire was a tyrannical system. We have seen that while Rubiés reports that the Ottoman Empire was regarded as tyrannical from the 1570s and despotic from 1580 onwards, at least as early as 1522 the Turks were depicted as “hereditary foe” of Christianity and that pamphleteers laid the emphasis on the cruelty and tyrannical nature of the Turks. This argument fitted within a tradition that was vibrant from the time that the Ottoman empire was not yet established. In the Middle Ages the advance of Islam had given many Christians pause. From 650 to 1100 there were ignorant reports on Islam and when the Crusades had set in this did not necessarily change: from 1120 accounts of Muslims were characterised by popular fantastical stories. Only from the 1450s onwards did humanists display a more rational description of Islam. The fall of Constantinople in 1453, however, served as a great shock to Christians all over Europe. When the Ottomans captured the eastern city, they were understood as a “scourge of God”, not in the least as a result of Lutheran eschatological sentiments. The Reformation subsequently reinvigorated the image of the Turk: it was utilised in the struggle of Protestants against Catholics, or contrastingly, as a call for Christian unity. We have seen that at the end of the sixteenth century the religious outlook on the arguments against the Turk diminished somewhat in favour of a more political stance. The Turks were less seen as a religious foe, but rather as a political one. *Een discoers* is an example of a tract in which this transition is visible. Rather than explaining the Ottoman empire in terms of religious contrasts, it is depicted as a tyrannical political system. Integral to the argument that the Ottoman sultan was a tyrant is the absence of the aristocracy in his empire. We have seen that this reasoning is to be found in Machiavelli’s account of the differences between the governments of France and the Ottoman Empire (1513), but it probably pre-dates his description.

Conclusion

We have seen that in the pamphlet we focus on in this thesis, the image of the Turk has been used to interpret Spanish behaviour. *Een discoers* is not only a reflection on Spanish tyranny; the image of the Turk is

¹⁵² Çırakman, *From the “Terror of the World”*, 35, 37.

¹⁵³ Çırakman, *From the “Terror of the World”*, 38.

used to expand on it: the Spaniards would have introduced a “Turkish tyranny” in the Netherlands. The aim of this chapter was to outline how this representation of the Spaniard worked, considering that the pamphleteers used the image they had of the Ottoman Empire to describe Spanish government. The image of the Turk that is presented in *Een discoers* has been adopted from the French *Discours*: the Dutch author could easily take over the terminology used by his French colleague. The presentation of the Turk as a tyrannical ruler was part of a much broader European tradition and as such contemporaries had a lively image of what a “Turkish tyranny” amounted to. It has been made clear that the Dutch and French author made use of the terminology of a “Turkish tyranny” because it could appeal to a broad audience. Dutch and French readers would have an immediate association with the terminology, because there was a considerable tradition of European imaging of the Ottoman Turk. It addressed current topics and popular concerns. This explains why, in the French and Dutch pamphlets, their governments are not described as only tyrannical, but as *Turkish tyrannies*. This does not explain, however, why other typifications of tyranny were not chosen to depict the insidious behaviour of certain elements of the French and Dutch government. For example, the authors could have decided to label their governments as a ‘Popish tyranny’, considering the religious turmoil in both countries. However, as we have seen in chapter three of this study, the French and Dutch authors chose not to address or emphasise religious differences in their pamphlets, in order to address a broad audience. “Turkish tyranny” would capture the imagination of their readers immediately, whereas if they would have chosen for a strictly Protestant approach they would have antagonised a certain part of their potential readers for sure. Another strategy might have been the reference to classical examples, for instance the tyrannies of Caligula or Nero that could spring to mind when considering the issue. However, this approach could have been lost to a particular amount of readers as well, for it presupposes knowledge of ancient history. If we imagine that the pamphleteers wanted to address a broad enough audience, they would steer away from this specialist approach as well. Thus, “Turkish tyranny” proved to be terminology that appealed to many contemporary readers and this is exactly the reason why the pamphleteers assumed the strategy of comparing their respective governments with Turkish rule.

For the Dutch context we have seen that there are several elements that constitute the argument that Spanish rule equates with tyranny. The Black Legend of Spain can be traced back to the Netherlands from about 1568 and certainly from 1572 onwards. It delineates the nature of the Spanish people as cruel and a nation inclined to tyranny. This cruelty and inclination to tyranny is expressed in multiple ways. Like in *Een discoers* the policy of the “bloody Spanish Inquisition” is invoked and the evil intentions of the king’s advisors are emphasised. What we do not yet find in the Dutch pamphlet because these arguments first occurs in 1578 and the beginning of the 1580s respectively, is the invocation of Spain’s master plan to establish a universal monarchy and the demonstration of king Philip’s private vices. In *Een discoers*, as well as in other pamphlets that were printed in the same period (1575), references to the conduct of the king’s “evil advisors” are made; the king himself is not yet criticised directly. Moreover, dating from around the mid-1560s and further developing in 1570s, is the reference to Spanish abuses in the Americas. While this is not to be found in *Een discoers*, it was nonetheless part of the Dutch imagination towards the Spaniard at

the time the pamphlet was published. The nature of Spanish people, the cruelty they exhibit and the Spanish treatment of the indigenous people of the New World all amounted to the shaping of the Dutch Black Legend.

We have analysed that in *Een discoers* this language of Spanish cruelty was connected to the image the pamphleteers had of the Ottoman Empire. The Turk was regarded in terms of the cruelty of their nature as well, at least as early as 1522. The Ottomans were regarded as the “hereditary foe” of Christendom. Besides the fact that the concept of “Turkish tyranny” would appeal to a broad audience, its use also emphasised the innate cruelty of the people. In depicting Spanish government as as “Turkish tyranny”, the Dutch author invariably stressed its innate cruelty because this was widely associated with the Turks. Thus, this is also part of the explanation of why the specific terminology of a *Turkish* tyranny is used. In *Een discoers*, as well as other early modern sources, the absence of a nobility class in the Ottoman empire is a means to illustrate the sultan as a tyrant. While we do not know exactly when this reasoning first arose, we have been able to identify a passage in Machiavelli’s *The Prince* (finished in 1513, printed posthumously in 1532) in which a practical distinction is made between the forms of government in France and the Ottoman empire and the role of the aristocracy therein. All these elements contribute to the depiction of the Ottoman government as a tyrannical system. In *Een discoers* we see that this representation of the Ottoman Turk is connected to the portrayal of the Spanish government as a tyrannical administration and serves as a cross section of how these separate ideas could be modelled into a new argument. We see that the characterisation of both governments come together in the political category of tyrannical government. What contemporaries understood to be such a “tyranny” is to where we now turn in the next chapter.

V.

Tyranny and Constitutionalism. Political thought in the sixteenth century

Introduction

In *Een discoers* Spanish rule in the Netherlands is presented as a “Turkish tyranny”.¹ As we have seen in the previous chapter, the Dutch pamphlet we focus on in this study was not alone in depicting the Ottoman Empire as a tyrannical political system; in other sixteenth-century sources this sentiment was evident as well.² This chapter consists of two parts. First we reflect upon the notion of tyranny in sixteenth-century European political thought and the significance of this conceptualisation for representations of the Ottoman Empire. The attempt is to reconstruct what might have been the current idea on what tyranny signified in the world of the pamphleteers responsible for the French and the Dutch pamphlet which concern us here. Notions that occur in the pamphlets will be our starting point in investigating the political thought of the era. The conceptualisation of tyranny in general and the use of the concept in characterising the Ottoman empire will be explored.

Secondly, we will discover that in the conceptualisation of tyranny, the lack of institutions to bridle the power of the monarch plays a vital role. The author of *Een discoers* makes clear that “of the three estates that are instituted in France as of old, the Nobility” has an important function in protecting the two other estates against the “will, absolute power and violence of kings”.³ In the second part of this chapter the function of the estates as a limiting factor of monarchy will be reviewed. We will see that the

1 *Een discoers ofte Vertoogh ghedaen voor den Coninck van Vranckerijke ende ettelyke van zynen raet, vvaerin verclaert vvort met wat middelen men soude connen Vranckerijke in een Turksche slavernije bringhen, verclarende insghelycks hoe de Spaense Nacie den saluen boosen raet ende middelen ghebruyckt om onse Nederlanden in een Turckse slavernije ende tyrannije te bringhen*, Knuttel 232 (1575).

2 Aslı Çırakman, ‘From Tyranny to Despotism: The Enlightenment’s Unenlightened Image of the Turks’, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 33:1 (February 2001) 49-68, 49.

3 “Want van de dry staten die van ouden tijden in Vranckericke inghestelt syn, soo is den Edeldom [...] gheacht, ende om segghen ingestelt, tot de bescherminghe ende onderhout der twee ander staten [...] teghen den wille, volle macht ende ghewelt der Coninghen.” *Een discoers*, [4 v]; “D’autant que des trois estats qui fure[n]t instituez anciennement en la France, la noblesse [...] fust estimee & comme ordonnee pour la conseruation des deux autres estats [...] contre les plaisirs & vuloirs des Roys.” *Discours traduict d’italien en francois, Contenant aulcuns moyens pour reduire la France à vne entiere obeissance à son Roy* (Augsburg 1575) XII.

French *Discours* and its Dutch relative *Een discoers* fitted within a political debate about the limits of legitimate monarchy. This ‘Constitutionalist’ debate was lively in sixteenth-century France and was associated with the so-called Monarchomachs like Theodore Beza and François Hotman,⁴ but could be applied to the Dutch political situation as well. *Een discoers* provides us with a good example of this. Just like we have seen regarding the use of the terminology of a “Turkish tyranny” in the French and Dutch pamphlets, these ‘constitutionalist’ considerations were part of a European debate, which could be deployed to fit domestic circumstances.

5.1 Tyranny and Despotism: From Aristotle to Bodin

In this part of the chapter we investigate the conception of tyranny in sixteenth-century political thought in order to grasp the full meaning of the terminology used in of *Een discoers*, in which the Spanish are alleged to introduce tyranny in the Low Countries. In the pamphlet mention is made of the “Turkish slavery and tyranny” to which the “Spanish Nation” would reduce “our Netherlands”.⁵ In this part of the chapter we try to interpret the way tyranny was conceptualised in the sixteenth century. In order for us to examine sixteenth-century thinking on tyrannical political systems, we start out by investigating Aristotle’s political philosophy on tyranny and despotism. While it is difficult to prove the exact influence Aristotle might have had on contemporaries when he is not explicitly mentioned in the sources, his *Politics* nonetheless provided intellectuals of the early modern age with a systematic classification of the kinds of governments that existed.⁶ It is not unlikely that these views trickled down into contemporary terminology. Because not every scholar would have been versed in the Greek language but would be in the Latin, a modern translation of Aristotle will be read in conjunction with a Latin version which early modern scholars probably would have used.⁷ In square brackets ([...]) the Latin translation – which was probably used by most humanist scholars – is given.⁸ This way we will be able to get an impression on how intellectuals of the time conceptualised related political notions. Subsequently, we will briefly reconstruct the use of relevant terminology in the ages after Aristotle and see how it evolved. Moreover, since in *Een discoers* the kind of tyranny that the Spanish allegedly would introduce in the Netherlands is expressed in terms of a “Turkish tyranny”, in the next part of the chapter we will investigate what the pamphleteer might have meant with the characterisation of this tyranny as “Turkish”.

4 Paul-Alexis Mellet, *Les traités monarchomachs. Confusion des temps, résistance armée et monarchie parfaite (1560-1600)* (Geneve 2007).

5 “hoe de Spaense Nacie den saluen boosen raet ende middelen ghebruyckt om onse Nederlanden in een Turckse slavernije ende tyrannije te bringhen.” *Een discoers*, [1r] title page.

6 T.A. Sinclair and Trevor J. Saunders, *Aristotle, The Politics* (London 1992, first ed. 1962) 167.

7 I thank dr. Adrie van der Laan (Erasmus Center for Early Modern Studies, Rotterdam) for pointing out to me that the Latin version of the *Politics* by Leonardo Bruni would probably be the version most used by early modern scholars. Also see R. Koebner, ‘Despot and despotism: Vicissitudes of a political term’, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 14: 3,4 (1951) 275-302, 282.

8 All Latin terminology used in this chapter originates from *Aristotelis Politica*, [*Leonardo Aretino interprete*] *novissime Parrhisius impressa* (Parrhisij, [Nicalaus de Pratis,] venundantur a Ponceto le Preux ca. 1510), which can be consulted in the Rare Book Reading Room at Leiden University, shelf number 20643 C33.

It is generally known that early modern scholars were greatly indebted to Aristotle for their political theories. Aristotle's works, dating from the fourth century BC, were without doubt paramount in the education received by early modern scholars, and Aristotle's works would be reinterpreted and commented on in the many ages following his own.⁹ Aristotle's political concepts were part of early modern thinking on the mechanisms of society. In Aristotle's *Politics*, the Greek philosopher asserts that there are two kinds of authority. The first regards the authority of master over slave. Even though according to him the natural slave and the natural master [*natura servo & natura domino*]¹⁰ have the same interests, the rule of master over slave is employed mainly for the benefit of the master [*pro domini utilitate*]¹¹ and only incidentally for the benefit of the slave [*pro utilitate servi contingentes*].¹² The second kind of authority is that of "man over his wife, his children and his whole household". This form of authority Aristotle calls "household management" (*oikonomia* in Greek)¹³ [*rei familiaris gubernationem*].¹⁴ Contrary to the authority [*auctoritas*]¹⁵ of man over slave, this form is beneficial for those subject to it, or to both parties. The individual who is in authority looks to the good of those under his authority, like a captain on a ship or a doctor over his patient. As the complete opposite of the authority of man over slave, the ruler is the one who gets benefit out of it only incidentally.¹⁶ Aristotle connects these types of authority to his exposition of the types of existing states.¹⁷ He writes: "It is clear then that those constitutions which aim at the common good are right, as being in accord with absolute justice; while those which aim only at the good of rulers are wrong".¹⁸ These wrong forms of governments are deviations of the right constitutions. The deviations are similar to the rule of a master over a slave (*despoteia* in Greek) [*praesidentia dominatiua*],¹⁹ while the state is an association of free men for Aristotle.²⁰ In other words, the ruler should look after the interests of the ruled.

Aristotle classifies the state according to its citizen-body, as 'constitution' and 'citizen-body' mean the same thing for him, and in the citizen-body resides the sovereign power [*potestas*]²¹ of the state.

9 Janet Coleman, *A History of Political Thought. From Ancient Greece to Early Christianity* (vol. 1) (Oxford 2000) 115.

10 *Aristotelis Politica*, fo. XXXIII [v].

11 *Aristotelis Politica*, fo. XXXIII [v].

12 *Aristotelis Politica*, fo. XXXIII [v].

13 Koebner, 'Despot and despotism', 276.

14 *Aristotelis Politica*, fo. XXXIII [v].

15 *Aristotelis Politica*, fo. XXXIII [r].

16 Aristotle, *The Politics*, in T.A. Sinclair (translator) and Trevor J. Saunders (editor) (London 1992, first ed. 1962) 1278b, 188.

17 It proves very difficult to translate *politeia*. Here it is translated as state or constitution, but it involves the whole social, political and economic organisation of the state. For a discussion on the matter of translation see T.A. Sinclair and Trevor J. Saunders, *Aristotle, The Politics* (London 1992, first ed. 1962) 177. In the translation of Stephen Everson, 'government' is used. See Stephen Everson (ed.), *Aristotle, The Politics* (Cambridge 1988). Leonardo Bruni translates 'constitution' with *res publica* and 'state' as *civitas*, fo. XXVIII [v].

18 [*Constat igitur qui quaecunque respublicae ad communem utilitatem intendunt hae recte sunt secundum simpliciter iustum.*] *Aristotelis Politica*, fo. XXXIII [r].

19 *Aristotelis Politica*, fo. XXXI [v]. *Despoteia* is given by T.A. Sinclair and Trevor J. Saunders, 187.

20 Aristotle, *The Politics*, 1279a, 189.

21 *Aristotelis Politica*, fo. XXXIII [r].

This sovereignty either resides in the one, few or many, [*vnus, vel pauci, vel multi*]²² and when these rule in view of the common good they are correct, but if they look to their private advantage, they are corrupt, or deviations [*transgressiones & labes*]^{23, 24} Aristotle lists the titles normally given to the right constitutions as monarchy (one), aristocracy (the best few) and polity (many). These constitutions all aim at the common interest [*publica vtilitatas*]^{25, 26} Their deviated forms are: from kingship to tyranny [*tyrannus*]²⁷, from aristocracy to oligarchy [*paucorum potentia*]²⁸ and from polity to democracy [*popularis status*]²⁹. What makes them deviations is that the aim of the rulers in question is not to the common good, but to the benefit of the monarch, the benefit of those few with means and the benefit of many without means respectively.³⁰

For the meaning of tyranny and despotism for Aristotle, we must look into his understanding of kingship. We have seen that in a deviation of a constitution the aim is one's own benefit, while in the best state it is possible to have one man who excels in virtue to rule over all. In Aristotle's view, these kind of kings will gladly be obeyed and will be permanent kings in their states.³¹ On the other hand, Aristotle clearly prefers aristocracy (rule by good men) over kingship (rule of one) since, according to him, more people are a better judge than one because "the many are less easily corrupted". So it seems that for Aristotle a ruler must be sovereign in all cases, "except those in which they go awry", that is, in those cases in which the constitution is deviated.³²

So what kind of forms of kingships are there, according to Aristotle? The clearest example of kingship he finds in the case of the Spartan constitution. This form of kingship is constituted according to the law, thus this type of rule is legitimate. The Spartan king is not sovereign over everything, but he is a leader in war and he has the care over religious matters. Aristotle calls this type of kingship "a generalship tenable for life, which may be acquired either by birth or election."³³ The second kind type of kingship Aristotle mentions is that of the non-Greeks. In considering the notion of "Turkish tyranny", this category is most relevant to us for it deals with a non-Greek (Eastern) form of kingship. The treatment of this form of kingship may seem somewhat confusing to us, because it resembles tyranny very closely.³⁴ The difference between tyranny and the constitution of the non-Greeks, however, is its legitimacy.

22 *Aristotelis Politica*, fo. XXXVIII [r].

23 *Aristotelis Politica*, fo. XXXVIII [r].

24 Aristotle, *The Politics*, 1279a, 189.

25 *Aristotelis Politica*, fo. XXX [v].

26 Aristotle, *The Politics*, 1279a, 190.

27 *Aristotelis Politica*, fo. XXX [r].

28 *Aristotelis Politica*, fo. XXX [r].

29 *Aristotelis Politica*, fo. XXIX [r].

30 Aristotle, *The Politics*, 1279b, 190.

31 Aristotle, *The Politics*, 1284b, 215-216.

32 Aristotle, *The Politics*, 1286a, 222-223.

33 Aristotle, *The Politics*, 1285a, 217.

34 About this confusion see T.A. Sinclair and Trevor J. Saunders, *Aristotle, The Politics* (London 1992, first ed. 1962) 216.

According to Aristotle, non-Greeks are by natural character more slavish than Greeks, and the Asiatics similarly are more slavish than Europeans. Consequently, they tolerate “master-like rule” without resentment. Thus, these non-Greek kingdoms are established by law, ancestrally organised and their subjects are *willing*. Therefore, they are not tyrannies but only resemble tyrannies, since this rulership is legitimate.³⁵ The third type of kingship used to exist with the Greeks of old.³⁶ Again, these kings resemble tyrants very closely. Aristotle calls them “in rough terms an elective tyranny.” The only difference with the non-Greeks form of kingship is that they are not ancestral but elective. Beyond that, they are equally subject to law and thus legitimate. What is important in the argument is again the legitimacy of this form of government, and the fact that these kings rule over willing subjects.³⁷ The fourth class of royal power concerns the kings of “heroic” times. This kingship is ancestral, subject to law and has willing subjects. The “heroic” kings are general, judge and religious head simultaneously. The fifth type of kingly rule is that which was mentioned above: one man with sovereign control over everything, which is the same as the household management of a state.³⁸

Let us recapitulate some conclusions we can draw thus far. According to Aristotle there are two types of authority: a rule of master over slave (*despoteia*), where the relationship of the ruler over the ruled is in favour of the former and only incidentally of the slave, and household management (*oikonomia*) where both parties benefit from the relationship and the ruler only incidentally. Aristotle transmits these types of rule on the forms of government there exist. When a government (whether of the one, few or many) rules over its subjects like the master-slave relationship it is a deviant form of government. The rule of the one (monarchy) deteriorates in tyranny, of the few (aristocracy) in oligarchy, and the many (polity) in democracy. In these deviated form of government, the relationship is always for the benefit of the ruler, at the expense of the ruled. Conversely, in the correct forms of government, the relationship is in the interests of the common good. In this understanding, *despoteia* (rule of a master over a slave) is the condition for a government to become corrupted and thus tyranny – just like oligarchy or democracy as corrupted forms of government – is the consequence of this type of authority. If we understand *despoteia* to mean despotic rule, tyranny is merely a specific type of despotic rule, namely when the monarch acts only in his own interests with no regard for the good of those over whom he rules. This is why Aristotle considers “tyrannical” rule and “despotic” rule as identical notions.³⁹

However, we have also seen that in Aristotle’s *Politics* the notion of legitimacy is important in his conceptualisation of tyranny. There are situations in which there is master-like rule over subjects – in case of non-Greek kingship – while Aristotle nonetheless identifies this as a correct form of government, and thus refers to kingship instead of tyranny. The distinction here is significant. As long

35 Aristotle, *The Politics*, 1285a, 218.

36 Aristotle calls this form of kingship *aisumneteia*, or elective dictatorship. See Aristotle, *The Politics*, 1285b, 219.

37 Aristotle, *The Politics*, 1285a, 218.

38 Aristotle, *The Politics*, 1285b, 218-219.

39 Koebner, ‘Despot and despotism’, 277.

as this master-like rule is established according the law and its subjects are willing, Aristotle does not regard this type of government as deviated, even though its form of authority can be understood in terms of *despoteia*. This distinction on the basis of legitimate “despotic” rule has as a consequence that one could reason that despotism amounted to a peculiar form of monarchy, legal and hereditary, which otherwise has the same characteristics as tyranny, given that the power of the king is absolute and his subjects are like slaves. It differs from tyranny in that it does not involve illegal rule over involuntary subjects. In this understanding, tyranny is an illegitimate and corrupt system by a ruler who, at the expense of his subjects puts his own interests and passions above the pursuit of the common good and as such abuses his power. Despotism here is legal insofar as the law exists and the despot is often accepted by the people at large as legitimate. It relates to the nature of the people concerned, and often the climate in which it is situated. It follows that the despot is not corrupting a correct system of rule, but simply acts as he is supposed to, given the servile nature of a people.⁴⁰ This distinction reveals a deeper association with despotism as a specific system of government as opposed to the circumstantiality of tyranny. Despotism is associated with a systematic form of government, while tyranny might apply to individual rulers.⁴¹

When the Roman writers set out to work with Greek political teachings they avoided using Greek terminology, and rather applied terms that were provided by the Latin language. Only *tyrannus* found its way into contemporary vocabulary. These authors found an alternative for *despotes* in the more neutral Latin word *dominus*. However, around 1260 Aristotle’s *Politics* was translated by William of Moerbeke. He interpreted the concept of *despotes* as we have set forth above as the relation between master and slave. In Moerbeke’s translation he did not hesitate to adopt Greek nomenclature in his Latin rendering. The terminology associated with *despoticum* would, however, never become more significant than the terms of *monarchia*, *aristocratia*, *oligarchia*, *democratia* and the already well-known *tyrannus*. Hence, the notions of despotic rule did not refer to one of the correct forms of government, nor their typical deviations; they were merely used to give expression to the master-slave relationship.⁴² Ptolemy of Lucca (c.1236-c.1327) preferred to use a different concept to that which Aristotle called *principatus despoticus*. He adopts *regimen regale* to denote ‘despotic’ and ‘tyrannical’ rule. When Marsilio of Padua (c.1275-c.1342) presented his definitions of monarchical government in his *Defensor Pacis*, he supposed that his readers were well aware of the servile notion that accompanied the concept of despotism, and stressed that such a government is for the benefit of the ruler, not for that of the ruled.⁴³ The manner in which Greek notions were translated in Latin in order to describe despotic rule changed in the age of the humanists. *Despotes*, *despoticus* and *despotia* did not originate from the Latin language and as one expects from humanist scholarship, this terminology was not taken over in humanist accounts. As the Roman writers before them, they generally chose the much more neutral term *dominus*. In the translation of Aristotle’s *Politics* by Leonardo Bruni (c.1370-1444) Latin voca-

40 Joan-Pau Rubiés, ‘Oriental despotism and European Orientalism: Botero to Montesquieu’, *Journal of Early Modern History* 9:1-2 (Leiden 2005) 109-180, 115-116.

41 Rubiés, ‘Oriental despotism’, 115; Koebner, ‘Despot and despotism’, 299.

42 Koebner, ‘Despot and despotism’, 278-279.

43 Koebner, ‘Despot and despotism’, 280.

bulary was employed which would have been used by Cicero. This meant that there was no place for the *despotes* nomenclature. Bruni, whose translation would have been read and studied by students who were initiated in the teaching of Aristotle, introduced the words *erus* and *erilis* to denote “master over slaves”.⁴⁴

In 1568 a new version of the *Politics* was rendered directly from the Greek by Loys le Roy (1510-1577). This translation proved to be an inspiration for Jean Bodin, who in 1576 in his *Six livres de la Republique* adopted from Le Roy the term *monarchie seigneuriale* to designate despotic government. Thus, he did not use the words ‘despot’ or ‘despotism’, but had his own understanding of *monarchie seigneuriale*. Even though this work was published a year later than the pamphlet *Discours* and the Dutch *Een discoers*, it is interesting to consider Bodin’s understanding of despotism and tyranny, since it illustrates the status of the intellectual debate on tyrannical government in the world in which the pamphleteers lived. Bodin renewed Aristotle’s theory of despotic government and connected it to his own theory of sovereignty. According to this theory, the supreme power in a state was by definition *legibus soluta*, free from the law, that is: human positive law. However, in Bodin’s theory a ruler always remains subject under natural law. Bodin uses the term ‘seigniorial monarchy’ in order to describe a special type of practice in which the ruler has power over the goods and the life of his subjects. In this case, natural law is denied, while in case of legitimate monarchy natural law is respected, even though the monarch is above human positive law. Sovereignty in a monarchy is *legibus soluta* for Bodin. Nevertheless, when natural law is being breached, ‘seigniorial monarchy’ becomes part of the equation. So far, the position of the ‘seigniorial’ ruler towards his subjects resembles that of the ‘tyrant’, but there is a difference in Bodin’s conceptualisation between tyranny and despotism. In accordance with Aristotle’s definition of a tyrant, he is portrayed as a ruler who pursues his own private ends at the expense of the interests of the state and therefore arbitrarily eliminates natural law and imposes the condition of slavery on free subjects. ‘Seigniorial’ rulership, however, is extant in countries where natural law and freedom somehow have never been valid – in cases of primitive countries as described in Aristotle’s non-Greek *despoteia* – or have stopped to be valid – in cases of conquest.⁴⁵

We have seen that the conceptualisation of tyranny and despotism evolved from the time in which Aristotle wrote about the subject to the period Bodin formulated his theory of sovereignty. However, the difference between ‘despotism’ and ‘tyranny’ has not always been distinct in practice. We have seen that for Aristotle the terms could be used interchangeably, since tyranny denoted a specific form of despotic authority. On the other hand, in theory ‘tyranny’ and ‘despotism’ differed from each other conceptually, because the former was understood to amount to an illegitimate and corrupt form of government, while the latter could be legitimate in cases where the nature of the specific people demanded a ‘despotic’ ruler. This form of government resembles tyranny almost completely, except for the important fact that tyranny is not legitimate and thus the tyrannical ruler abuses his power and corrupts the government. Both political systems aim at the benefit of the ruler instead of the ruled, but in case of tyranny this is illegitimate, while a despotic government it is accepted by the people at large. The confusion of the one

44 Koebner, ‘Despot and despotism’, 282-283.

45 Koebner, ‘Despot and despotism’, 284-286.

concept for the other may have been increased by the variation in the use of words by important theorists from the time of Aristoteles to the time of Bodin. Medieval writers latinised certain Greek concepts like *despotes* and *despoticum*, while in the age of humanism this practice was abandoned by preferring the Latin language used by Cicero. The more neutral Latin term of *dominus* was adopted. Thus, the terminology that was used to describe and understand tyrannical and despotic government differed from time to time and from theorist to theorist.

5.2 Turkish tyranny

On the basis of the distinction between tyranny and despotism made above, when one looks at the content of *Een discoers* one would expect that the legitimate systematic nature of the Turkish political regime would be described in terms of despotism, as was done frequently in the debate on the nature of regimes in the East. As we have seen above, the depiction of Eastern empires having servile peoples that demand the rule of a despot goes back to Aristotle. In his portrayal of several forms of monarchy, he lists this type of government among the non-Greeks. Not only does he distinguish tyranny from despotism here, he also locates this version of government within the ‘oriental’ (Persian) tradition in opposition to Greek European norms, on the basis of the distinctive nature of Asiatic people.⁴⁶ European observers regarded despotism in Eastern parts of the world as expedient because of the nature of oriental subjects, while in Europe such a ruler would be dubbed a tyrant because such a government was deemed illegitimate since it did not fit European liberties.⁴⁷ If the Dutch pamphleteer would have chosen to hold on to this ‘Oriental despotism’ vs. ‘European tyranny’ dichotomy, the author would have been able to stress the illegitimacy of Spanish behaviour in the Netherlands. Turkish ‘despotism’ – which would have been understood as legal and legitimate in its own country – would be juxtaposed to the illegitimate ‘tyranny’ of the Spaniard in the Low Countries. The author, however, chose to portray the “Turkish slavery and tyranny” with the same brush as the “Spanish nation” – instead of using the concept of ‘despotism’ in the case of Turkey.⁴⁸ He does not go so far as to use the term “Spanish tyranny” but claims that the Spanish have “alas put into effect [the advice of the discourse] in such a way that it is insurmountable that from it soon follows more than a Turkish slavery.”⁴⁹ This reference to slavery makes clear that in *Een discoers* the concept of slavery is connected to the understanding of the Turkish government as a tyrannical regime. As we have seen in case of the definition of tyranny and despotism dating back to Aristotle, both are interpreted as a rule in which subjects are treated like slaves. The difference was, however, that in case of despotism subjects are legitimately treated

46 Rubiés, ‘Oriental despotism’, 115.

47 Rubiés, ‘Oriental despotism’, 119.

48 “hoe de Spaense Nacie den saluen boosen raet ende middelen ghebruyckt om onse Nederlanden in een Turckse slavernije ende tyrannije te bringhen.” *Een discoers*, [1r] title page.

49 “naeuolghende het discoers vtrechten, so dat sy gheheel end al schynen eenen ghelycken raet onderlinghe geschoren te hebben, den welcken sy (eylaes) alreede soo verde in effecte ghebrocht hebben dattet onmoghelick is of daerwt en volge corts meer dan een Turcksche slauernye”, *Een discoers*, [8v].

like slaves because of the servile nature of a specific people, while in case of tyrannical government subjects are unjustly treated as such and the ruler abuses his authority. It is likely that the pamphleteer interpreted Spanish rule in the understanding of tyranny clarified above, but he does not make the theoretical distinction between tyranny and despotism we found in Aristotle.

Why the Dutch author chose to depict Turkish government as tyrannical instead of despotic is an interesting question which we have to ask if we truly want to understand the concepts used in the period. It is possible that ‘despotism’ as a concept was not yet part of the debate in this era. Even though, as we have seen, political thought on tyranny and despotism was extensively discussed in theory, Joan-Pau Rubiés has argued that the term ‘despotism’ was coined by Pierre Bayle only at the turn of the eighteenth century, while the adjective ‘despotic’ to describe a particular type of government had been widespread in the seventeenth century.⁵⁰ Aslı Çırakman makes a similar claim. She states that ‘tyranny’ was used to describe the Ottoman empire in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, while in the eighteenth century a transition occurred to the terminology of ‘despotism’.⁵¹ Rubiés clarifies that from the 1570s onwards – the exact period we are concerned with here – the tendency to describe the Ottoman monarchy as tyrannical – with its connotations to its illegitimacy – increased because it became clear for Europeans that the Turkish government, which they once partly admired as orderly, disciplinary and extraordinary powerful, was now susceptible to injustice, corruption and weakness. This view may be explained by decline of the Ottoman Empire, which became apparent to Europeans in the seventeenth century.⁵² Çırakman has a different explanation, though. She states that while ‘tyranny’ was a concept that allowed both positive and negative features, ‘despotism’ allowed only negative connotations because it stressed the corruption and backwardness of the Ottoman government.⁵³ Whatever the case, it is striking that *Een discoers* makes no mention of the term ‘despotism’ at all and it is likely, indeed, that the term ‘tyranny’ was used in contemporary debates about Turkish rule, while ‘despotism’ would enter the arena only later on.

It is interesting to note that the French *Discours*, on which the Dutch *Een discoers* was based, does not use the terminology of a ‘Turkish tyranny’, even though in content the pamphlets coincide – except for the preface of the French author and the prologue and epilogue of the Dutch author. In the preface of the French author – which the Dutch pamphleteer chose not to include in his translation – he warns for “the most cruel and tyrannical plans” that would follow from the discourse, “which would never before have been made in Christendom”,⁵⁴ but the French author never uses the words ‘Turkish tyranny’. He deploys the words “absolute obedience to the sovereign Prince” that is to be found in Turkey,⁵⁵ but never once directly connects the word ‘tyranny’ to Turkish government. While *Een discoers* includes the words “Turkish slavery and tyranny” on its title page, the *Discoers* states that the discourse contains “several means

50 Rubiés, ‘Oriental despotism’, 110.

51 Çırakman, ‘From Tyranny to Despotism’, 49.

52 Rubiés, ‘Oriental despotism’, 128.

53 Çırakman, ‘From Tyranny to Despotism’, 49.

54 “que son effect peult empescher les plus cruels & tyranniques desseigns, qui furent iamais faits en Chrestienté”, *Discours*, VI.

55 “entiere obeissance au Prince souuerain sinon en Turquie seullement”, *Discours*, IX.

to reduce France to an entire obedience to his King”, without suggesting that the country would deteriorate into a “Turkish tyranny”.⁵⁶ For the French sister of *Discours*, jointly titled *La France-Turquie*, this is a whole different story altogether.⁵⁷ On the title page of this comprehensive pamphlet a direct link is made between the French situation and the “Turkish tyranny”.⁵⁸ When a contemporary reader would turn over the first page, he would find an elaboration on this theme. On the verso side of the title page is announced what is included in *La France-Turquie*. About the *Conseil Du Chevalier Poncet*, which corresponds in content to its sister *Discours*, it is stated that the discourse was presented in order to “reduce France in the same state as Turkey”.⁵⁹ Moreover, the last work included in *La France-Turquie*, *Lunettes de Christal de Roche* would “clearly show the path towards the subjection of France to the obedience existing in Turkey.”⁶⁰ Unlike the Dutch pamphlet, however, in *La France-Turquie* there is no mentioning of the word ‘slavery’ neither in the context of Turkey, nor in connection to the “cruel and tyrannical plans” which the “enemies of the Crown of France” would have presented in the discourse in question. We could conclude, therefore, that in case of the Dutch pamphlet, the author clearly associated tyranny with slavery and regarded Spanish behaviour in the Netherlands in comparable terms. It is likely that this fitted the terminology in which the Dutch audience understood and interpreted Spanish rule. The terminology was probably chosen to appeal to the Dutch audience. In case of the French pamphlets this vocabulary was perhaps less compelling, because the stress was more on the ‘insidious’ influence of Italian advisors on the royal council.

As we have seen in Chapter four, in *Een discoers* there were three themes that were associated with Turkish tyrannical rule: the absence of nobility, the institution of the Janissaries and the toleration of only one religion in the entire country. Another characterisation that is linked to tyrannical rule, and this time is extant as well in the Dutch pamphlet as in both French versions, is the reference to the insecurity of “persons and goods” of subjects under such governments. Rubiés points out that the argument that unlimited control over the persons and goods of a king’s subjects is what makes the monarch a despot became currency in the seventeenth century. The Ottoman empire was regarded as the most despotic regime, because the sultan was thought to be the absolute master of all things in his dominion and all his subjects his slaves, and life and goods were not safe.⁶¹ We see that already in all three pamphlets the frailty of subject’s persons and goods under the yoke of a tyrannical government is stressed on several occasions. Firstly, in the alleged preface of the Florentine who would have given the discourse to the French translator, a warning is expressed concerning the persons and goods of French subjects. The Florentine allegedly wanted to make the discourse known to the French people in order for them to “observe their

56 “aucuns moyens pour reduire la France à une entiere obeissance à son Roy.”, *Discours*, title page.

57 For more information on the relationship of *Discours*, *La France-Turquie* and *Een discoers*, see Chapter two of this thesis.

58 *La France-Turquie, C’est à dire, conseils et moyens tenus par les ennemis de la Couronne de France, pour reduire le royaume en tel estat que la Tyrann[ie] Turquesque* (Orleans, Thibaut des Murs 1576) [A1 r] title page.

59 “Conseil Du Chevalier Poncet, donné [...] pour reduire la France en mesme estat que la Turquie”, *La France-Turquie*, [A1 v].

60 “Lunettes de Christal de Roche, par lesquelles on void clairement le chemin tenu pour subiuguer la France à mesme obeissance que la Turquie”, *La France-Turquie*, [A1 v].

61 Rubiés, ‘Oriental despotism’, 127.

prosperity better than before” and to “prevent or hinder such evil plans, which could be carried out against their persons and goods.”⁶² The second instance in which the danger to persons and goods is highlighted concerns the discourse which the alleged “Signeur Poncet” would have held before the royal council in order to explain how the French king would be able to eliminate the nobility in France so he could muster as much obedience as the Ottoman sultan holds in his lands. The king is advised to “in all manners demand the diminution of said Princes, Lords and Nobility, as well in their persons as their goods.”⁶³ Ottoman subjects would deliberately be kept poor, “in order that be no attack or enterprise against [the Turk], similarly that it would be virtually impossible that rebellious and seditious minds would rise.”⁶⁴

Thus, the danger to subjects’ persons and goods is associated with the tyrannical rule in first instance in case of the Ottoman sultan, and in second instance of the French king in France and Spanish king in the Netherlands in case the advice of the discourse would be acted upon. Moreover, in order to make clear that the Ottoman sultan is in full control of his subjects, they are depicted as his “children”. Here, again, in all the pamphlets concerned this connection to the rule of the Ottomans is made. This association is identified with the institution of the Janissaries. The pamphleteers explain: “He allows no Nobility in his empire than only his Janissaries, who from young age have been groomed and raised by the big Turk as if they were his own children or creatures”.⁶⁵ It follows that an Ottoman subject “could nor dares to act against the will or command of the Turk.”⁶⁶

5.3 Constitutionalism: limiting the power of the monarch

The time when *Een discoers* was published (1575) is an interesting period for scholars of the history of ideas and political thought. France in particular was the scene of lively debates about the power of monarchs, and it was certainly not restricted to France. In chapter three of this study, where we reconstructed the

62 “op haerlieder weluaert meer acht nemen, dan zy tot noch toe ghedaen hebben, om also te beletten ofte verhinderen alsulcke boose raetslaghen, alsser teghen hare personen ende goederen soude mogen gehouden worden.” *Een discoers*, Aij v; “present de plus pres à leurs affaires qu’ils n’ont fait iusques icy, pour empescher les pernicieux desseins qui peuent estre faicts contre leurs personnes & biens”, *Discours*, VIII; *La France-Turquie*, 7.

63 “om in alle manieren te voorderen de verminderinghe der voorseyder Princen, Heeren ende Aedelen, soo wel in hare personen als in hare goederen”, *Een discoers*, [5r]; “afin de trauailler en toutes fortes à la diminution desdicts princes, seigneurs & nobles tant des personnes que des biens”, *Discours*, XIII; *La France-Turquie*, [10], which is erroneously numbered 01.

64 “om [syne ondersaten] altijs in armoede te houden ende also te beletten dat sy geen penninghen en soude connen fornieren, so verde daer eenighen aenslach ofte enterprinse teghen hem soude mogen gebeuren, gelickerwijs het schier onmogelick is, of daer en souden somstys sommige oproerige ende ongeruste gheesten oprijzen.” *Een discoers*, [4v]; “afin de [ses subiects] tenir tousiours paaures & empescher par ce moyen de fournir aux menees & entreprises, si aucunes s’en fai soient, comme il estoit impossible qu’il n’y eust de mal contents quelque foys.” *Discours*, [XI], erroneously numbered IX; *La France-Turquie*, 8-9.

65 “dat hy ghenen anderen Edeldom in syn rycke en bekent dan alleenlick syn Ianissaren, de welcke van ionghs beene af, vanden grooten Turck opgheueect ende opgheuoet synde, al of sy zijn kinderen ofte syn maeksel selue waren”, *Een discoers*, Aij r; “qui’il ne permettoit en son empire autre noblesse recogneuë que ses genissaires, lesquels estants de leur enfance nourriz & comme ses creatures entretenuz de luy”, *Discours*, IX; *La France-Turquie*, 7.

66 “niemant noch en can en derf, yet roeren teghen den wille ofte ghebot des Turcks.” *Een discoers*, Aij v – [4r]; “nul ne pouuoit & n’osoit atte[n]ter contre le plaisir volonté & commendement dudict Turcq”, *Discours*, [XI], erroneously numbered IX; *La France-Turquie*, 8.

historical background of both France and the Netherlands at the time of the publication of the pamphlets, we have seen in the case of the Dutch and French pamphlet that in the early modern period – just like in modern times – ideas transcended geographical borders and historical and contextual differences. The exchange of ideas was not fixed to geographical environments: they could be received and consummated in different contexts. Subsequently, ideas would be transformed to fit the local circumstances. This is the background in which there was a pan-European discussion about the nature and limit of monarchical power. In *Een discoers* this question is also raised. Members of the noble estate are presented as the “controllers and limiters of the will of Kings.”⁶⁷ In his part of the chapter we look further into the political thought of the sixteenth century, particularly concerning the ideas about the institutions that were deemed to function as limitations to monarchical power. These ideas are what amounts to the concept of ‘constitutionalism’. This concept is created by historians to denote the tendency to regard the commonwealth as sovereign – from which all authority derives – and the institutionalisation of that sovereignty through the control of governmental power by the people or their representatives.⁶⁸ In the sixteenth century this tendency was still in development. It was a period of transition from the medieval to this modern constitutionalist thinking. The constitutionalism associated with the German kingdoms in the early Middle Ages did not resemble the modern version in any distinct way. In that time it was limited to the right of active resistance towards a ruler who in his administration of justice made calls that conflicted with the sense of justice embodied in the tradition of the specific territory. As long as the king would have consent, he was in the ability to act as he wished. This meant that the supremacy of the law was not guaranteed by institutional limitations. The monarch was not bound to the advice given by magistrates and he was free to choose his own advisors. Moreover, the right to resist or overthrow a king was not acknowledged as an act of the community, which is one of the concepts fundamental to modern constitutionalism.⁶⁹

In the high and later Middle Ages more complex and organised institutions emerged, which had the consequence that the concepts of modern constitutionalism began to have more resonance. From the eleventh century onwards the tenet of popular sovereignty began to develop gradually because of the revival of Roman law and the scholastic study of classical philosophy. With regard to Roman civil law, its interpreters understood the *lex regia* of the *Digest* of Justinian to mean that the emperor’s power was transmitted to him by a grant of the community. Some argued that on the basis of private-law analogy that this grant was revocable. This idea carried the seeds of resistance based on popular sovereignty. On the basis of the study of Aristotle by theologians and philosophers, a similar conclusion could be drawn. In the high Middle Ages another development provided for the advancement of another constitutionalist precept, namely the emergence of the idea of institutional restraints on royal power. This principle was

67 “controleurders ende beletters des willes der Coninghen”, *Een discoers*, [4v]; “contrerolleurs & empescheurs des volonte des Roys”, *Discours*, XII; *La France-Turquie*, 9.

68 Julian H. Franklin, *Constitutionalism and Resistance in the Sixteenth Century. Three Treatises by Hotman, Beza & Mornay* (Indianapolis 1978, first ed. New York 1969) 11-12.

69 Franklin, *Constitutionalism and Resistance*, 11.

associated with the rise and maturation of representative Estates assemblies. These institutions emerged in almost every part of Western Europe under various titles and were based on the older, feudal forms of consultation. Existing mechanisms were expanded to incorporate significant towns and sometimes other parts of society that had become of greater political import. The Estates represented the larger community. New taxation required the consent of the Estates, a development which was reinforced by the expanding financial needs of the more centralised administrations. As a consequence the representative bodies could demand certain rights which established their influence, for instance through consent to legislation and regular meetings. Nevertheless, these developments did not lead to the modern conceptualisation of constitutionalism in this period. The idea of an ongoing supremacy of the people was a very exceptional viewpoint. The position that authority was somehow shared between the king and the community was much more common. Moreover, the medieval estates were not regarded as an institution that could control the government. Basically, these representative bodies were regarded as consultative assemblies whose consent was nonetheless required for certain royal actions.⁷⁰

The issue of the power of monarchs became all the more relevant as the – also pan-European – development of the Reformation unfolded. It raised the question how to react when a sovereign, whether he was prince, king or Emperor, was not an adherent of the ‘true faith’.⁷¹ This question became even more pertinent when Protestantism was in crisis in the 1540s. At that time, Protestants were being persecuted everywhere in Europe.⁷² It became obvious that, not only did monarchs adhere to a different denomination than their Protestant subjects, they also seemed intent on eradicating the new religion. Confronted with this sudden threat to the very existence of Protestantism, the religious leaders of the new faith, Luther and Calvin, did not react with the utmost resilience immediately. Calvin remained committed to a theory of passive political obedience, as Luther had in his early works in the 1520s.⁷³ The principles behind this theory are to be found in the maxims that all power was ordained by God and that princes were the ministers of God and as such His representatives on earth. These assumptions had the striking consequence that even wicked magistrates had to be obeyed. In this line of thinking, evil rulers were instituted by God to punish the sinfulness of the people. Tyrants, even impious and sacrilegious, were brought to the earth to fulfil God’s plans. Considering this theory, one could only react to the yoke of an evil and impious ruler with obedience and suffering.⁷⁴

In contrast to the Calvinists, the Lutherans had less difficulty in defending the idea of active resistance to their ruler in the 1540s. When they decided to declare war on Charles V in 1546, they had already built up radical arguments about the validity of political violence. The seeds for these arguments were sowed in the 1520s. Since the Diet of Worms in 1521 the Emperor had expressed the aim to

70 Franklin, *Constitutionalism and Resistance*, 12-15.

71 Robert von Friedeburg, *Self-Defence and Religious Strife in Early Modern Europe. England and Germany, 1530-1680* (Aldershot 2002) 21.

72 Quentin Skinner, *The foundations of modern political thought. Vol.2: The age of Reformation* (Cambridge 1978) 189.

73 Skinner, *The foundations*, 191.

74 Skinner, *The foundations*, 193-194.

push the Lutherans back into the unity of the Catholic Church. When in 1529 peace with France was signed (the Peace of Cambrai) and the Turks were resisted in Vienna, Charles V seized the opportunity and announced at the Diet of Spreyer to withdraw all the concessions made to Lutherans. The Lutherans replied with a formal protest (hence, the name Protestants) which was presented in the name of six princes and fourteen cities. The Catholic majority was unmoved, however. Against this background Lutherans first confronted the problem of active resistance. Philip of Hesse became the protagonist in this quest when he gave legal advisors the assignment to solve the problem. There was no question whether it was legitimate if one may defend oneself against a prince in the circumstances of an attack, but rather if it was lawful to resist the Emperor himself, who now had become the leader of the Catholic majority. The challenge was to find a line of argument and still uphold the Lutheran maxim that power was ordained by God. The legal advisors deployed by Phillip of Hesse found juridical precedent: electors had already resisted and even removed Emperor Wenzel in 1400. This find legitimised the idea of armed resistance while still respecting the fundamental Lutheran principle that all power was derived from the ordinance of God. Indeed, it could be argued that this was the case for all territorial sovereigns, so the the electors would have just as much authority than the said Emperor. Moreover, the condition was added that powers said to be ordained perform a particular office and implied the observance of certain legal obligations towards each other. If one party would break this legal obligation it would follow that the duped party would have the right to defend itself. The princes and the Emperor would stand in such legal relationship towards each other that if the Emperor would overstep his boundaries by persecuting the gospel or to submit violence to one of the princes he may be opposed. At first, nothing concrete emerged out of the militant move and constitutionalist theory of Hesse. At the outset Luther rejected it and he remained committed to the theory of non-resistance. As the situation became more threatening by the end of the 1530s, and Saxon jurists also put forward their theory of resistance based on private-law analogies, Luther eventually gave in and endorsed the theory of resistance.⁷⁵

In the 1550s the Calvinists adopted and reworked the radical arguments of the Lutherans, but they also made distinguished contributions themselves. Radical Calvinists like Ponet and Goodman acknowledged that a prince or judge was not always ordained by God. This was a revolutionary claim. They argued that the people had made a mistake in selecting a prince over them, whereby they ignored the will of God.⁷⁶ Another contribution the Calvinists made to the theory of resistance in the 1550s is the fact that they were much more liberal in permitting who could lawfully resist an idolatrous or tyrannical ruler. The Lutherans were of the opinion that kings and other superior magistrates could only be opposed by other ordained powers, in other words, inferior magistrates. Some Calvinists enhanced this argument by arguing that there are other representatives that may lawfully challenge a tyrannical government under certain conditions. This concerns a special class of popularly elected magistrates. In Calvin's *Institutes* he portrays them

⁷⁵ Skinner, *The foundations*, 194-199.

⁷⁶ Skinner, *The foundations*, 225, 227, 230.

as the magistrates of the people and confers on them the ability to restrain kings.⁷⁷ These magistrates are modelled like the 'ephors' who were set up in Sparta to check the power of their kings.⁷⁸ Calvin did not only suggest that there may be magistrates appointed to curb monarchical power, but also proposed that the best candidates for such posts were the three Estates of each kingdom when they were assembled, since they serve as the representatives of the people who elected them and as such hold responsibility to the people. He never explicitly states, however, that in his day there existed such assemblies that held 'ephoral' authority in any extant kingdom in Europe. Neither does he unequivocally claim that, if such authorities should exist, they would have the duty to resist the government of tyrannical rulers. It must be added that his discussion at first did not seem to generate much influence. Nevertheless, Calvin's ideas were significant, as he introduced a secular and constitutionalist argument in the discussion about political authority, which the Lutherans had intentionally avoided. In his theory inferior magistrates were not primarily ordained by God, but elected officials with a responsibility to those who had elected them.⁷⁹ This constitutionalist and less sectarian theory of opposition helped broaden the scope of the support for the Calvinists who were a minority: the emphasis moved from religious motivations to secular considerations.⁸⁰

It is against this background that the notion of popular sovereignty developed. Radical Calvinists took the constitutionalists arguments further. As we have seen, popular sovereignty was one of the elements belonging to modern constitutionalism. The other was that institutions were established to guarantee popular sovereignty through the control of governmental power by the people or their representatives. François Hotman (1524-1590) was the first to combine these elements. As a jurist he set out to put together a humanist history of the French constitution in his *Francogallia* (1573). He unearthed a mixed constitution in which the power was shared between the king and the community. Hotman regarded this history as a guideline for present conduct. What he found in the 'ancient constitution' is presented as a standard against which contemporary behaviour should be measured. From constitutional principles he argued that the king was nothing more than a magistrate for life and when he should violate the duties of his office, he should fear removal by the people. Hotman came to this conclusion by using the French constitution to demonstrate that the French monarchy was originally elective. In his line of thinking, kings were created by the people and remained to be responsible to the people for the conduct of their office.⁸¹ From this starting point he then equates the public council as the Three Estates of the country. He argued that these Estates remained unaltered from the foundation of the kingdom. They do not correspond to the Estates as we would identify them, i.e. according to social orders of the clergy, nobility and commoners. For Hotman the three Estates were classified rather according to political order, meaning the king,

77 Skinner, *The foundations*, 230.

78 Robert von Friedeburg, 'Von den 'Ephoren' als Institut ständischer Mitbestimmung zur Fundamentalverfassung des Gemeinwesens: Die Entwicklung von Calvin bis hin zu Althusius, Besold und Boxhorn um die Mitte des 17. Jahrhunderts' in Heinrich de Wall (ed.), *Reformierte Staatslehren in der frühen Neuzeit* (Berlin 2013).

79 Skinner, *The foundations*, 233-234.

80 Skinner, *The foundations*, 310.

81 Franklin, *Constitutionalism and Resistance*, 20-21.

the aristocracy and the people. The element of the aristocracy was made up of those who hold or have a claim to a high position and authority, so they effectively consist of high officials rather than of the whole noblesse. The popular element would be made up from all the regional deputies who were regarded as elected agents.⁸² Without the consent of these Estates, the king could do nothing. According to Hotman, they had to be consulted in fiscal matters as well as matters of war and peace. Crown officials were responsible to the Estates, rather than the king, for they had elected them and could remove them for misconduct. 'Royal majesty' was not something residing in the person of the king, but in the Estates assembled as a whole, of which the king was only the executive officer. It followed that the Estates were no longer understood as a body that would only be consulted only on rare occasions, but rather as an institution central in the government.⁸³ Thus, Hotman's theory is one of absolute popular control: the representatives of the people have the supreme power not only to transfer, but also to take away the kingdom.⁸⁴

Theodore Beza (1519-1605) consulted Hotman while preparing his *Right of Magistrates*, which he penned in 1574, a year before the *Discours* and *Een discoers* were published.⁸⁵ Hotman had used notions that Calvin had evoked earlier. He had stated that representative assemblies might be viewed as the conveyers of 'ephoral' powers. Hotman then placed 'ephoral' authority in the hands of the assembly of the Estates in France.⁸⁶ Beza expands on this theme.⁸⁷ Important in his defence of active resistance is his proposition that, as was the case with Hotman, kings are not only instated for the welfare of the people, but they are also were created by the people.⁸⁸ He then goes on to argue that the creation of a king involved the establishment of definite conditions.⁸⁹ From these two propositions it follows that if a ruler fails to uphold the conditions on which authority was granted, the people no longer have an obligation to him and may remove him.⁹⁰ But when may such a tyrant be deposed of? It is important to note that Beza distinguishes between two kinds of tyrants. The first is a tyrant by usurpation, who seizes power without legal title. He may be resisted by all. Indeed, in this case resistance is not only a right of every individual; it is his sacred duty.⁹¹ The second type of tyrant is a ruler who abuses his authority but his title is otherwise legitimate.⁹² Here Beza's response is more complex. In his analysis there are three types of subjects. First of all, there are private persons who have no public office. Even though these subjects must never make themselves the instrument of tyranny or fail to do their duty to God and their fellowmen, they may, under no circumstances, on their

82 Franklin, *Constitutionalism and Resistance*, 23.

83 Franklin, *Constitutionalism and Resistance*, 26.

84 Skinner, *The foundations*, 312-313.

85 Skinner, *The foundations*, 304.

86 Skinner, *The foundations*, 314.

87 Also see Von Friedeburg, 'Von den 'Ephoren''.

88 Theodore Beza, *Right of Magistrates*, Ch. V, in Julian H. Franklin, *Constitutionalism and Resistance in the Sixteenth Century. Three Treatises by Hotman, Beza & Mornay* (Indianapolis 1978, first ed. New York 1969) 104.

89 Beza, *Right of Magistrates*, Ch. VI, 114.

90 Beza, *Right of Magistrates*, Ch. VI, 114, 123.

91 Beza, *Right of Magistrates*, Ch. V, 105-107.

92 Beza, *Right of Magistrates*, Ch. VI, 108.

own initiative repel force with force. They must either go in exile or bear the yoke with trust in God.⁹³ The second kind of subjects are those below the sovereign, the lesser magistrates. These are not the officers of the king's household, Beza explains, for these are devoted to the king rather than the kingdom. Conversely, the lesser magistrates are those who have state responsibilities either in the administration of justice or in war, and also include the elected officers of towns. The relationship of the king and these lesser magistrates is expressed in terms of definite conditions. If the inferior officers do not observe these conditions, it is the task of the sovereign to dismiss them, but only through legal procedures. On the other hand, if the king fails to uphold the conditions, the lesser magistrates are free from their oath and are entitled to resist the oppression of the realm.⁹⁴ Beza argues that these inferior magistrates are endowed with 'ephoral' authority.⁹⁵ The third class of subjects are the Estates and similar bodies. They are constituted to check and bridle the sovereign magistrate.⁹⁶ Where it is the right of magistrates to constrain the sovereign, the power to depose a tyrant is exclusively the right of the Estates.⁹⁷ The latter are established to hold the sovereign to his duty and even punish him when the occasion arises.⁹⁸ Beza regrets the fact that "In the France of our day, the closest male relative of a king succeeds to the throne without a meeting of the Estates [...]. The Estates are no longer assembled at regular intervals but are called at the pleasure of individuals who are concerned only with their own profit and security."⁹⁹

It is interesting to note that Beza provides a lot of Biblical and historical evidence in his quest to prove the authority of the Estates. He also mentions Turkey in this regard, but states that this country cannot serve as an example, for this country is "not monarchical and not humane, but entirely barbaric, brutal and cruel"¹⁰⁰ He seems to be aware of the fact that people had suggested to European kings to fashion their rule after Ottoman example and strongly rejects this:

And this is why I say and hold before everyone to hear that those who want to recommend, advise or prod kings to follow such an example for their government, are to be regarded as enemies of humanity and as such should be exterminated.¹⁰¹

This brings us back to *Een discoers*, where "Signeur Poncet" - the alleged orator of the speech recorded in the pamphlet - is said to have encouraged the French king to adopt a political system as could be found in contemporary Turkey; the exact deed that Beza abhorred. Not only do the authors of the pamphlets strongly

93 Beza, *Right of Magistrates*, Ch. VI, 108.

94 Beza, *Right of Magistrates*, Ch. VI, 110-111.

95 Franklin, *Constitutionalism and Resistance*, 36.

96 Beza, *Right of Magistrates*, Ch. VI, 108.

97 Beza, *Right of Magistrates*, Ch. VI, 112 ; Franklin, *Constitutionalism and Resistance*, 36.s

98 Beza, *Right of Magistrates*, Ch. VI, 113.

99 Beza, *Right of Magistrates*, Ch. VI, 121.

100 Beza, *Het recht der overheden*, in H. Meijer, Theodorus Beza, *Het recht der overheden. De iure magistratum* (Gouda 1980) 64.

101 Beza, *Het recht der overheden*, 65.

oppose this advice as well, they also present sentiments that resemble constitutionalist arguments. It is of course very difficult to reconstruct the manner in which authors were influenced by intellectual discussions such as the debate on Reformation theory of resistance and constitutionalist argumentation. We can propose, however, that the debate on the power of the monarch and limiting institutions was ongoing when the pamphlets we are dealing with here were published in 1575. Indeed, both the ability of the nobility and of the Estates to limit the power of the monarch are put forward in the French and Dutch pamphlets. The nobility is regarded as the institution of choice to hold authority against the “will, absolute power and violence of kings”, so that “the Princes and grandees are rightly called the controllers and limiters of the will of Kings.”¹⁰² The fact that in the Ottoman Empire the nobility is lacking is emphasised in the pamphlet in order to demonstrate the tyrannical character of Turkish rule.¹⁰³ In other early modern sources this lack of nobility was more often juxtaposed against European liberties.¹⁰⁴ According to the author of the French pamphlet and the Dutch translator, the position of the nobility “follows from nothing else than the unity and common agreement of the three aforementioned estates.”¹⁰⁵ They clarify that:

It follows that people say that kings are called sovereign lords and masters, but that they are in reality subjects of their subjects, because they cannot freely act according to their wishes, and that their desires and demands cannot be received, which are sometimes based on the enlargement of their realm and other times on the necessity which their affairs demand.¹⁰⁶

The text of *Een discoers* relays a speech that is held before the French king and his council, which advises the king to “destroy” the nobility, and “get the two other estates in more and strict subjection” as well.¹⁰⁷ Considering that the authors of the pamphlet distance themselves from the content that is communicated

102 “teghen den wille, volle macht ende ghewelt der Coninghen. Soo dat men de Princen ende groote meesters met de rechte mach noemen controleurders ende beletters des willes der Coninghen.” *Een discoers*, [4v]; “contre les plaisirs & vouldoirs des Roys. Telleme[n]t que lesdicts Princes & gra[n]des seigneurs se peuuent à bon droict no[m]mer contrerolleurs & empescheurs des volonte[is] des Roys” *Discours*, XII; *La France-Turquie*, 9.

103 For more information on this theme, see Chapter 4 of this thesis.

104 Rubiés, ‘Oriental despotism’, 119.

105 “Het welcke inconuenient nerghens el wt spruijt dat wt de eenicheyt ende onderlinghe correspondencie der dry voors. staten.”, *Een discoers*, [4v]; “proceda[n]t cela de l’vniõ[n] & corresponda[n]ce qui est entre lesdict trois estats”, *Discours*, XII-XIII; *La France-Turquie*, 9.

106 “Vvaer wt comt dat men seght, dat de Coninghen, Opperste Heeren ende meesters syn metten name, maer dat sy metter daet ende in effecte als subiecten zijn van hare ondersaten: nademaele zij niet vrijelicken doen en moghen het ghene dat sy willen, ende haerlieder begheerten ende heyschen niet en moghen ontfanghen worden, die somtyts ghefondeert zijn op de vermeerderinghe hares rijcks, ende somtyts om dat den noot van haerlieder affairen sulcke wt heyscht.” *Een discoers*, [4v]; “d’ou vient que lon dit que les Roys sont souuerains seigneurs & maistres en apparence, mais que aux effects ils sont comme subiects de leurs subiects, puis qu’ils ne peuuent faire ce qui’ils veulent, & leurs mouuemens & raisons ne peuuent estre receuës, fondeed quelquesfois pour l’augmentation de leur domaine, & quelques fois pour subuenir à la necessité de leurs affaires.”, *Discours*, XIII; *La France-Turquie*, 9-10.

107 “Dus dan om de voorsejde Princen, groote meesters ende ouerghebleuenen te beter omme te bringhen, ende also [...] de ander twee staten in meerder ende strichter subiectie te houden”, *Een discoers*, [4v-5r]; “Or doncques pour se deffaïre desdicts Princes, grands seigneurs & demeurant de la noblesse, afin de subiuguer plus estroittement les autres”, *Discours*, XIII; *La France-Turquie*, 10.

in the speech and even warn their readers for this kind of advice, it is likely that they were of the opinion that the Estates should have adequate authority to limit the power of the monarch. “Signeur Poncet” insidiously advises the king to “in no circumstance allow assemblies or meeting of the Estates, neither general nor particular, for they never lead to something else than the bridling and restraining of the King.”¹⁰⁸ In other words, the behaviour that is suggested by Poncet for the king to adopt is associated by the author as tyrannical. Should the king follow such counsel and not allow the Estates to convene on a regular basis, he would be no different than the “Grand Turck”.

The Dutch author does not only follow his French precursor in his considerations on the limits of the power of the monarch, he also presents his own comments on the implications for the state of affairs in the Low Countries. With regard to the nobility – who would otherwise hold a limiting power on the monarch – the Dutch author emphasises the harsh reality that the nobility in the Netherlands is systematically eradicated by the Spaniard.¹⁰⁹ Indeed, this would lead to “more than a Turkish slavery and miserable desolation”, unless something would be done about it. Alongside “God, the mercy of the King, the Princes, Lords, cities”, the “general estates of the country” should take action “without delay”. He implores them to “wake up and be watchful now that there is still time, because it concerns him and his prosperity”.¹¹⁰ Thus, the Dutch author sees a role for both the nobility as the “general estates of the country” to prevent a deterioration of the Netherlands into a “Turkish slavery”.

Obviously, the circumstances in the Low Countries differed from the situation in France, and the relationships within the Estates were different as well. Nevertheless, the vocabulary used in aforementioned discussions on political thought could be adopted and transferred to Dutch circumstances, because in the course of the Revolt the position of the Estates-General became a central tenet in the discussion of the limit of the power of the Spanish king. Also the rights and privileges of the country fitted the constitutionalist theories originating from France.¹¹¹ Indeed, it is not surprising that the theories developed for instance by Beza and Hotman did not only have significant influence in France, were highly influential the Netherlands as well.¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ “dat syne Maiest. te gheenen tyde eenighe versamelingen ofte vergaderinghen der Staten toe en late, noch generale, nog particuliere: want die toch nerghens el toe en strecken, dan om de Coninghen altijys meer ende meer te breydelen, ende in bedwanghe te houden.” *Een discoers*, [6r]; “En oultre que sa Maiesté ne permette iamais aulcunes assemblees & tenues d’estats, ne generaulx ne particuliers, d’aultant que ce n’est que pour tousiours brider les Roys de plus en plus”, *Discours*, XV; *La France-Turquie*, 11.

¹⁰⁹ *Een discoers*, [8r].

¹¹⁰ “daerwt en volge corts meer dan een Turcksche slauernye, ende iammerlicke deso;acie soo wel ouer cleyn als ouer groot, ten sy datter Godt, des Conincks goederentierenheyte, de Princen, Heeren, steden ende generaele staeten vanden lande sonder delay in voorsien. Daeromme een yghelick ontslaepe ende lette op syn stuck binnen dien dat het noch tijt is, want het hem aengaet ende syne weluaert betreft”, *Een discoers*, [8v].

¹¹¹ Martin van Gelderen, *The Political Thought of the Dutch Revolt 1555-1590* (Cambridge 1992) Chapter 4.

¹¹² Skinner, *The foundations*, 311, 337.

Conclusion

This chapter consisted of two parts. Its first aim was to clarify what contemporaries might understand as the concept of tyranny. We have seen that Aristotle treated the concept in his work dating back to the fourth century BC and that it is probable that his definitions had some influence on contemporary political thought. Central in Aristotle's conceptualisation of tyranny is the distinction between two types of rule. The first is the rule of master over a slave (*despoteia*), where the interests of the master are primarily attended to and second, household management (*oikonomia*) where the relationship between ruler and ruled is primarily in the benefit of the ruled. Aristotle adopts these types of rule in analogy to types of government. When a ruler acts in his own benefit at the expense of that of the ruled, the government is corrupted and monarchy, for instance, deteriorates into tyranny. Conversely, if the ruler acts in the benefit of the ruled in analogy to household management, the government achieves its correct form. Another important concept for Aristotle is legitimacy. There are circumstances in which master-like rule is legitimate, for instance in case of non-Greek Persians, because of the servile nature of that people. In this case the form of government is not corrupted and thus can be called a monarchy instead of tyranny, even though the type of rule remains on the basis of *despoteia*. On the basis of this distinction we have seen that despotism could in later ages be understood as a systematic lawful government, while tyrannical government was regarded as illegitimate arbitrary rule. This is not to say that this dichotomy was always strictly obtained. In case of *Een discoers* we see that the concept of 'tyranny' is used to depict Ottoman rule, while on the basis of the distinction made here, we would rather expect that the word 'despotism' would be used. We were able to establish that at the time the pamphlets we deal with here were created, the 'despotism' vocabulary did not yet enter the debate. Next to the observations made in the fourth chapter of this study that "Turkish tyranny" was associated with the lack of nobility, the institution of the Janissaries and the toleration of only one religion in the country, we have seen that in *Een discoers* and its French relatives "Turkish tyranny" was also understood as a political system in which the persons and goods of the subjects were not safe.

After we reconstructed the current idea on what 'tyranny' amounted to, in the second part of the chapter we aimed at determining how contemporaries thought to curb the power of the monarch in order to prevent him from becoming a tyrant. Especially since the Reformation, political thought at the time dealt with questions when the sovereign would be regarded as a tyrant and what to do about it if the occasion arose. We have seen that at the time the French and Dutch pamphlets were published there was an ongoing debate about the institutional limitations on the power of the monarch. We have seen that elements of this debate can be identified in the French and Dutch pamphlets. The Estates were understood to be central in this discussion: they were instituted to check and bridle the power of the monarch. We have established that this vocabulary can be found in the Monarchomach theories of Hotman and Beza, and belonged to the wider context of 'constitutionalist' debates. By claiming that if the Estates would not be able to regularly convene the kingdom would degenerate into tyrannical rule, *Een discoers* was an expression of this constitutionalist argument, not only on the basis of its French relative but also because of its reference to the state of affairs in the Netherlands. The Dutch author referred to institutional condi-

tions in Low Countries in the afterword accompanying his translation of the French *Discours*. In particular the nobility and the “general estates” were regarded as institutions to curb the power of the monarch. This discussion on the limits of monarchical authority was part of a broader European debate, and was adapted in the French pamphlet and its Dutch offspring *Een discoers* in order to fit domestic considerations.

Conclusion

The pamphlet *Een discoers* (1575) was part of a world in which tidings of all kinds were eagerly received by a curious audience. Pamphlets were a medium *par excellence* to communicate various forms of information to the Dutch public, whether about topics from abroad or domestic issues. In the case of *Een discoers* these two categories intertwined. The pamphlet was a Dutch translation of the French *Discours* and as such dealt with French affairs, but it also addressed distinct and exclusively Dutch matters. The discourse that was relayed in the French pamphlet is translated almost word-for-word, but in the foreword and afterword the Dutch writer pleads to his readers to take heed of the situation in France, for the “Spanish nation” would have already brought into effect the recommendations of the discourse, which would soon lead to a “Turkish slavery” in the Netherlands. Hence, to inform about French circumstances was not the primary goal of the Dutch author of *Een discoers*: he aimed at persuading his readers not to allow the advice that allegedly found its way into the royal council in France in their own country. This is why the pamphlet is addressed to the nobility and regents of the Netherlands.

We set out this study in order to answer the question how certain themes that existed in European political debates found their way into *Een discoers*, how these ideas were adjusted to fit domestic circumstances and what this teaches us about the context in which the pamphlet was written. With its criticism on Spanish rule, *Een discoers* fitted within the tradition which historians have later become to identify as the ‘Black Legend of Spain’. The “bloody Spanish Inquisition” was referred to in the pamphlet, and it deals with the “evil advice” that could be presented to the Spanish king, Philip II. The innate cruelty of the Spanish people – “its nature and cruelty” – is emphasised. Of course, this Hispanophobic motif is not relevant for contemporary France where the *Discours* was published, or *La France-Turquie* a year later. These pamphlets, especially *La France-Turquie*, can be understood rather in an Italophobic context. The Queen Mother Catherine de Medici and her Italian advisors – like the Count of Retz – would have contaminated the reign of the young Charles IX. The discourse allegedly presented by “Signeur Poncet” in the French royal council can be interpreted in this context. The anti-Italian element of the pamphlet was lost in the translation by the Dutch author, and instead the relayed discourse was used to illustrate how such advice could lead to a “Turkish tyranny” in case of Spanish rule in the Netherlands. Without batting an eye, the Dutch author adopted the idea put forward by the French and transferred it to the socio-political reality of the Low Countries at the time. Thus, the specific contexts of the countries in question determined the outlook of the pamphlets. The Dutch author did not merely translate the *Discours*, he added a fore- and afterword in which he connected the issues which were presented in the French pamphlet to the political situation in the Low Countries. In the process, the anti-Italianism that permeated the French pamphlet was completely lost in

the Dutch version. Instead, *Een discoers* is critique on Spanish behaviour in the Low Countries. Where in the French pamphlet Italian influence is seen as a threat to French crown and its nobility, Spanish authority is blamed for the destruction of the Dutch privileges and the noble class in its anti-Spanish Dutch counterpart.

We have seen that, despite the institutional and circumstantial differences that existed between the situations in France and the Netherlands during the sixteenth century, contemporaries often emphasised the similarities between the two countries. Despite the differences, Dutchmen felt they shared the fate of their French neighbours in certain respects, and this resulted in shared political observations. Against the background of a broad European debate about the limitations of monarchical power, the comparison was strengthened. The ‘constitutionalist’ Monarchomach theories of men like Theodore Beza and François Hotman resonated in the Netherlands as well. *Een discoers* is a good example of this. The Dutch author did not merely adopt the terminology presented in the French *Discours*: in his afterword he applied it to Dutch state of affairs by emphasising the importance of the institutions of the “general estates” and by warning Dutch regents and noblemen not to allow the behaviour Spanish rule represented. Thus, while the French and Dutch authors strictly applied the relevant themes according to their specific contexts, the discussion about the limits of monarchical authority was ongoing in the whole of Europe at the time.

The Dutch author thought it appropriate to emphasise the argument made in the French *Discours* that the counsel in the pamphlet would lead to a political system existing in the Ottoman Empire by including the term “Turkish tyranny” on the title page. The Dutch author – or, for that matter, his publisher – chose to include the terminology on the title page himself. On the title page of the *Discours* – on which the Dutch pamphlet was based – it was absent, while in the later publication of *La France-Turquie* it was brought to the fore again. The allusion to “Turkish tyranny” appealed to the author and his audience. The reference to a “Turkish tyranny” to describe the rule of the “Spanish nation” led us to the question how the Turks were portrayed in *Een discoers* and how this corresponds to the general European image of the Ottoman Turk. The Turks were seen as the “hereditary foe” of Christendom, and cruel and barbaric in nature. In this regard, the use of the term “Turkish tyranny” proved to be very fitting for the Dutch author to describe Spanish rule, considering that he also referred to the “nature and cruelty” of the Spaniards. With addressing Spanish government as Turkish, the Dutch author was able to stress the cruel nature of the Spaniards.

Een discoers followed its French counterpart *Discours* in its description of the Ottoman Empire. The Dutch author translated the French account in this regard literally, even though he interpreted the implications for Dutch society specifically in his fore- and afterword. Both the French and Dutch authors sought to appeal to a broad audience and the depiction of the influence on their governments as “Turkish” could help in achieving this aim. It was terminology which was part of a broader European discussion dealing with the issue of the Ottoman Turk. Their readers would immediately associate the portrayal of the Turk in the pamphlets with the image they already had based on this wider European rhetoric. If the authors would have chosen to describe the insidious influence on

their governments as ‘Popish’ for instance, they would have been able to reach a much more limited audience. This Protestant outlook would have antagonised the potential Catholic audience.

The Dutch author takes over the manner in which the rule of the Ottoman sultan is described in the *Discours*. “Signeur Poncet” – who allegedly advised the French king to govern his country like the Ottoman sultan and was said to have visited the Ottoman Empire for eight or nine years himself – described the obedience he encountered in Turkey according to three points.

First he explained that there was no nobility in the Ottoman Empire, and that this ensured the independence of the ruler. The noble class was portrayed as an institution to bridle “the absolute power” of the king. Without it, the king would surely have full control over his subjects. In *Een discoers*, the author claimed that the Spaniard had been eradicating the nobility of the land, and that therefore a “Turkish slavery” would soon follow. As we have seen, at the moment the pamphlets were published there was an ongoing intellectual debate in Europe about the limits of monarchical power that connected to this issue. French writers like Hotman and Beza epitomised what historians have coined as ‘constitutionalism’ and Monarchomach theories and described the representative bodies like the Estates of the country as institutions to limit monarchical power. In *Een discoers* and its French relatives the members of the nobility were singled out as the “controllers and limiters of the will of Kings”, and preventing the assembly of the Estates was identified as something a tyrant would do. The author of *Een discoers* did not merely follow the French *Discours* in the description of the limits to monarchical power – he also added themes that were relevant in the context of Dutch realities in his afterword, for instance the elimination of the nobility by the Spaniards and the importance of the “general estates of the country”.

The second issue that was associated with the absolute power of the Ottoman sultan was the strict obedience the Janissaries owed to the sultan and the power the officers of the Janissaries had over Turkish subjects. This point has some overlap with the first point about nobility: It emphasises the fact that the Janissaries were completely dependent on the sultan for their position and had no power of their own like the aristocracy in France, or the Netherlands for that matter. Because of the power held by the Janissary officers, no one in the Ottoman empire dares to act any differently than the direct command of the “Grand Turk”. In the French and Dutch pamphlets, also the reference of the danger to the “persons and the goods” of subjects was associated with tyrannical rule.

More significant was the third point which was related to Ottoman authority: the toleration of only one religion in the Empire. This argument is not only remarkable because of the relative religious toleration that was observed in the Ottoman Empire in reality, it also directly referred to the immediate situation in France at the time, where religious turmoil between Catholics and Protestants wreaked havoc on society at large. The targeted audience of the French and Dutch pamphlets were addressed as “whether from the one religion or the other”, so it is probable that the authors advocated at least a certain amount of religious tolerance. To only allow one religion in the country was understood to be equivalent to tyrannical behaviour. It was assigned to the Ottoman sultan, while in reality the Ottoman Empire had legal arrangements for adherents of different faiths. For the authors the point was not if their portrayal of

the Ottoman Empire corresponded to reality, they wanted to convey their image of the “Turkish tyranny”. Moreover, the authors shuddered at the thought that Poncet would have advised the king to attack the nobility of the country under the pretext of religion. This appealed to the worries of both authors in their direct surroundings. Not only did this apply to French society, it also addressed problems the Dutch author experienced in his own country and as such could be easily adopted in the Dutch translation.

Thus, Poncet explains Ottoman obedience according to these three points: the absence of nobility, the institution of the Janissaries and the existence of only one religion in the country. The author of the French pamphlet recognised the Italian influence on the French crown in these points, while the Dutch author associated this behaviour with his experiences with Spanish rule. The analysis of tyranny fitted within the framework of the constitutionalist political debates of the Monarchomachs. This was a discussion that was ongoing in Europe at the time, and the *Discours* and *Een discoers* applied it to their experiences with their respective governments, expressed in the French case with anti-Italianism and in the Dutch pamphlet with anti-Spanish sentiments. Thus, while there existed a European political discussion, the specific contexts of the countries determined how these themes were expressed. Ideas about tyranny – from Aristotle’s distinction of illegitimate corrupted tyrannical government and legitimate despotism in the East to medieval terminology of despotism and the humanistic more neutral term of *dominus* – were also part of the political debates occurring in Europe at the time. The authors of the *Discours* and *Een discoers* used the concept of ‘tyranny’ instead of ‘despotism’ because the latter term was not in use at the time the pamphlets were published. The framework in which the conceptualisation of a *Turkish* tyranny developed was also part of a broader European discussion. It could thus be easily adopted by the French as well as the Dutch author, for it captured the imagination of their readers immediately. The way these themes originating from European political debates were incorporated in the domestic context differed, but they were part of the European debates at the same time.

This brings us to the question of the possible identities of the authors of the French and Dutch pamphlets, for they might give some further insight into the aim of the treatises. All three pamphlets were published anonymously, so the clues that might help us uncover background of the authors in question must come from internal evidence. We have already established that both the French and the Dutch authors addressed their readers “whether of the one religion or the other” and thus probably supported some kind of religious toleration. Considering their stance on religion, they can be placed into the backdrop of a moderate environment. When one ponders the reference to the massacres of St. Bartholomew as “[...] the most horrific, brutal and most cruel murder that ever came to pass in the world”, however, one might be tempted to classify the authors as belonging to the Protestant denomination. Indeed, historians have done so before. We must keep in mind, though, that there also existed Catholics who disapproved of Protestant as Catholic violence altogether, so we cannot with any certainty dismiss the possibility that the authors had a Catholic background. The background of the French authors is probably to be found among the ranks of the Malcontents, a group that counted Protestants as well as Catholics as its members. Likewise, for the Dutch author of *Een discoers* it proves hard to determine whether he had a Protestant or

Catholic background. Considering the aim of the pamphleteers, it is not surprising that it is difficult to discern their 'ideological' backdrop: they wanted to appeal to a broad audience and persuade their readers to be mindful of the tyrannical influences in their governments. To appeal to a large audience, they were wise not to emphasise religious differences but instead focus on their more broader and immediate aim of addressing the insidious elements of the French and Spanish regime respectively. Similarly, the choice of venting their criticism in terms of a "Turkish tyranny" enabled them to refer to the less controversial image of an enemy with which all could relate, not just a Protestant or Catholic faction.

While the Dutch and French authors may have been of moderate alloy concerning religion, they were not middle-of-the-road in their stance towards their governments. Both expressed severe criticism on the rulership of their countries. As such, they were part of the propaganda struggle that materialised in both countries in the sixteenth century. The French pamphlet bore an anti-Italian and anti-absolutism signature. Likewise, the Dutch pamphlet was anti-Spanish in nature and also argued in favour of the power of nobility and the Estates against the absolute power of the "Spanish nation". Hence, the aims of the authors were to convince their readers of the corrupt nature of their governments and persuade the nobility and regents – to whom the pamphlets were addressed – to be mindful of the kind of advice presented by the discourse of "Signeur Poncet". The discourse was but a tip of the iceberg of what contributed to the tyrannical tendencies of the French and Spanish administrations and every regent should be vigilant in order to combat such behaviour.

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