Clashes of discourses: Humanists and Calvinists in seventeenth-century academic Leiden
Kromhout, D.

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Chapter 3: A New Standard

The event of the coup d’état of Maurice of Orange and the Synod of Dordt created a new situation among the Leiden humanists, that created a new discursive field that partly incorporated elements of the former humanist discourse, but in an entirely different orientation. Many elements of Foucault’s discursive theory can easily be applied to this new situation: concepts are rearranged in the discursive field, new authorities emerge, former authorities disappear from the scene or acquire a new role in the new setting. The new discourse was strongly coloured by the discourse of the orthodox Calvinists. Many former authorities in the Republic and at Leiden University were literally replaced by orthodox Calvinists. It is clear that the days of the Leiden humanists as representatives of a special branch of the Republic of Letters were over.

This chapter will discuss various representations of the new discursive field that had as its centre Leiden University. Daniel Heinsius can still be found at the centre of this new discourse, but he has acquired a new role. In my opinion, Daniel Heinsius had to adapt his persona to the new discourse. Perhaps in Foucauldian terms it would even be better to state that the discourse changed Heinsius’s persona. In what follows, I will first briefly summarize the historical events of Maurice of Orange’s coup d’état and the Synod of Dordt in 3.1. In 3.2 I will discuss the new role of Daniel Heinsius and his research programme. I will elaborate on this new programme in 3.3, with Ludovicus de Dieu trying to gain access to this discourse with the aid of his supervisor Heinsius. It is the comparison between Ludovicus de Dieu here and the young Grotius...
and Heinsius in the first chapter that renders the developments in the scholarly discourse at Leiden University clearly visible. However, the Leiden humanists had not only been scholars, but also poets. The ability to write Latin poetry was an important skill, both in the Republic of Letters and among the Leiden humanists. This self-evident combination of both literary and scholarly qualities seems not to have survived within the new discursive field. The scholars of the first decades after 1620 seem occupied primarily with their research. However, both Jacobus Revius (3.4) and Jacob Cats (3.5) are important literary representatives of the new discourse. In section 3.6 I will tentatively show how elements of the pre-1620 discourse of the Leiden humanists found their way into the curriculum of the Latin schools.

3.1 Historical setting

The growing tensions between the Remonstrants and Counter-Reomonstrants had to culminate in some sort of eruption. It is this final eruption that can be characterized as the materialization of the Foucauldian event. It was clear to all participants in the conflict that something had to happen and it was evident that the Counter-Reomonstrants had the strongest cards. By the end of the second decade of the seventeenth century, Maurice of Orange had made manifest the fact that he favoured the Counter-Reomonstrants. Until 1617, Maurice had always been attending the lectures and services of the Remonstrant court preacher, Wtenbogaert. Maurice seems to have admired the preacher, but also been troubled by his theological opinions. In the meanwhile, conflict arose in The Hague regarding the use of a church building, the Kloosterkerk. A group of Counter-Reomonstrants refused to attend public services as long as they were not ministered by the Counter-Reomonstrant minister of their choice. For about a year, this group walked every Sunday from The Hague to the nearby village of Rijnsburg where they could hold their own separate services. However, after a year, on 9 July, the group gained access to the Kloosterkerk and claimed the right to hold their own services there. After escalating riots, Van Oldenbarnevelt had no choice

171 Van Deursen, Bavianen en Slijkgeuzen, 305–309; Nellen, Hugo de Groot: Een leven in strijd om de vrede 1583-1645, 189.
but to give in. This in itself already unfortunate situation was aggravated by Maurice of Orange, who on 23 July publicly attended the service of this community and henceforth ceased to attend the services of his court preacher Wtenbogaert.

Several reasons can and have been put forward to explain this choice. One explanation is that Maurice and the Counter-Remonstrants were united in their mutual aversion to a peace treaty with Spain – the Counter-Remonstrants because they feared the Roman Catholic suppression of their Protestantism, Maurice because his popularity stemmed from his success in the war against Spain. The Remonstrants favoured peace with Spain, especially for economic reasons. This shows again the relationship between the Remonstrants and the regent class – it was the rich regent class of Holland that participated in the overseas trade and had most to gain from peace. This opposition had existed since as far back as the beginning of the Twelve Years’ Truce (1609-1621), though it intensified in the present political situation. Van Oldenbarnevelt had always felt that France was the Republic’s most important ally in the war against Spain. This was perfectly acceptable to the Counter-Remonstrants as long as France had a Protestant king, Henry IV. However, Maria de Medici had managed to arrange a double marriage between her children (Louis XIII and his sister) and the children of Philip III of Spain, the Spanish prince (Philip IV) and princess (Anne of Austria); this marriage was much deplored both by England and the Republic. When consequently Henry IV was killed and France under Maria de Medici took a friendlier stance towards Spain and Van Oldenbarnevelt still supported the French Crown against claims by French Protestant nobility, many Counter-Remonstrants felt that Van Oldenbarnevelt proved himself disloyal to the Protestant cause. It should be borne in mind that according to this section of society the Revolt had primarily been a matter of religion. Van Oldenbarnevelt, however, ultimately expected France to be the most trustworthy partner should Spain decide to wage war on the Republic again. He anticipated that in the long run the Republic’s best chances lay with France, guessing that animosity between Spain and

172 Van Deursen maintains that the entire royal family of the Nassau’s was on the side of the Counter-Remonstrants and suspected the Remonstrants of loyalties to the Spanish Crown! See Van Deursen, Maurits van Nassau, 1567-1625, 253–255.
173 See Van Deursen, De last van veel geluk, 179–180.
France was inevitable, contrary to the opinion of Maurice, who preferred to strengthen ties with England.

The final accident that triggered the event and the coup d’état of Maurice of Orange was relatively insignificant. Van Oldenbarnevelt had decided that cities could raise their own special military forces, *waardgelders*, to suppress Counter-Remonstrant riots.¹⁷⁴ When ordered by the States General to dismiss the *waardgelders*, Van Oldenbarnevelt refused to obey. The States General had ordered that the disbanding of these forces should start at Utrecht. However, the garrison commander seemed to stay loyal to Van Oldenbarnevelt. That was the moment that Maurice intervened with his army. Having assured the *waardgelders* of their pay, he entered the city with additional troops and disarmed them on 31 July. He consequently purged the States of Utrecht, which diminished the Remonstrant stronghold to merely the States of Holland solely. By now, Grotius and Van Oldenbarnevelt saw that further opposition was useless and tried to win as much as they could by cooperating with Maurice of Orange. Maurice, however, felt that it was time to finish this conflict once and for all and advanced on the primary Remonstrants: first Van Oldenbarnevelt and Grotius were arrested, then Maurice removed all Remonstrant members of the city councils.

The course of the legal process is well known and documented.¹⁷⁵ Grotius was put in prison and Van Oldenbarnevelt beheaded. In the meanwhile, the Synod of Dordt took place. It had long been decided that this Synod needed to be held, but hitherto the Arminians had endeavoured to ensure they had some sort of protection in the Synod, as they knew they would be outnumbered by the Gomarists. However, no one felt the wishes of the Arminians had to be protected any more and the Synod proceeded with equal voting rights for all members. This meant that Remonstrants were ostracized by the Counter-Remonstrant majority and declared to be heretical. The Remonstrants could either repent or leave the Dutch

Reformed Church. Many of them were banished, some would try to constitute a new Remonstrant Church in the Republic.\textsuperscript{176}

These events signified an outright victory for the Counter-Remonstrants. From now on, their view was the only official view in religious matters. One of the most important measures taken is probably the rule that henceforth every government official had to be a member of the Dutch Reformed Church. This meant not only members of the States and city councils, but also university professors. Understandably, Leiden University in particular was quickly purged of all Remonstrant elements. Bertius, Vossius (1577-1649), and Barlaeus (1584-1648) had to leave. As Vossius had kept his voice low in public during the controversies, it was possible for him to be re-established as Professor of Rhetoric and History in 1622. Vacant positions were filled with orthodox Calvinists of undisputed reputation.\textsuperscript{177} This meant that a completely different constellation of scholars appeared in the Leiden firmament. These Calvinist scholars enforced the pre-existing Calvinist discourse. As we have seen, the central point of reference in the Calvinist discourse is the Bible and it was the Bible that was now the central point of reference at

\textsuperscript{176} Nellen, Hugo de Groot: Een leven in strijd om de vrede 1583-1645, 248; Bangs, “Regents and Remonstrants in Amsterdam”.

\textsuperscript{177} De Leidse universiteit kreeg haar schop op de nationale synode die op 13 november 1618 te Dordrecht geopend werd. Daar werd niet alleen de kerk gezuiverd, daar werd ook, op de honderddriëenigste sessie, de grondslag gelegd voor een blijvende kerkelijke controle op bestuur en onderwijs aan de Leidse universiteit. Bepaald werd dat curatoren voortaan op hun aannemelijkheid aan de Dordtse leerregels geselecteerd werden. Het college moest naast politieke ook kerkelijke bestuurders omvatten, en de benoeming van professoren in de theologie en van bestuurders in het Staten College werd in handen van de synode gelegd. Bij de benoeming van andere professoren, met name die uit de artes, moest de godsdienstige overtuiging zorgvuldig nagegaan worden. Bij zijn aantreden moest elke professor de geloofsbelijdenis onderschrijven. De professoren van de artes dienden zich verre te houden van hetgeen tot de theologie behoorde. (The University of Leiden received a major blow at the National Synod, which was opened in Dordrecht on 13 November 1618. There, not only was the Church purged, but also the foundations were laid for continuing control on the part of the Church over direction and education at Leiden University. It was decided at the 163\textsuperscript{rd} meeting that directors henceforth had to be selected on the basis of their allegiance to the rules of faith that had been decided upon at the Synod. The board had to have both political and ecclesiastical members, and the appointment of professors in Theology and directors of the States College was placed in the hands of the Synod. Concerning the appointment of other professors, especially in the artes, special attention was to be paid to religious convictions. Every professor had to sign before being appointed to the Confessio Belgica. Professors of the artes had to keep ample distance from anything belonging to the field of theology. – transl. DK) Otterspeer, Het bolwerk van de vrijheid, 255.
Leiden University as far as the humanities are concerned. Among the newly appointed scholars at the university was the orthodox theologian Constantijn L’Empereur (Eastern Languages). Together with L’Empereur and the preacher Ludovicus de Dieu, Daniel Heinsius would create a new discursive centre at Leiden University in the same fashion as Dousa, Van Hout, and Lipsius had at the end of the sixteenth century and Scaliger, Grotius, and Heinsius had in the early seventeenth century. But they functioned in an altogether different discourse. This discursive change is nicely illustrated by the different angles Heinsius took to approach the works of Nonnus Panopolitus.

3.2 Heinsius’s *Aristarchus sacer*

The *Aristarchus sacer, sive ad Nonni in Iohannem metaphrasin exercitationes* (1627) is a commentary on the paraphrase of St John’s Gospel, made by Nonnus Panopolitus somewhere in the fifth century AD. We hardly know anything for sure about Nonnus, except for the fact that he also wrote the *Dionysiaca*, an enormous epic on the god Dionysus in 48 books, and that he lived in Egypt. Nonnus’s *Paraphrase* or *Metabole* is a rephrasing of the Gospel of St John in dactylic hexameters. In his youth Daniel Heinsius was a great admirer of Nonnus’s work. But when he met Scaliger, Heinsius had to revise his opinion on Nonnus. Scaliger was not among Nonnus’s admirers and somehow Daniel Heinsius felt he had to agree with his teacher or perhaps he really was convinced by Scaliger’s arguments. In any case, in 1610 Heinsius makes manifest his new opinion on Nonnus in his *Dissertatio de Nonni Dionysiacis, et eiusdem Paraphrasi*, forming part of Petrus Cunaeus’s *Animadversionum liber in Nonni Dionysiaca*.178 From a fervent admirer of Nonnus, Heinsius had changed into one of Nonnus’s most outspoken critics. Or, as Meter puts it: ‘In 1610 he [Heinsius – DK] disavowed his old predilection for this work [i.e. the *Dionysiaca* – DK] as an intoxication of the indiscrete and thoughtless years of his youth. He makes it seem as if the rational insight

of more mature years enabled him to distance himself from his own spontaneous preference for baroque exuberance and melodrama. [...] Nonetheless, there is a touch of an imbalanced tenacity in the absoluteness with which he rejects the Dionysiaca after the unbridled admiration of the past’. 179

We may wonder why Heinsius started to demonstrate his criticism, or Scaliger’s criticism, within a year of Scaliger’s death. If we wish to provide a cynical interpretation, we might think Heinsius felt free to use Scaliger's notes and opinions as his own, as he was inheritor of Scaliger's unpublished work and was authorized to do with it as he saw fit. Heinsius has often been accused of plagiarizing his teacher’s work. 180 But perhaps a better and at least friendlier interpretation would be that Heinsius wanted to keep Scaliger’s memory alive and tried to live up to Scaliger’s opinions and expectations.

Heinsius’s criticism of Nonnus was been discussed by Meter in 1984, and more extensively by Gärtner in 2008. She showed that Heinsius often criticizes Nonnus on the same points: linguistic and grammatical errors, formation of words, choice of words, incorrect metaphors, false relations or syllepsis, bad invention, factual errors, and general bad taste. 181 These errors/faults are not presented in a categorized way and often seem to relate to Heinsius’s personal taste. 182 She also

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179 Meter, The Literary Theories of Daniel Heinsius, 131.
180 Sellin, Daniel Heinsius and Stuart England, 43.
showed that Heinsius’s whole exercise in the work of Nonnus seems to be founded on the opinions Scaliger vented as early as 1599. The last part of the *Dissertatio de Nonni Dionysiacis* had been dedicated as a kind of afterthought to Nonnus’s *Paraphrase*. Gärtner distinguishes the same categories here, but with more emphasis on the theological content.

When we look at the text of Heinsius’s commentary on the *Aristarchus sacer*, it seems that Heinsius was not completely satisfied with his first *Dissertatio* on Nonnus and that he felt he could make more of it. He writes the same kind of commentary with the same kind of criticism as he used in the *Dissertatio*, but now on a much larger scale. He pasted the text he wrote on the *Paraphrase* in his *Dissertatio* unaltered into the third chapter of his *Aristarchus sacer*. The main line of thought is Nonnus did not understand St John at all, he did not have an accurate understanding of the particular language or dialect of the New Testament, his Greek was erratic and he wrote bad poetry.

The nucleus of Heinsius’s critique is that Nonnus had no adequate understanding of the special character of the New Testament world and New Testament Greek in particular. The theory that Heinsius proposes is based on the assumption that much or most of classical civilization had been inherited from the Orient. In the first chapter of his notes to the *Aristarchus sacer*, Heinsius tries to prove this point by means of etymological and mythological examples taken from the *Dionysiaca*. As he states, although the story of Bacchus is ‘fabulosum’, the amount of ancient erudition, especially from the Orient, can hardly be overestimated:

> Indeed, the work on Bacchus seems, as it is, a fantasy; however, it can hardly be emphasized sufficiently how much knowledge about the ancient world and especially about the Orient can be gleaned from this story, particularly because he also described in it the arrival of Cadmus in Greece. Whence all matters human and divine, both the language itself and the arts, which the Greeks illegitimately appropriated, have taken their origin.

183 Gärtner, “Vom Rausch des ‘praeco immodicus’”, 60.
184 *Ipsum enim Bacchicorum opus, quanvis fabulosum, ut est, esse videatur; dici tamen vix potest, quantum eruditionis ex antiquitate, & inprimis Oriente, argumentum hoc admittat. Cum in eo primum quoque Cadmi in Graeciam descripserit adventum. A quo res humanae*
Heinsius reads the myth of Cadmus’s migration to Greece as a mythological representation of a large cultural migration. Apparently, he sees the hero Cadmus as a prototype of migrants from the Orient, who brought with them their (more) advanced culture. The cradle of this civilization was to be found in Phoenicia:

Truly, no one should doubt that the whole story of Bacchus has been derived from Phoenicia, together with its people. Neither should anyone doubt that traces of that very language are to be found everywhere in the actual words.\(^{185}\)

The story of the migration of Cadmus represents a cultural transfer from the Near East to Greece. Heinsius sees remnants of this cultural migration in many words and phrases, for example the name of Cadmus, which he relates to the Hebrew word *kadmon*, meaning ‘ancient’:

Everybody knows that Cadmus was the first to come to Boeotia, an event that resulted in nigh on all place names either retaining their origin, or being readily reducible to their origin by an experienced scholar. No one who knows the meaning of the [Hebrew] words *Cadem* and *Cadmon* can doubt these facts.\(^{186}\)

It is interesting to see that Heinsius does not really make clear what he means by the word ‘Oriens’, or Orient. It seems to comprise at least the Hebrew language and the scriptures of the Old Testament, but extends to rabbinical literature, Aramaic and Syriac language and literature, and Egyptian culture, which enables him to merge Cadmus, Adonis, and Osiris into one and the same person. Whatever the concept Orient consisted of in


\(^{186}\) Cadmum in Boeotiam venisse primum, nemo est qui nescit. A quo omnia propemodum locorum nomina, originem vel conservarunt, vel ad eam facile a perito revocari possunt. Nam de isto dubitare nemo potest, qui quid Cedem sit & Cadmon non ignorant. Heinsius, *Aristarchus sacer*, 7.
Heinsius’s mind, it predated Greek culture, it had been highly influential on Greek culture, and continued to exist after the Hellenization of the Near East. The Greek language used in the Near East, what we tend to call koine, was, according to Heinsius, no more than a veneer. Underneath, the ancient oriental culture simply continued to exist, even in expressions and syntactical constructions, albeit now with the use of Greek words. According to Heinsius, Nonnus should have paid more attention to the peculiar situation in which he found himself. As he had been born in the Orient and lived there, he was perfectly placed to clarify the oriental origins of Hellenized Greek.187

This concept of a Greek dialect with an underlying Hebrew/Semitic structure was not an altogether new idea on the part of Heinsius, but came from Scaliger. Scaliger had coined the term ‘dialectus Hellenistica’. By ‘Hellenistae’ he meant Jews, and only Jews, who had assimilated with their Greek-speaking surroundings to such an extent that they had forgotten Hebrew and Aramaic and only understood Greek. But under the surface, these Jews used the imageries and syntax of the Semitic languages. The dialectus Hellenistica was the language of these Hellenized Jews. As such, it was not the same as our koine or the Greek of the whole Hellenized world.188

We may wonder why Daniel Heinsius wrote this commentary. It is hard to maintain that he wrote it in order to clarify the text of Nonnus. If that were the case, Heinsius would not have put so much effort into rebuking Nonnus. He could simply have provided examples of the difficult words and phrases and perhaps some theological and historical background information. But that is clearly not what Heinsius is doing. He leaves out many difficult words and phrases, and instead seems to focus on words that give him the opportunity to criticize Nonnus, to point out his faults.

187 Illud ergo deplorandum, hominem ex Oriente orium dum, cum historiam easque res susciperet, quas multi e Graecorum gente sic tractassent, ut vix quicquam nobis praeter fabulas ac tenebras dedissent, ita eas descripsisse, ut originem ac veritatem, quae ex solo Oriente, ubi haec omnia nata sunt, petenda fuit, nec levissime attigisse videatur. Heinsius, Aristarchus sacer, 6.
For example, in the King James Version, John 1:6-8 reads: ‘There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but he was sent to bear witness of that Light’. 189 The paraphrase of Nonnus reads: ‘In the bee-feeding thicket was a mountain-dwelling citizen of the deserted rock, herald of the first baptism: his name was Divine John, arouser of his people. He stood up among them as a trustworthy herald to speak his testimony of the light, so that all could have through the cry of one herald the right faith, infinite mother of the world. Not he was the intelligent light, but that he might open his godspeaking mouth open to all, and appear as waybearer of the unproclaimed light, by speaking his public testimony to a God-receiving crowd’. 190 In his Exercitationes sacrae, or comments, Heinsius is annoyed about the use of the word ‘world’ in the sentence ‘infinite mother of the world’. According to Heinsius, Nonnus should never have linked the word ‘world’ to the concept of ‘faith’: ‘If you accept the word ‘kosmos’ as describing the whole human race, it is a bad choice, as many of them are infidels. You could better follow St John, who uses the word in a sense common to the Hebrews, i.e., by opposing ‘believers’ and ‘the world’. Heinsius continues by quoting some passages from John and from Augustine that prove his point about the negative connotation of the word ‘world’. He continues: ‘You can see what has to be thought about this apposition and how it has not been chosen in accordance with the habit of the author. And we did not speak yet about his crude hypallage. For what he wanted to say, is: ‘mother of the infinite world’. Those who think otherwise, are wrong’ 191.

190 ‘[…] melissodôto δ’ ἐνι λόγῳ / ἐσκε τις οὐρασιφοιτος ἐρημάδος ἀστός ἔρηπνης, / κήρυξ ἄρχεγλον βαπτισματος οὐνομα δ’ αὐτῷ / θείος Ἰωάννης λαοσσός: Οὗτος ἐπέστη / ἄγγελος ἐκπεδύμυθος, ὅπως περὶ φωτὸς ἐνίψῃ / μαρτυρίην, ἢν πάντες ἐνός κήρυκος ιοῇ / ὅρθην πιστὶν ἔγοιν, ἀτέρμονα μητέρα κόσμου: / Ὁ μὴ κείνος ἐν νοερόν φῶς, ἀλλ’ ἵνα μοῦνον / πᾶσιν αναπτύξεις θεογόνον ἀνθρεύδων, / και φάος προκύλλουσθος ἀκριτκίου φανείη, / ξυνὴν μαρτυρίην ἐνίπτων θεοδέγμονι λαῷ. Heinsius, Aristarchus sacer, 2. The translation is mine; a more inspired translation is Prost’s: Nonnus Panopolitanus, Paraphrase of the Gospel of St. John, 59-60.
191 Sive enim vocem κόσμου, proprie de toto genere hominum accipias, male id dicitur; cum plures sint eo ὅπιστοι, ac infideles, sive, ut Iohannes more Hebrais usitato ea voce utitur, ὁ κόσμος καὶ οἱ πιστοὶ opponuntur. […] Vides ergo quid de hoc apposito sit.
This seems to our eyes a peculiar way of commenting on a text, so the next question is: ‘Was this simply Heinsius’s way of commenting on a text? Was for Heinsius the “ars critica” simply synonymous with criticizing the author and his text?’ I think the answer to this question should be in the negative. If we were to compare the *Aristarchus sacer* to Heinsius’s other commentaries, we would still find that his commentary on Nonnus differs from the others. If we take, for example, his commentary on Silius Italicus (1600)\(^{192}\) or his commentary on Horace (1612),\(^{193}\) we still find that they differ from our present commentaries. Most of these commentaries are de facto textual emendations. The principal goal of Heinsius’s earlier commentaries was to eliminate difficulties in the text by making emendations and discussing emendations made by others. I dare say that in none of his other commentaries does Heinsius show the same negative attitude towards the author and his text.

So why did Heinsius write the *Aristarchus sacer*? I think we can safely say that it was not intended as a commentary on Nonnus per se. Heinsius uses the text of Nonnus as a point of departure to show how he believes the text of the New Testament should be approached. We may assume that Heinsius felt that after the Synod of Dordt, with the changed intellectual climate in the Netherlands, the best way to put his linguistic and literary talents to use was in the field of New Testament studies. Probably he felt his expertise in this field might be questioned or criticized and so, instead of immediately writing a commentary on the New Testament itself, or on the Gospel of Saint John, he writes a commentary on a literary paraphrase of the Gospel of Saint John.

Heinsius’s choice is admirable for several reasons. First of all, it was a safe choice. Heinsius knew Greek very well and was internationally renowned for it and for his knowledge of classical poetry and poetical theory. He could be sure no one would question him if he wrote a commentary on a text by Nonnus. But while writing a commentary on Nonnus, Heinsius actually used the occasion to expose his ideas on New Testament criticism. This becomes clear as early on as the prologue,

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\(^{192}\) Silius Italicus, *De secundo bello Punico*.
\(^{193}\) Quintus Horatius Flaccus, *Q. Horati Flacci opera*. 

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where he shows that already in Ancient Greece the *Kritès* was entitled to speak on any theoretical subject and that theology was indeed part of the critic’s work. In fact, Heinsius is not writing a commentary on Nonnus’s *Paraphrase*, delivering instead a polemic against Nonnus, as if Nonnus were a competing commentator on the Gospel of St John and he, Heinsius, is defending the text against the views of Nonnus.

This is interesting from the perspective of self-presentation – Heinsius has introduced Nonnus to us as someone from the Orient, who lived under the conditions most favourable to interpreting the Hellenistic world. But now Heinsius presents himself an interpreter who understands the Hellenistic world even better than the Hellenistic scholar himself! In every lemma he shows us how much better he understands the world of St John than Nonnus. If he understands the New Testament better than a citizen of the late antique world, wouldn’t he then be the scholar best equipped to write a commentary on the New Testament? And that is exactly what happens: Daniel Heinsius receives an appointment by the States of Holland and West-Frisia to write a commentary. It will turn out to be his magnum opus, in which he will elaborate on his theory of the Hellenistic dialect and for which he will be greatly rewarded. However, it would also draw him into a heavy conflict with Claude Saumaise.

In conclusion we can say that the *Aristarchus sacer* shows us at least two interesting things. In the first place it shows how a commentary can be used for purposes other than simply commenting on a text – it can serve as a vehicle either to promote new ideas or new steps in a career. Secondly, the work seems to show us both how the changed intellectual climate influenced Heinsius and how at the same time he contributed to this change. We may assume he felt that the best prospects for a Greek scholar lay in the field of New Testament studies. At the same time, by stepping into this field as Professor of Greek, he emphasized the importance of this field in contrast to the classical authors.
3.3 Ludovicus de Dieu

One of Heinsius’s new friends was Ludovicus de Dieu (1590-1642). De Dieu Jr was the son of Daniel de Dieu, a Protestant preacher in Brussels who had moved to Flushing under pressure of Spanish repression in the Southern Netherlands, and Sarah Colonius. After Daniel de Dieu died, both Ludovicus and his mother were cared for by his uncle, Daniel Colonius. De Dieu Jr studied at the Walloon College in Leiden under the supervision of Daniel Colonius, who was director of this college. De Dieu Jr seems to have been an excellent student as Prince Maurice asked him in 1612 to become preacher at the Court. De Dieu declined and became preacher in Middelburg and Flushing in both the Walloon and the Dutch Reformed Church. In 1619 Ludovicus became preacher of the Walloon Church in Leiden, eventually following in his uncle’s steps and becoming director of the Walloon College in 1636. It was only in 1619 that he matriculated at Leiden University to study theology. Apart from theology, Ludovicus spent much time learning oriental languages under Erpenius and Golius. It was the combination of these two areas of interest that would stimulate his friendship with Heinsius. As we have seen above, it was the interpretation of Scripture with the aid of knowledge of the Semitic languages in particular that interested Heinsius when it came to the interpretation of the New Testament. However, it seems that there was a personal connection

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195 On Daniel Colonius, see Posthumus Meyjes, *Geschiedenis van het Waalse College te Leiden*, 1606-1699, chap. IV.
between the families as well – it is probable that Protestant refugees from the Southern Netherlands kept some sort connection – or else both families may have functioned in the same social sphere in the province of Zeeland. What is more, both families had lived in Ghent for a while. Whatever the case, Daniel Heinsius felt it was a good choice to dedicate his *Aristarchus sacer* to Daniel Colonius in 1627 and mentions a long-standing relationship, going back to the friendship between his father, Nicholaas Heinsius and the addressee, Daniel Colonius. And although Ludovicus de Dieu was no student of Heinsius, it is tempting to envision the elder, well-known Heinsius coaching a younger friend of the family in his academic career.

This impression is reinforced by De Dieu’s edition of the Syriac version of the Apocalypse of St John, which he dedicates to Daniel Heinsius and in which he shows his allegiance to the great scholar. Immediately in the first lines of the dedication De Dieu refers to the mutual friendship between the families. He then mentions how their friendship had grown due to their common interest in Oriental languages. However, this is merely a stepping stone to a lengthy encomium on Heinsius’s progression in his new field of interest: ‘How much you love them [i.e. these oriental languages – DK] shows the incredible progress you have made in these within a few years; which was well known to us, who had easy access to you; but others will know as well, when they have seen your *Exercitationes sacrae in Nonnum* [= *Aristarchus sacer* – DK], a work that cannot be sufficiently praised either

196 *Amicitiam, quam a Parente optimo probissimoque haereditariam accepi, annos plurimos sanctissime inter nos tuemur*. [‘I keep up most respectfully for many years the relationship between us that I inherited from my excellent and most upright father’.] Heinsius, *Danielis Heinsii Aristarchus*, *3v.*
197 De Dieu, *Apocalypsis Sancti Iohannis.*
198 *Vir Amplissime, quem piae memoriae parens meus Daniel de Dieu semper fecit maximi, eum ut in pretio non habeam, nefas duco. Quique vicissim parentem meum, ut tuum, coluisti semper, eum ut non colam, impetrare a me non possum*. [‘Honourable Sir, it would seem unheard of to me not to honour the man whom my father of blessed memory, Daniel de Dieu, held in high esteem. And I could not be brought to neglect my relationship with you, who has honoured my father as your own’.] De Dieu, *Apocalypsis Sancti Iohannis*, *2r.*
for its utility or its erudition’. De Dieu continues by mentioning how Heinsius spurred him on: ‘Your love ignited mine. As soon as you laid your eyes on my tiny *Grammaticae Hebraeae compendium*, you urged me to write a comparative grammar of Hebrew, Aramaic, and Syriac. I immediately obeyed, as I cannot deny you anything. I would have published the book, as you told me to after you had read it, were it not that you mentioned this present book to me. You said that there was in the manuscript collection of the famous Josephus Scaliger, which he had left to our Academia, a copy of the Syriac version of the Apocalypse. You demanded that I would copy the Syriac, transcribe it in Hebrew characters, with vocalization, translate it into Latin, juxtapose it to the Greek version, and make it all ready for the press’.

The work is very interesting for various reasons. We saw in the first chapter how Grotius and Heinsius made their entrée in the Republic of Letters by publishing a classical text. Grotius made an edition of Martianus Capella’s *Satyricon*, Heinsius published Silius Italicus. We saw that two factors were decisive in acquiring a position in the implicit hierarchy of the international Republic of Letters. First of all, a display of an outstanding knowledge of the classical languages, especially Latin, and of the classical world was needed. The second factor was the importance of being introduced by a respected member of the Republic of Letters. The present work shows how, at least in the Leiden humanist environment in Leiden, these vital elements of the Republic of Letters were reinterpreted and modified. The format is still very recognizable: a student is presented

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200 *Quam enim tu eas ames, docet incredibilis ille quem paucis annis in iis fecisti progressus: quem nos quidem novimus pridem, quibus facilis ad te accessus datur: at non aequae norunt alii: ignorabit autem deinceps nemo, qui sacras tuas in Nonnum exercitationes viderit, opus nunquam erudition, utilitate nunquam laudatum satis: […]* De Dieu, *Apocalysis Sancti Iohannis*, *2r*–*2v*.

201 *Excitavit hic tuus amor meum. Simulac enim leviculum illud Grammaticae Hebraeae compendium a me editum vidisses, e vestigio mones, ut linguarum Hebraicae, Chaldaicae & Syriacae grammaticalem collationem instituere aggradiar: Monenti pareo, qui tanto viro denegare nihil possum. Paratum opus ubi vides & legis, instare non desistis, ut edam. Paruissem jam & ibi, nisi hujus libelli mentio a te incidisset. Ais, inter libros, a magnó illo literarum omnium lumine Iosepho Scaligero Academiae huic nostrae legatos, latere manuscriptum exemplar Syriacae versionis Apocalypseos. […]* Exhibes amico scriptum, sed simul amico injungis laborem. Postulas Syriaca a me transcribe, vis eadem literis Hebraicis adjectis vocalibus exprimi, latinam a me ex Syriaco versionem cupis addi, textum Graecum vis conjungi, atque ita simul omnia prelo committi. De Dieu, *Apocalysis Sancti Iohannis*, *2v*–*3r*.
with a manuscript and instructed to make, as a masterpiece, a scholarly edition of the received text. The assignment enables the student first of all to exhibit his knowledge and abilities, and also provides room to show the connection between protector and protégée.

These elements retain their value in the present case: Heinsius presents a manuscript to De Dieu, De Dieu makes a scholarly edition, which enables him to show the learned world both his skills and his connection with Daniel Heinsius. However, where in the cases of Heinsius and Grotius the reference to the classical world was of central importance, here all references are made to the new discourse at the Leiden University, or, in modern words, to Heinsius’s new research programme. Already the opening of the dedication shows the reader the new situation of the Leiden discourse. Immediately after the *To Mr Daniel Heinsius, etc. etc.*, De Dieu opens with the Paulinian words: *Ludovicus de Dieu, Flissinganus, salutem ac pacem precatur a Deo Patre & Domino nostro Iesu Christo.* It is underscored by the choice of the subject, the Book of Revelation of the New Testament, and by the fact that it is the Syriac version of the Book of Revelation. It is clear that both Heinsius and De Dieu present themselves here as protagonists of a new discourse, where it is important to show that they are working within a Christian framework and the text of the New Testament is the primary focus, especially in relation to the Semitic languages.

After his edition of Revelation, De Dieu publishes his *Grammatica linguarum orientalium* in 1628, which he had already mentioned in the introduction to his *Apocalypsis Sancti Iohannis*. Again, De Dieu mentions Heinsius’s supportive role in the dedication of his *Grammatica linguarum orientalium* to the magistrates of Leiden: ‘I must confess that I would never have set my mind to this task, if not the well-renowned Daniel Heinsius, ornament of your city and light of the Academy, had urged me, to whom I could not refuse anything, neither here and now, nor elsewhere’. Heinsius confirms his relationship with De Dieu by writing a Greek liminary poem for this book.

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202 ‘Ludovicus de Dieu from Flushing prays to God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ for peace and prosperity [for Daniel Heinsius]’. De Dieu, *Apocalypsis Sancti Iohannis*, *2r.

203 *ad quod tamen, ut quod res est, fater; nunquam animum meum applicuissem, nisi impulisset Clarissimus Daniel Heinsius, urbis vestrae ornamentum & Academiae lumen, cui nec hic, nec alibi denegare quicquam potui*. De Dieu, *Diqduq lešonot ha-qedem*, *3r.*
Although this book can be seen simply as the next step on the same road, the dedication and the preface of the *Grammatica linguarum orientalium* by De Dieu are instructive, as they tell us why De Dieu thought it was important to study these languages. Where in his *Apocalypsis* he only speaks of the inspiration of Erpenius and Heinsius, here De Dieu provides better insight into his motivations. The first reason is a general intellectual one: some people travel and bring riches from the Far Orient; others travel with their mind and collect their riches from the cultural heritage of other peoples. This is a prerequisite for ‘intellectual sublimity’. Of course, this would have been a convincing argument in a time when the Dutch East India Company (the VOC) was harvesting the riches of the East. Many magistrates themselves participated in the VOC. But where the reader could expect De Dieu to confess he had an interest in the languages and cultures of the Far East, he makes a turn and writes that not all languages and cultures can be studied by everybody and every student has his own predilection. His personal choice fell to Hebrew, Aramaic, and Syriac, because: ‘I selected for myself the Oriental peoples [as they were - DK] the first inhabitants of the earth, originators of every wisdom and knowledge, from whom emanated whatever divine and salvation-bringing knowledge the other peoples held; from whom even the source of their impious superstition can be traced. It is in their languages in particular that I find delight. I like to treat their history and institutions, and as I think that it would be most profitable for both Church and State when these matters are studied by others as well, I explain here three of their quite similar languages, Hebrew, Aramaic, and Syriac’. These words bring us back to Heinsius’s *Aristarchus sacer*. Although not as explicitly stated as there, De Dieu clearly refers to Heinsius’s ideas about the origin of Western culture and the importance of the study of these origins for a good understanding of the classical and Hellenistic world.

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204 *Nemo mentis est sublimioris, qui intra suam gentem animum concludat & contineat*. De Dieu, *Diqduq lešonot ha-qedem*, *2r.*

205 *Ego Orientales mihi populos selegi, primos terrae habitatores, primos doctrinae omnis & eruditionis parentes, a quibus, quicquid reliqui populi habent divinae ac salutiferae scientiae, dimanavit: a quibus etiam quicquid habent impiae superstitionis originem traxit. horum linguis apprime delector; horum res libenter tracto, & quia ab alius quoque easdem tractari Ecclesiae Reipublicaque utilissimum arbitror; tres hic eorum linguas, non multum sibi absimiles exhibeo, Hebraicam, Chaldaicam, & Syriacam*. De Dieu, *Diqduq lešonot ha-qedem*, *2v.*
However, De Dieu feels he has to explain his choice in greater detail to his public, with what to the modern reader will seem like a degree of defensiveness: ‘I am sure that no one will disapprove of my undertaking once he has taken notice of my motivations’. The reason for including Hebrew is that it is the first of all languages and superior to any other language, as old as Adam himself, learned from God. It is the language of the prophets and the only *interpres* of the Old Testament’s divine revelations. Aramaic deserves attention as the books of Daniel and Esra were (largely) written in it, but more importantly because the (in De Dieu’s view) noble and eternally praiseworthy Aramaic translations of the Old Testament, the *targumim*, were written in Aramaic. ‘They are followed by Syriac, the language that has been sanctified not only by the mouth of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, but also of our Apostles, who had no other vernacular than this one, which is attested by many traces and documents in the New Testament.’

De Dieu continues this line of thought in his introduction (*Ad lectorem*), giving the following reasons why he thinks it worthwhile to study these languages: ‘First man was created in the Orient, the Church first came into existence in the Orient and spread out from there. It was that region that first held men, religion and piety, erudition. Just as mankind spread from there, so too did learning. Greece owes its wisdom and fame to the Orient and it admits to having received its alphabet from Cadmus, who came from Phoenicia that neighbours Syria. Say only *ἀλφα, βήθα, γάμμα, δέλτα* and already you speak Aramaic. You are most ungrateful if you refuse to learn the rest of these languages, from which you simply received for free the names of the letters when you

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206 *Quod quidem institutum meum a nemine improbatum iri confido, cui vitae meae ratio perspecta est.* De Dieu, *Diqduq lešonot ha-qedem*, *2v.*

207 *Prima harum prima quoque est omnium & praestantissima linguarum, primo nostro parenti Adamo coaeva, cum ipso nata aut creato potius, non ab homine sed ab ipso Deo edocta. Prophetae ea lingua est, & divinorum veteris foederis unica nuncia & interpres.* De Dieu, *Diqduq lešonot ha-qedem*, *2v.*

208 *Comitatur eam lingua Chaldaica, quam in captivitate Babylonica didicerunt Iudaei, & exinde Daniel & Esdras in sacris suis scriptis exhibuerunt, quaque antiqua illa, & nobilis, & aeterna laude digna veteris Testamenti paraphrasis, quae Targum dicitur, conscripta est.* De Dieu, *Diqduq lešonot ha-qedem*, *2v.*

209 *Syriaca sequitur: ipsius servatoris nostri Iesv Christi ore, nec non Apostolorum sanctificata, qui non aliam quam hanc vernaculam habuerunt, cujus multa in N. Testamento vestigia extant & documenta.* De Dieu, *Diqduq lešonot ha-qedem*, *2v.*
speak Greek. Read *De Diis Syris* by John Selden, read the first chapter of Daniel Heinsius’s *Aristarchus sacer*, and you will admit that almost all religion of the Greeks, the Egyptians, and the Romans has come from the Orient and that even the names of the Gods can only be understood when related to their oriental origin\(^\text{210}\).

He then again refers more extensively to the different *targumim*, apparently dating at least the *Targum Onkelos* and *Targum Jonathan* to Old Testament times and the already acknowledged importance of the *targumim* for the interpretation of Scripture. But more important at the present juncture is what De Dieu writes about Syriac. After some well-known examples from the New Testament, such as *thalita kumi* and *maranatha*, he writes:

> It is clear from these examples that the vernacular for Christ, the Apostles, and the Evangelists was Syriac and the only possible interpretation of these examples can be found in the Syriac. However, more importantly, wherever direct speech is found in the New Testament, the interpretation of these sentences can only be made with the help of the Syriac language. No Athenian citizen would have called the language of the Evangelists and the Apostles Greek. It is probably easier for Europeans to imitate Plato and Aristotle, than it is for Plato and Aristotle to interpret the New Testament to us. Why? Because the holy men thought in Syriac what they wrote in Greek, and they transferred the natural expression of their vernacular to foreign words, which means not only that the subject matter originates from Prophetic Scripture,

\(^{210}\) *In Oriente creati primi homines, In Oriente nata primum & exculta Ecclesia. Illa primum regio homines, illa religionem & pietatem, illa eruditionem prima tenuit. Inde sicut alio propagati homines, ita & eruditio. Orienti doctrinam ac famam suam debet Graecia, quae a Cadmo Phaenicio Syriae vicino literas se habere fatetur. Dic ἄλφα, βήθα, γάμμα, δέλτα, jam Chaldaice loqueris. Ingratus, ingratissimus, si reliqua istius linguae addiscere non digneris, a qua, quum Graecam discis, ipsa elementorum nomina dono habes. Lege doctissimum Clariss. viri Iohannis Sildeni De Diis Syris Tractatum, lege primum in Sacro Aristarcho magni Danielis Heinsii caput, multa eruditione refertum, fatheberis omnem fere Graecorum, Aegyptiorum & Latinorum religionem ex Oriente fluxisse, & ne Deorum quidem nomina aliunde quam ex Oriente intelligi posse. De Dieu, Diqduq lešonot ha-qedem, [*4r/v]*.*
but also that its formulation and power and energy are present in
the New Testament.211

It is important here to notice the significance of these examples.
The examples of Heinsius and De Dieu clearly show how the discourse at
Leiden University, at least among its humanists, changed in the course of
early seventeenth century. The format of the Republic of Letters remained
unchanged, but the values expressed within this format changed
significantly. Part of the format was the method of research, which
remained largely the same, text-centric, almost word-centric. Whether
commenting on Silius Italicus, Nonnus Panopolitius, or the New
Testament, the method of writing *notae* and *adnotationes* remained largely
the same. In this we can see a continuation of the humanist format.
However, the content and the referential landmarks had altered
considerably. As said before, the Bible and Calvinist values had
supplanted classical antiquity as the central point of orientation in research
and writing. Within this new discourse the concept of the *dialectus
Hellenistica* assumes a special place, becoming the central theme in
Heinsius’s research programme, the lens through which he will continue
his scholarly work and stimulate others. This new theme probably also
helped Heinsius to consolidate his position in the scholarly world after the
unrest of 1618-1620. As can be learned from the work of De Dieu and
others, it is Heinsius who by now holds the position once held by Scaliger
and others, namely that of central personality within the learned
community, whose introduction is needed and requested by debutants.

I want to emphasize here again, that it is not exactly clear whether
the discursive change in Leiden was the effect of the political change, or
the Synod of Dordt, or the purgation at the University, or simply the new
personal setting. It is my strong impression that all these factors played a

211 Ex quibus liquido constat, vernaculum Christo, Apostolis & Evangelistis linguam fuisse
Syriacam, & non nisi ex ea eorum quae diximus peti posse interpretationem. Sed majus
est, quod ipsarum phrasium, quae passim in N.T. adhibentur, verus sensus non aliunde
quam ex Syriaco sit petendus. Phrasim enim Evangelistarum & Apostolorum Graecam
esse nemo Atticus dixerit. Facilis Europaeis foret, Platonis Aristotelisque elegantiam
imitari, quam Platoni Aristotelive N.T. nobis interpretari. Quid ita? Quia sancti viri
Syriace conceperunt, quae Graece scriperunt, & linguae vernaculae emphasis peregrinis
verbis indiderunt, ut Scripturae Propheticae non res tantum, sed & phrasis, virtus atque
energia in N.T. exhiberentur. De Dieu, Diqduq lešonot ha-gedem, **r/v.
role within this discursive change and that all factors should be seen as manifestations of this discursive change. Or to return to Greenblatt’s introduction of Renaissance Self-Fashioning, the individual personalities are influenced by their surroundings and these influences become manifest in the various modes of expression of these individuals, but these personalities also become influencing factors on their surroundings. In our context what this means is that Daniel Heinsius is influenced by all the aforementioned factors, but is himself also an important determining factor in the cultural discourse of his time, as he holds a central position among the Leiden humanists.

3.4 Jacobus Revius (1586-1658) as example of the new standard

The third example of the new discourse I wish to introduce is the second edition of Jacobus Revius’s Over-ijsselsche sangen en gedichten. Revius was born in Deventer and grew up in Amsterdam. He studied theology in Leiden and Franeker and made a peregrinatio to France, where he seems to have been impressed by the local fruits of Renaissance poetry. His main post after his return would be in Deventer, until the year of 1642, when he was asked to direct the States College in Leiden. During his early student years, Revius was impressed by Arminius, but soon decided that he could not agree with his theological views, and became a vehement voice of the Counter-Remonstrant faction. Revius was particularly involved in the publication of an authorized translation of the Bible, De Statenvertaling. This project was an outcome of the Synod of Dordt, where it had been decided that an authorized translation of the Bible in Dutch was needed. A group of learned and, in particular, undisputed orthodox theologians worked on this project between 1626 and 1637. Academic linguists were only consulted. Revius acted as one of the

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212 Greenblatt, Renaissance Self-Fashioning, 4.
213 On Revius, see: De Bruijn, Eerst de waarheid, dan de vrede. On Revius’s poetry and his Over-ijsselsche sangen, see esp. De Bruijn, Eerst de waarheid, dan de vrede, chap. IV; Stronks, Stichten of schitteren, chap. 6.
role within this discursive change and that all factors should be seen as manifestations of this discursive change. Or to return to Greenblatt’s introduction of Renaissance Self-Fashioning, the individual personalities are influenced by their surroundings and these influences become manifest in the various modes of expression of these individuals, but these personalities also become influencing factors on their surroundings. In our context what this means is that Daniel Heinsius is influenced by all the aforementioned factors, but is himself also an important determining factor in the cultural discourse of his time, as he holds a central position among the Leiden humanists.

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Although Revius spent much of his life in his home town Deventer and as such would hardly qualify as belonging to the circle of Leiden humanists, I would still like to introduce him here, as he has some important connections to the literary environment of the Leiden humanists. The most important is his connection with Daniel Heinsius, but he was also acquainted with Ludovicus de Dieu, Constantijn l’Empereur, and others. Furthermore, he had, after all, studied in Leiden and would spend the last seventeen years of his career as director of the Leiden States College. The reason for including Revius in this chapter is that he seems the embodiment of the final stage of the discursive change. The process described in all earlier cases finds its temporary ending in the literary work of Jacobus Revius. As mentioned earlier, the later works of Cats can be named in this context as well, but Revius wrote his poetry earlier than Cats wrote his more Calvinistically inspired works.

Revius wrote the poems of his Over-ysselsche sangen en gedichten between 1616 and 1630. It is immediately clear from the first page of the book that he wishes to be associated with Heinsius. The book starts with an address to Daniel Heinsius, in which Revius states that the main reason for issuing a second and expanded edition of his poems was Heinsius’s favourable judgment of them. He concludes the address with the following words: ‘This being also to others a token of our continuing friendship, if that is what can be named the connection of hearts between an insignificant person as myself’

214 De Bruijn, Eerst de waarheid, dan de vrede, 293–306.
and someone as excellent as the great Heinsius is’. It is interesting to see that he explicitly specifies the reason for his dedicational letter: he wants both his connection with Heinsius and Heinsius’s approbation to be clearly visible to the world! This approbation confirms what we already saw in the case of Ludovicus de Dieu, namely that Heinsius was seen as central authority within this reformed local branch of the Republic of Letters. However, the books of De Dieu still had a strong resemblance with the dedications of Heinsius and Grotius themselves to Scaliger. What was different in the case of De Dieu was that referential topics had changed, but the format survived. In Revis’s dedications the format itself had found its final stage – from the humanist Latin letter, teeming with learned references to the classical world, we find ourselves in a Dutch Calvinist setting.

It is worthwhile investigating this phenomenon somewhat further. The fact that Revis wrote in Dutch is not surprising – he was a vehement Counter Remonstrant preacher with a taste for poetry. He wrote religious poetry for an orthodox Calvinist audience. Both Revis’s career and his works make him a central authority within the orthodox Calvinist discourse. What is peculiar about his dedication is that he dedicated this poetical work to Heinsius, whose poetry to a considerable extent does not fit in within this orthodox Calvinist discourse. Apparently, that did not really matter. Heinsius had been the centre of the Leiden humanist discourse before the events of 1618-1620, he had managed to adapt himself to the discursive change, had been an influential factor in the discursive change, and had emerged as central authority of the purified Dutch Republic of Letters. He was now classified as an exemplary authority in orthodox Calvinist circles.

How Revis managed to invoke Heinsius within this discourse can be learned from his dedicational poem *Wien geef ick dit papier*? First of all, it is worth mentioning that in the title of his poem Revis calls

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215 *Zijnde oock by anderen een bewijs, van onse bestendighe vriendschap, indien alsoo ghenoemt mach worden de verknopinge der gemoeden, tusschen soo geringen persoon als ick my kenne, ende so uytnemenden als den grooten Heinsius is. Revis, Over-ysselsche sangen en dichten Iacobi Revii, [A2r].*

216 *Revis, Over-ysselsche sangen en dichten Iacobi Revii, [A4r].*
Heinsius the ‘most important poet of our time’.217 As said above, this may seem peculiar in the light of all the pagan poetry Heinsius had written. However, it turns out that Revius simply ignores all of Heinsius’s pagan work and only mentions his two major Christian poems: his De contemptu mortis and his Lofsanck van Christus! Revius connects his own work with the Lofsanck in particular: ‘Through which, o great poet, through the Netherlands flew / The immeasurable praise of Christ’s being God and man: / The same I wish to show gratefully as well. / Even if you despise the verses, you have to praise their theme’.218 Heinsius is stripped of his pagan elements and appropriated by the orthodox Calvinist discourse. Again, it is not clear how much of this process was a conscious choice.

We do not know whether Heinsius had written the De contemptu mortis and the Lofsanck with a clear vision of the changing discourse in mind. We can assume that Revius in particular approved of these works of Heinsius and less of his pagan works. However, what remains peculiar is that Revius calls Heinsius simply the greatest poet of his time and ignores most of his poetical work!

The liminary poem of Hendrick van Heijdendal shows some further aspects of the way Revius was perceived as a poet. Playing with the title of the work, Van Heijdendal opens by saying that finally the River IJssel has its own poet, after the Rhine, the Amstel, and the Meuse: ‘The Rhine has its Heinsius, the Amstel has Hooft, / The Meuse has its Cats, every watercourse / has someone to praise it; your time has come now / O famous IJssel god, as Revius silences [all classical examples]’.219 Revius is apparently associated with the great Dutch Renaissance poets. The poet elaborates on this theme in the first lines of the second strophe: ‘He plays

217 ‘Aen myn Heere. Mijn Heere Danielem Heinsium, […], voornaemste poeet van onsen tijt.’
218 [Ghy hebt een gladde pijl uyt uwen tros getogen /] Waer mee, o groot poeet, door Neerland is gevoegen / Den ongemeten lof van Christo God en mensch: / Dien selven soeck ik oock my danckbaer te bewijsen. / Soo ghy de veersen laeckt, de stoffe moetty prijsen.
Revius, Over-ysselsche sangen en dichten Iacobi Revii, [A4r].
219 Den Rijn heeft zijn Heyns, den Amstel heeft zijn Hooft, / De Maes heeft zijnen Cats, eck een der waterstromen / Heeft jemant die hem viert; u beurt is mee gecomen / O claren Ysselgodt, want Reves die verdooft, / Als hy zijn snaren roert, het quelen der Sirenen, / Den Roomschen Lierman, en ’t gevely van den Toscaen. / De Harp van Orpheus, en het treuren vande Swaen, / Ia de Thebaense Luyt verroerster van de stenen. Revius, Over-ysselsche sangen en dichten Iacobi Revii, A3r.
Writing poems in multiple languages was, of course, a topic in Renaissance poetry, either to imitate the classical examples, or to imitate other imitators, for example the poets of the Pléiade. However, the poet then continues by mentioning the subject of Revius’s poetry: ‘The fame and deeds of those valiant heroes / Who risked their lives for the Netherlands. / […] What’s more, he shall sing sweetly for you / God’s eternal praise and glory, so ardently expressed’. This liminary poem confirms the previously stated impression: Revius was seen and wanted to be seen as a poet standing in the tradition of the Renaissance poets. However, the similarity stops short when it comes to the content of his poetry – Revius particularly writes either about the Revolt or God. It is also worth mentioning that the multilingual character of the work is strictly speaking true, but still about 99 percent of the work has been written in Dutch. It is only a handful of poems that have been written in Greek, French, or Latin; most noteworthy of these are the Anacreonticum at the beginning of the book and the Laurus rediviva.

Of these, the Anacreonticum is the most conspicuous, as it is the first poem to appear in the collection. The poem has been discussed in detail by Ad Leerintvelt, who has shown that this poem is a close imitation of Anacreonta no. 23. Estienne had placed the poem first in his editio princeps of these poems. In the original poem, the poet says he wanted to sing heroic epic songs, but that his lyre refused and instead only wanted to play love songs. Revius copies the format of the poem and closely follows the original. However, where the original aimed to sing epic poetry, Revius complains that he only wished to sing about the goddess Pallas Athena (τὴν Ἀθήνην) and about the Muse (τὴν Μοῦσαν). And his lyre only wishes to sing the praise of God and Christ. What is interesting about

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220 Hy speelt u op goet Duyts, op Frans, Griecx en Latijn […]. Revius, Over-ysselsche sangen en dichten Iacobi Revii, A3r.
221 De daden en den roem der onverschrocken Helden / Die voor het Nederlant haer in de waegschael stelden. Revius, Over-ysselsche sangen en dichten Iacobi Revii, A3r.
222 Els Stronks has devoted an interesting chapter on the use of classical imagery by Calvinist preacher-poets in her dissertation: Stronks, Stichten of schitteren, chap. 9. She adduces Heinsius as an example of maximum freedom in this area. However, no attention is paid to the discursive change of the 1610s.
224 Leerintveld, “Adonis en Christus, mythologie en christendom bij Revius”.

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the poem is that at first glance it seems to closely copy Heinsius’s imitations of Greek examples. Daniel Heinsius was well known for his Latin poetry, but no less for his Greek poetry. We have seen in the first chapter how Heinsius seemed to enforce the discourse of the Republic of Letters, imitating Virgil and Theocrites by translating Latin poetry into Doric Greek. The *Anacreonticum* of Revius shows how far Revius could go in imitating and emulating his great example Heinsius. Revius clearly refers to the humanist discourse of the Republic of Letters, if only by dedicating the work to Daniel Heinsius and imitating the great Heinsius in the field for which he was most famous. However, he can only do so by overtly renouncing the referential world of the humanist discourse and replacing it with Christian imagery. Within the context of orthodox Calvinism even imitating a heathen poet was suspect. Why would a Christian poet imitate a heathen Greek? The only way Revius could do so, was by changing the referential context.225

As Schenkeveld–van der Dussen has shown in her *Dutch Literature in the Age of Rembrandt*, Revius had explicitly formulated this programme of Calvinist appropriation in his poem *Pagan Marriage*: ‘comparable to the old Israelites, who were allowed to keep foreign women if they cut off their hair and nails, the poet admonishes his readers to cleanse the Roman and Greek Muses of their voluptuousness, idolatry, and sophisms. Only then can they safely be embraced and will bring forth offspring that will keep your memory alive!’226 The poem underlines some of the themes that were discussed in the previous chapter. First of all, there is the identification with the old people of Israel, especially on their wandering through the desert, when it was to Calvinist eyes the

226 ‘Whoever in the war had caught a woman fair / Wife to some infidel, that he would fain retain, / Had to pare short her nails, cut off all of her hair, / Then alter her attire and wed her only then. / O poets, if you want to enjoy in the arms / Of a Pierian muse, her Greek and Roman charms, / Pare off all that she has of sumptuous wantonness, / Of dull idolatry and subtle scornfulness. / Embrace her only then, she’ll bear you children fast / That through all ages shall cause your renown to last.’ (Soo wie een schone vrou van griek of ander heyden / Vinck inden oorloch, en daer van niet wil scheyden / Haer nagels corten most, afşnyden al haer haar, / Veranderen haer cleet, en trouwense daer near: / O dichters, wildy u vermake inde minne / Vande Romeynsche of de griesche Piêrinne / Snoeyt af al wate heeft van wylyte dertelheyt, / Van domme afgody, en spite schamperheyt, / Omhelsetse daer na, sy sal u kinders geven / Die u gedachtenis in eeuwicheyt doen leven.) Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, *Dutch Literature in the Age of Rembrandt*, 47–48.
perfect example of a theocratic nation, led by God through the mouth of his minister. But more importantly, it shows again the deep distrust of the Calvinists regarding the Greek and Roman cultures of classical antiquity. They are compared with Canaanite and Moabite women! Marriage and sexual congress between the Israelites and women of the surrounding tribes is always suspect in the Old Testament, as they tend to occasion various forms of idolatry. Famous examples the Bible are the Heresy of Peor, and King Ahab’s wife Jezebel.\textsuperscript{227} It is especially this context of sexual and religious impurity that Revius evokes in connection with classical imagery.

As a possible exception to this rule the poems of the \textit{Laurus rediviva} could be mentioned. These poems show us Revius in a humanist disguise. Actually, the \textit{Laurus rediviva} is one poem, but Revius wrote the same poem in four different languages: Greek, Latin, French, and Dutch. The poems were written in honour of the inauguration of Henricus Reyner, who had been appointed as a professor of philosophy and lector in the artes liberales at the Deventer gymnasium on 8 November 1630. The poem stands out in the collection of Revius, as it is one of the few poems with not a single reference to a Christian context. There is no explicit reference to any pagan context either, however, and the use of the humanist format and the choice of the laurel, which can be seen as a covert reference to the god Apollo, make these poems exceptional. As we shall see later, this poem also shows the context in which this humanist imitation still had some value in the eyes of Revius and the orthodox Calvinists, namely the schools. Largely thanks to Calvin himself, the humanist discourse would have some sort of \textit{Nachleben} in the context of the Latin schools and later the Dutch grammar schools (gymnasia). It was in this context that the maxims of imitatio and emulatio would be cultivated for a relatively long time (until the end of the nineteenth century).\textsuperscript{228}

The case of Revius demonstrates nicely how the discursive field was reshaped by the \textit{événement} of 1618-1620. Heinsius remains a central authority in the literary field; however, the content of his authority has changed, as he is still considered the greatest poet, but his quality as


former heathen poet is ignored and instead he has become the champion of Christian poetry. Imitation of the classical poets had become highly suspect and was no longer focal point of the literary discourse. Coincidental or not, with his *Laurus rediviva* Revius also points to the corner of the discursive field to which classical imitation was relegated: the Latin schools.

3.5 The old Cats

Cats's *Twee en tachtig-jarig leven*

The last work I wish to discuss is the autobiography of Jacob Cats, written in roughly 3,000 verses. It seems that towards the end of his life Cats drew on older materials and shaped them into a new poem with more recent material added to it. The poem was not published until 1700, when it appeared in the second edition of his collected works. The reason for discussing this work here is twofold. First, the book is Cats’s last work and as such can be seen as an endpoint in the discursive change of the poets discussed in the present thesis. A second reason is, that Cats commentates upon his own youth and the time of both the humanist and the Calvinist discourse. It is understood that the work has to be read as being written by an orthodox Calvinist, awaiting his heavenly judgement, who wants to fulfil the role he knew so well one last time: that of *praecceptor iuventutis*, the eternal schoolmaster. Nonetheless, it is

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230 Or in the words of Karel Bostoen: *Cats ziet op zijn oude dag zijn leven aan zich voorbijtrekken als een illustratie van de calvinistische predestinatie. Hij wordt niet moe te herhalen dat alles in zijn leven door God is voorbeschikt en vervalt daarbij regelmatig tot, wat Busken Huet heeft genoemd: “leuterlievende vroomheid en keutelachtige poësie”. De angst voor het hiernamaals was de grijsaard op Zorgvliet dermate naar de keel gevlogen dat vele passages eerder ouderdomswakte en hersenverweking openbaren dan vroomheid*. [sic] (‘Cats sees his past life before his eyes as an example of Calvinist predestination. He never tires of repeating that everything in his life has been preordained by God and he regularly lapses into, what Busken Huet called, “garrulous piety and silly poetry”. Anxiety regarding the afterlife brought the old man at Zorgvliet in such a state of fear, that many passages reveal rather infirmity of the old age and a softening of his brain rather than piety’). Bostoen, “De autobiografie van Jacob Cats”, 91–92.
interesting to see how Cats himself looks back upon his youth and the
time when the humanist discourse was still dominant within the Dutch
Republic and more specifically in the circles of Leiden University.

Cats’s intentions are immediately recognizable from the title page,
which reads: *J. Cats eighty-two years life, from his birth until his death.*
*To his fourteen grandchildren, to the benefit of their education. Written in
verses by himself.*\(^{231}\) Apparently, Cats takes pride in the age he has reached
and thinks his grandchildren will be able to learn some lessons from his
own life. The didactic purpose of the book ensures that readers have to be
even more careful than they would usually in terms of assessing the events
depicted. Perhaps we should be grateful for that – at least we are not
tempted with such a caveat to read the poem as an account of historical
facts. However true the facts portrayed may be, they still function here
within a didactic framework. As the work is both presented to the author’s
grandchildren and the entire Dutch reading world, it may be assumed that
Cats was careful in the construction of his own image. As we shall see,
this does not necessarily mean that he always displays the most positive
characteristics of his personality; even then his character flaws have their
function within a specific story and a specific discourse.

Cats elaborates on the didactic theme in the introduction to the
poem. Opening with a motto taken from Terence\(^{232}\) he compares reading
the lives of others to looking into a mirror, from which virtues and vices
can be learned in the consequences of their behaviour. Cats describes the
writing of his own life as a testimony to God’s grace ‘as this story will
show me how God has prevented me from many accidents and
incidents’.\(^{233}\) And later: ‘And listen to the mistakes of my youth as well,
for they can lead you to virtue’.\(^{234}\) The introduction shows us that Cats
wishes to shape his biography on the model of Christian – and more

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\(^{231}\) ‘*J. Cats twee-en-tagtig-jaarig leven van zyn geboorte tot zyn dood toe: dienende tot
naricht aan deszelvs XIV kinds-kinderen, door hem zelvs in vaerzen beschreven.*’ Cats,
*Gedachten op slapeloose nachten*, [117].

\(^{232}\) *Inspicere, tanquam in speculum, vitas omnium / Atque ex aliis sumere exemplum, hoc
facio, / Hoc jubeo, hoc laudi est, hoc vitio datur* (Ter. Ad. 3, 3, 61.) Cats, *Gedachten op
slapelose nachten*, 119.

\(^{233}\) *Om dat my dit verhael indachtig maken sal, / Hoe Godt my heeft geleyt door menig

\(^{234}\) *Maer hoort oock onder dies de feylen myner jeugt, / Want dat kon evenselfs u leyden tot
particularly, Calvinist – redemption. As there has to be a turning point in the biography of the Calvinist, where the individual has a sense of being called or brought to Light, in a sense as the vocation of St Paul before the gates of Damascus, he models the story of his own life on the paradigm of a sinful youth, a crisis, and conversion and salvation. However, he is careful in the depiction of his sinful youth and remains evasive about the precise nature of some of his amorous experiences during his student years. And although man can experience divine grace during his life, he remains a sinner. Cats is fully aware of the importance of depicting himself as devout Christian, conscious of his sinful nature, even after his conversion, and will not let any opportunity pass to depict himself in humble culpability.

Although these confessions of adolescent sins and a consciousness of his own sinful nature may be convincing as upright and true to Cats’s vision of himself in this phase of his life, there remain some questions to the modern reader. The most obvious is the question of to what use the poet repeatedly mentions his own sinfulness and humility. At an elementary semantic level this should, of course, mean that the person Jacob Cats feels remorse about (aspects of) his bygone life and wishes to prevent his grandchildren from the making the same mistakes. This may very well be true, or not. However, Cats presents his story as an almost typical Calvinist account of salvation. As such, it clearly functions within an orthodox, probably even pietistic discourse. In order to obtain a central place within this discourse, especially when writing an autobiography, it is of key importance to show how well one’s own life correlates with Calvinist notions of sin and salvation. The combination of these facts creates the paradoxical situation in which, if an author wishes to further
his career within the Calvinist discourse, he will have to exhibit in his writings his humility and a consciousness of man’s sinful nature.

The second question this work raises in the mind of the modern reader is the nature of Cats’s writing about sexuality. Sexuality is a central, if not the central, theme in Cats’s poetry. However, where in his early poetry Cats was able to write openly about the subject, after his migration to the Calvinist discourse he had to find another way to treat this subject and he found one in the adulation of marriage and marital love and his well-known warnings on extramarital relations. The present work in particular gives the reader the impression that Cats had not fundamentally changed his subject over the years, but continued writing about sexuality, only in a negative light! Cats hardly mentions anything about his youth except about his sexual relations, of which he consequently only says that these had been conspicuous by their absence! This is at least strange in a didactic poem for one’s grandchildren. Cats could easily have omitted these passages – after all, what grandchild needs to learn from his grandfather’s non-existent sexual affairs? However, it is my impression that Cats wishes to write about sexuality and leads our imagination to the adventures of his youth by denying (rather unconvincingly) that they ever existed. Cats wished to treat sexuality and had to adapt to the Calvinist discourse. The only way to treat this subject properly within this discourse was by denial.

This is almost immediately evident when Cats starts writing about his schooldays. He spends about two pages on his family ties and earliest childhood and then complains for about a page about his schoolmaster in Zierickzee – according to Cats, the man was more than reasonably proud of his pupils who did well after school. But then Cats spends more than a page on the schoolmaster’s maid. Apparently, the girl could work well, but had had some love affairs after work: ‘She showed many signs of common sense in her work, / But had misused her best pledge. / She had lived at Court, but had alas been betrayed there, / A thing called virginity had fled away from her’. In what follows, Cats tells how this girl would walk into the boys’ dormitory at night and lay there with the boys,

235 *Sy toond* 'in haer bedryf veel tekens van verstant, / Maer sy had buytens tydt, misbruyckt haer beste pandt. / Sy had in ’t Hof gewoont, maer was daer laes! bedrogen, / Iet dat men maegdom hiet was van haer weggevlogen: Cats, Gedachten op slapeloose nachten, 124.
apparently only talking and laughing. The moral of the story is that Cats, in his own words, had absorbed some of the words and images of this girl and that these had a lasting influence on him: ‘I still feel regularly coming to my senses / What I took in unnoticed from this matter’.237

In this passage the reader can find all the elements mentioned above. First of all, Cats is very outspoken about the influence of sexual imagery on young boys. He explicitly warns headmasters and others who are responsible for young people to be careful who they hire. He also makes very clear that he thinks these events had a lasting influence on him. However, this book has not been written as a pedagogical manual for teachers and educators. Cats takes ample time to write in a text meant for his grandchildren a detailed account of the behaviour and visits of an attractive young woman who had been sexually active in a boys’ dormitory! And, of course, Cats expressly denies having had any dealings with the maid, again in agreement with the characteristics mentioned earlier.

It is impossible to conclude whether or not Cats had had any dealings with this girl.238 What is more, that is not what matters here. It is peculiar that a young boy apparently knows so much about the not so honourable past of a woman significantly older than he was, and that he remembers these apparent facts till his 81st year. But what really matters here is that Cats wishes to elaborate on this theme in this context. If Cats really meant what he wrote, that he felt he had suffered lasting damage from these nocturnal intrusions, why does he impose the very same

236 Alleen in losse praat bestont haer vergenoegen: (All her joy was idle talk). Cats, Gedachten op slapeloos nachten, 124.
237 Ick voele menigmael noch in myn zinnen komen / Dat ick van dese stof ter loops heb ingenomen: Cats, Gedachten op slapeloose nachten, 124.
238 Derek Phillips seems not to share my opinion, preferring in his discussion of these juvenile passages of Cats’s life to treat them as if they definitely happened. Personally I think Cats is too evasive in his words to state this with utter certainty. See Phillips, Well-Being in Amsterdam’s Golden Age, 88–89. On the other side is Bostoen: Het verhaal van zijn leven is doorspekt met anekdotes over amoureuze verlokkingen waaraan hij als leerling van de Latijnse School te Zierikzee en als student te Leiden en te Orléans is blootgesteld. Maar beziwijken voor de verleidingen deed de jonge Cats niet. De Vinger Gods hield hem steeds op het rechte pad. (‘The story of his life is full of anecdotes about amorous seductions to which he was exposed as a pupil in the Latin School of Zierikzee and as a student in Leiden and Orleans. However, Cats did not succumb to these temptations. The hand of God kept him on the right path’.) Bostoen, “De autobiografie van Jacob Cats”, 90–91.
images on the minds of his own grandchildren? For how can a reader not wonder whether the young Cats had really had no dealings at all with this girl? And after taking in the lively descriptions provided by Cats, how would any young person not envision in detail the maid entering the dorms? It becomes very tempting to read the text as if Cats is actually proud of his earliest close encounters with a girl and tries to convey the stealthy pleasure to his readers. Again, I cannot prove that this was consciously on Cats’s mind. I cannot even prove that a contemporary reader read the text as such. However, it seems clear that Cats wishes to write about sexuality in some way and that the only way he could do this within the Calvinist discourse is in terms of denial and condemnation. And that is exactly what he does throughout the description of his youth in this autobiography.\(^{239}\)

In the subsequent pages Cats elaborates on the virtues of the master’s wife and about his earliest days at Leiden University. He states very clearly that he regrets not having pursued his Greek studies, especially after the departure of his teacher Johannes Cornelis Gesselius (1550?-1627) to Amersfoort.\(^{240}\) However, before long Cats sails into the second love story. Again a maid was the source of all problems: ‘The Lady however, as we could see afterwards, / Made at the time a mistake and hit badly. / She hired a maid of nice appearances, / And sweet in her

\(^{239}\) I am not the first reader to find Cats’s frank descriptions to his grandchildren remarkable; Bostoen cites Busken Huet: ‘De beschrijving van amoureuze aangelegenheden werd door negentiende-euwers, die geen rekening hielden met het klassieke karakter van Cats’ biografie, juist uitvoerig gewraakt. Zo kon Busken Huet schrijven: ‘s Dichters eigen openhartige bekentenis: Mijn aard was van der jeugd genegen om te mallen, / En ‘t vrouwelijk geslacht dat heeft mij wel bevallen - dit gulle woord van den twee-en-tachtigjarigen grijsaard is eene voldoende waarschuwing. Geen fatsoenlijk meisje van onzen tijd kan een gedicht van Cats ten einde toe lezen; geen onzer opgeschoten knapen straffeloos bladeren in de dienstelijke nalatenschap van den vromen Raadpensionaris. (The descriptions of the amorous encounters were often extensively criticized by nineteenth-century readers, who did not heed the classical character of Cats’s biography. Thus Busken Huet could write: ‘The frank confession of the poet: It was my nature from my youth to play / And the female sex has always pleased me well – this candour on the part of the eighty-two-year-old man is a sufficient warning. No decent girl of our days can read a poem by Cats to the end; no lanky lad can leaf unpunished through the poetical heritage of this pious Pensionary.’). Bostoen, “De autobiografie van Jacob Cats”, 93.

\(^{240}\) On Gesselius, see Meertens, Letterkundig leven in Zeeland in de zestiende en de eerste helft der zeventiende eeuw, 246 and 382, n. 213 [cited by Ten Berge, Jacob Cats, 37-38]. The text can also be accessed at: http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/meer035lett01_01/.
face and witty in her habits, / Learned in the French language’.  Cats describes how the boarders enjoyed the company of this girl – they soon forgot to study, instead making music instead and apparently having a good time in her company. Again Cats makes very clear that he had no part in these festivities – he remained a diligent student and would only afterwards learn about any intimate acts that had occurred in the house. However, the lady of the house soon discovered that her boarders were distracted by the pretty maid and sent her away and hired a Medusa instead! The new maid, angry because the boarders ignore her, tells them one day that she met the first maid in the marketplace and that she was pregnant: ‘She has, according to her own words, seduced by deceitful words, left her best pledge in this honourable house’. The Medusa adds that the culprit will have to take care of the costs. Cats makes the reader believe he had never slept with the girl and only now learned of all that had happened. He fears that he will be charged maintenance money for the as yet unborn child, apparently as the other boys seem more experienced in denying responsibility, and seeks advice from a lawyer. In his own words, this experience was sufficient to heal him of his desire for any further relations with women, at least for the time being. After

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241 De Vrouwe evenwel, gelyck men namaels sag, / Misgreep haer op een tyt en deed een quade slag. / Sy nam in haeren dienst een Maegd van frisse leden, / En soet in haer gelaet en geestig in haer zeden, / Geleert in Fransse tael. [...] Cats, Gedachten op slapeloose nachten, 127.

242 Sy die niet goet en vont dit lang te laten dueren, / Ging sonder lang beraet een ander Meysjen hueren, / Een Griet van stuaren aert, en leelyck boven dien, / Soo dat in haer gelaet niet soets en was te sien. / Dit Meysjen, of veel eer een backkus van Meduyse, / En wierd hier niet gebruycyt ten dienste van den huys, / Noch tot het keuckewerck, maer haer weird opgeleyt, / Te staen tot onsen dienst gelyck een Kamer-meyt. (She did not deem it right to let this last, / Rented soon another maid, / A moody tart and ugly as well, / Nothing enjoyable to see in her face. / This girl, or this head of Medusa, / Was not hired to the service of the house, / Nor for the kitchen, but was trained, / To stand at our service as a chamber maid.). Cats, Gedachten op slapeloose nachten, 128.

243 Sy heeft, gelyckse seyt, door schoon en listig praeten, / Hier in dit eerbaer huys haer beste pant gelaeten. Cats, Gedachten op slapeloose nachten, 129.

244 Als Kock en Bottelier bywylen hevig kyven, / Dan word’et openbaer waer vet en boter blyven; / Een yder vecht om stryt, en onder dese twist, / Soo komt het schennis uyt dat niemand recht en wist. / Nu schoon ick nooit so over myn plitchen had vergeten, / Dat my van al dit wreck iet mogte zyn geweten. [...] (When the cook and the pantler fight, / It becomes clear where grease and butter are; / When all are fighting aloud, / Indecency comes out, that no one really knew. / Now I had never disregarded so much of my duties, / That I could be blamed in any way for this work /(…) Cats, Gedachten op slapeloose nachten,129.
thanking God for his protection in this matter, Cats tells the reader that ultimately it turned out that the girl had never been pregnant at all and the whole thing had been an invention of the Medusa.

The passage is interesting, as it seems to suggest more than it really says. It is very hard not to read this passage in exactly the opposite way from the one in which Cats seems to have intended it to be read. The story makes such an unconvincing impression that it seems to tell us that Cats did possibly impregnate the girl, learned that others had slept with her as well, found a lawyer who put the new maid under persuasive pressure to withdraw her accusations, and subsequently walked away. The passage again shows us that Cats apparently wished to tell his grandchildren or his readers about his sexual activities (‘When we were still students…’), felt on the other hand that he could not do so and had to abide by the orthodox Calvinist ideas of morality, instead telling the story in terms of denial and condemnation. Cats remains vague about the lessons he professes to teach in this passage. He does not explicitly warn about contact with girls, although he seems to have had enough of that for a while after this episode. However, what he does explicitly warn about are clever fellow boarders who can burden you with their faults and mischievous neglected maids who may set you up with lies. The conclusion of these lessons could very well be, at least at face value, that there is no harm in sexual contact with a girl of lower standing, as long as they do not get pregnant, are not being shared with too many companions, and the affair remains indoors.

Although this is, of course, somewhat exaggerated, I do think it reflects something of the prevalent sexual morality of this time, contrary to what is sometimes written in scholarly literature. Roberts and Groenendijk speak of all-male environments in the seventeenth century that offered little or no exposure to women.245 If anything, the passages show that there clearly was contact between the sexes, especially of different standing. Apparently many boys and young men had opportunities to have their first sexual encounters with maids in boarding houses. The texts also show that it is important to distinguish between the moral ideology preached by the orthodox Calvinist clergy and daily life. Reading Cats, it can hardly be concluded that he opposed sexual contact,

245 Roberts and Groenendijk, “Wearing out a Pair of Fool’s Shoes”, 146.
especially in one’s youth. He is careful to express his own abstinence, but in such a circumspect way, that the reader almost cannot suppress the urge to fill in the missing scenes. And even when condemning these alleged sexual acts (on the part of others), Cats condemns the outcome of the acts, the financial responsibility, or the betrayal by others. The maids have, in his words, lost their most valuable pledge. But the men only have to be careful.

The situations distilled from Cats’s words would appear to present a more likely portrayal of daily life in the seventeenth century than merely supposing complete obedience to orthodox Calvinism. It also fits in better within the picture that has been described during the course of this book, namely that orthodox Calvinism demanded complete control of all aspects of a man’s personality. However, it is the seventeenth century in particular where this idea of one coherent personality is still in the process of evolving. We have witnessed that the Leiden humanists saw no problematic incongruence between a religious personality and a pagan persona. The notion of a central personality that has to control the different aspects of a personality and that these have to respond to one overall coherent governing moral system is exactly the process that is happening in this period, as has been described by many others as one of the primary characteristics of Renaissance man.

The ambiguity of Cats in matters of premarital sexual relations, which may very well reflect a more general opinion of his time, is illustrated well by Cats’s account of his student years in France. Jacob Cats went to Orleans after the completion of his studies in Leiden to receive a doctorate in Roman law and to improve his knowledge of French. Apparently he acquired his knowledge of French from local girls in particular, although he is very evasive about the precise nature of these lessons: ‘I spent much time with the damsels of the town, / Where I had good entertainment and free access, / And this was, as it seemed, to be able to learn French’. Cats remains vague whether he fell in love with one special girl or frequented some sort of salon, but he clearly states that he spent much time there and felt very sorry when he had to leave: ‘I

\[246\] *Ik heb veel tyts gespilt by Juffers van de Stadt, / Daer ick goet onderhout en vryen toeganck hadt. / En dit was, soo het scheen, om Frans te mogen leeren, / […]* Cats, *Gedachten op slapeloos nachten*, 131.
noticed, when I had to leave, / That I was overcome with sorrow.\(^{247}\) And later: ‘Farewell, then, Orleans, although with sad pain, / There is no other option, we have to separate now. / If I have to give a reason for my actions [i.e. the sorrow – DK],/ I stayed too long in a single place, / And by my prolonged staying grew my acquaintance, / Therefore I did not want to leave this place’.\(^{248}\)

Cats is very clear as to the reason why he had to leave: he had promised his parents not to marry a foreign girl and apparently this had become a prospect: ‘I could have found there at the time, / Someone willing to marry me, / But I was told upon my leaving, / Not to return as part of a couple’.\(^{249}\) Cats warns his readers not to stay too long in the same place when they are abroad – a fresh branch does not easily catch fire. Apparently Cats had stayed too long in Orleans and fallen in love with a local girl: ‘As is characteristic of the youth, I liked to jest, / And I had a weak spot for the female sex, / However I was almost caught before I knew, / And lost, alas, much of my precious time’.\(^{250}\) On the other hand, he wishes to keep his reputation clean and wants us to know he never visited a brothel: ‘To whoring, to jolly unchaste life, / I could not render myself. / Not in England, nor in France / Did I ever enter a brothel or visit a prostitute’.\(^{251}\) And what seems most important: ‘My body was clean when I started my journey, / And I brought my members healthy back home’.\(^{252}\)

\(^{247}\) *Voor my ick heb bemerckt, toen ick vertrecken sou, / Dat ick was overstort met ongemeene rou. Cats, Gedachten op slapeloose nachten, 132-133.*

\(^{248}\) *Vaert wel dan Orliens, al is het droeve pyn, / Daer is geen ander raet, het moet gescheyd zyn. / Nu mits ick van myn doen gestaeg wil reden geven, / Ick was te langen tyt op eene plaets gebleven, / En door het stage verblyf soo wies de kennis aen, / Dies was ick ongesint van daer te moeten gaen. Cats, Gedachten op slapeloose nachten, 133.*

\(^{249}\) *Want ick kon toen ter tyt ook daer wel iemant vinden, / Die aen my door de trouw haer was gesint te binden: / Maer my was aengeseyt, toen ick gaen reysen wou, / Dat ick doch met myn tween niet wederkeeren sou. Cats, Gedachten op slapeloose nachten, 133.*

\(^{250}\) *Myn aert was van der jeugt genegen om te mallen, / En ’t vrouwelyck geslacht dat heeft my wel bevallen: / Hier door wierd ick verruck byna eer ick het wist, / En heb, eylaes! hier in geen kleynen tyt gequist. Cats, Gedachten op slapeloose nachten, 133.*

\(^{251}\) *Tot slooren evenwel, van geyl en dertel leven, / En heb ick mijn gemoet niet kunnen overgeven. / Ick heb in Engeland noch op de Fransche kust, / Nooit hoerhuys ingegaan, nooit hoerenbrant geblust. Cats, Gedachten op slapeloose nachten, 133/134.*

\(^{252}\) *Als ick de reys begon, toen was mijn lichaam kuys, / En ick brogt wederom gesonde leden thuys. Cats, Gedachten op slapeloose nachten, 134.*
It is this last theme in particular that is the focus of Benjamin Roberts’s treatment of Cats’s ideas about premarital sex. According to Roberts, Cats is predominantly concerned about the physical health of the young men: ‘For young men in the early seventeenth century, there was not a wide margin for error when it came to sexuality, considering the risk of contracting a fatal venereal disease. […] The most popular moralist of the seventeenth century, Jacob Cats, warned young men about syphilis – the most dreaded venereal disease of the era. […] Jacob Cats stood out among other contemporary moralists by recognizing the sexual desires of young men, but in the end urged them to practice abstinence from the age of sexual maturity […] until the age of marriage’. I do agree with Roberts as far as prostitutes are concerned, but I do not think Cats preached complete abstinence. If the passages of Cats’s autobiography are indeed intended as a guide book for his grandchildren, it seems that Cats advises them to be careful – they should not attract a disease, they should be careful about with whom they sleep and make sure no paternity suits can follow. Cats is also generally very outspoken about the importance of preserving girls’ virginity. However, Cats apparently sees no problem when boys have sexual relationships with either foreign girls or girls of a lower standing.

Phillips seems to come to the same conclusion: ‘Jacob Cats, the great moralist, seems to have regarded sexual intercourse with a servant as part of a young male adolescent’s education – it was one of the ways he sowed his wild oats’. This was apparently a common experience in the seventeenth century: ‘Among married couples, a woman’s sex life was supposed to be restricted to what occurred in the marital relationship. At the same time, a blind eye was usually turned to a man’s sexual exploits outside marriage. This double standard of sexual morality was common practice as far as servants were concerned. As elsewhere in early modern Europe, sexual involvement with female servants was a widespread social phenomenon. Although it usually had no adverse consequences for the reputations of a man, it was otherwise for the fair sex’.

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253 Roberts, *Sex and Drugs before Rock “N” Roll*, chap. 5.
Although I do not agree with Phillips that pre- and extramarital relationships for a man were not problematic at all, I do think both Phillips and Cats show that they were real, it simply happened. Reading Cats’s autobiography, these encounters were not strange or unheard of. However, Cats does feel compelled to write about these encounters in a circumspect way, embedded as they are in lengthy apologies and prayers. The text shows how Cats has to juggle with the representation of socially accepted phenomena in an orthodox Calvinist context. It is part of the process described by Roberts: ‘Through the course of the late sixteenth, seventeenth, and early eighteenth centuries, this attitude towards sexuality underwent a drastic change as society became more concerned with controlling carnal urges. For the early modern period Norbert Elias terms the increasing self-regulation of urges, including sexual ones, the transition from *Fremdzwang* (social constraint) to *Selbstzwang* (self-constraint). The transition entailed making the controlling of urges an internal regulation of conduct based on guilt instead of behavior controlled by external regulation and associated with shame’.\(^{257}\) This statement seems to be another way of saying what has been stated above, namely that within the dominant Calvinist discourse there was a keen sense of the necessity of uniting all facets of a personality, including literary personae, under the tutelage of one governing principle. All these facets had to be brought together, in Greenblatt’s words, under one governing Authority.\(^{258}\)

### 3.6 Afterthought: The *Nachleben* of the Leiden humanist discourse

Leiden University as a stronghold of the humanist discourse as envisioned by Janus Dousa had practically ceased to exist. A new discourse had taken its place, of which De Dieu, L’Empereur, and Revius are important representatives. But what happened to the former humanist discourse? Did it disappear altogether? Or did it have some sort of afterlife? It is my impression that it did, and especially in the curriculum of the Latin schools in Holland and West Frisia. Now that the ideals of

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\(^{257}\) Roberts, *Sex and Drugs before Rock “N” Roll*, 142–143.

humanist learning were no longer cherished at Leiden University, they found a new home, or rather, they recovered their old home, in the Latin schools. It was through the efforts of Gerardus Joannes Vossius (1577-1649) in particular that the ideals of the Leiden humanists found their way into the curriculum of the Latin schools of Holland and West Frisia. The other area is the vernacular poetry, where Heinsius’s and Vossius’s interpretations of Aristotelian poetics would have a lasting influence.259

It had been a long-felt desideratum that increased unity would be engendered between the different Latin schools. As a rule, the headmasters of these schools themselves set the curriculum and materials for their schools, which resulted in varying standards and results on the part of the students. The outcome of this incongruence was strongly felt at the university and the States College. Various measures had been taken to ensure a minimum standard, by way of compulsory reading lists and entry exams both at the States College and at the university. Already in 1580 Prince William of Orange had asked Lipsius and Dousa to provide a curriculum for the Latin schools, but it was not until 1624 that a committee was formed, consisting of professors from Leiden University and representatives of the Dutch Reformed Church, who had been entrusted by the States General with the task of writing a curriculum and providing textbooks for the Latin schools. It was the task of the academic members of the committee in particular to take care of these textbooks.260

Both Heinsius and Vossius sat on this committee and both would contribute significantly to the outcome in 1625 of the ‘Schoolordre’, as the curriculum was about to be named. Vossius was actually a theologian; being an orphan, the only way he had been able to enter university had been for him to obtain a bursary at the States College, where preachers and theologians were trained for the Dutch Reformed Church. Vossius was an excellent and diligent student and was asked after his studies in 1600 to become headmaster of the Latin school in Dordrecht (Dordt). Later, in 1613, Vossius was called back to Leiden to become regent of the States College. During the controversies between the Remonstrants and Counter-Remonstrants Vossius was very anxious to maintain a moderate stance, at

least outwardly. But he also became a close friend of Hugo Grotius, whom he admired greatly. He often gave free advice and helped Grotius where he could as long as he would not compromise himself. Nonetheless, Vossius was dismissed as regent after the Synod of Dordt.

Having been director at both a Latin school and the States College, Vossius had become an excellent judge of the educational system and he found it wanting. It is hard to say what Vossius’s influence on the committee was. Nonetheless, it is immediately clear that the result of the committee’s work was to Vossius’s taste – the ‘Hollandsche schoolordre’ (‘The Regulation for the Schools of Holland’) of 1625 would turn out to be a road map for humanist learning. It is most remarkable that almost immediately after Leiden University had been purged and the humanist discourse had been replaced by the orthodox Calvinist discourse, this same humanist discourse becomes institutionalized in the Latin schools through this Schoolordre.

The most pressing problem was the use of different grammar books in the Latin schools, which made switching from school tricky and resulted in incongruence among beginning students at the University. This problem was temporarily solved by the committee by prescribing existing textbooks, but it was this area in particular to which Vossius would dedicate himself in order to solve this problem once and for all. Over the

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261 Kuiper, De Hollandse Schoolordre van 1625, 84: Uit de opbouw van de leergang blijkt, dat men de Latijnse school opnieuw wilde “humaniseren”, d.w.z. dat er geen “eindeloze grammatica-oefeningen” dienden de te zijn: de Latijnse en de Griekse grammatica moesten beide in 3 leerjaren zijn afgehandeld, er werd een ruime keus van auteurs geboden benevens een intensieve training in het schriftelijk gebruik van het Latijn (epistola, carmen) en in het mondelinge (disputatio, declamatio); ook het Grieks mocht in dit opzicht niet worden verwaarloosd. (“It appears from the curriculum that the Latin school had to be “humanized” again, i.e. it should not remain an endless repetition of grammatical exercises: both Latin and Greek grammar had to be acquired in the first 3 years, a wide variety of authors was suggested as well as an intensive training in Latin writing (letters and poetry) and speaking (disputations and orations); besides, attention should be paid to learning Greek as well.”)

262 Kuiper, De Hollandse Schoolordre van 1625, 84: De theologen zouden misschien iets meer hebben verwacht, zo al niet de professoren dan toch wel de predikanten, de literaten echter konden zich niets beters wensen; wellicht zouden ook de Humanisten, die een eeuw tevoren waren gestorven [sic!], vol geestdrift dit programma als een realisatie van hun verlangens bewonderen […]. (“Of the theologians, the preachers in particular might have hoped for more, but the literary scholars could not have had any better; probably also the Humanists, who had died a century before [sic!], would have admired this programme as the realization of their deepest wishes [,. …]”).
following decades, Vossius would publish Latin and Greek grammars that would remain a standard for Dutch grammar schools well into the nineteenth century.

3.7 Conclusion

The coup d’état of Maurice and the Synod of Dordt mark the end of the peculiar intellectual climate of the Leiden humanists. It is interesting to complete the Foucauldian exercise and note which elements disappear, which elements appear, and which elements receive a new or different place. The first element that certainly disappears is the pagan persona of the poet. In the new discourse, the poetical persona has to be an expression of Calvinist belief. No more honorary poems are written to Bacchus or Aphrodite. The gods of the classical world are treated with distrust and have to be read allegorically at best. Revius and the later Cats are examples of poetry of this new discourse. Secondly, the pagan world has ceased to be the primary source of inspiration. The new generation of scholars around Daniel Heinsius presents itself as no longer belonging to the same intellectual world as the pagan authors of the Roman world. However, knowledge of the classical world is not an element that disappears, instead it is being given a new place in the new discourse. Rather than being the entrance ticket to the scholarly world, it becomes an auxiliary study for better understanding the world of the Bible. This brings us straight to the element that enters this discourse: the world of the Bible.

Nonetheless, this chapter shows not only how the discourse changed, but also how it affected individual authors. Baker states that individual personal minds ultimately constitute the stage of discursive formation and change. This is illustrated particularly well by Cats, who as early on as his Proteus showed the competition of these two discourses and managed to resolve these tensions ‘through a politics of rehierarchization, recodification, or transformation of discourses’.

The elements of rehierarchization and transformation can be found when the Proteus is contrasted with his autobiography. In Proteus, the humanist discourse coexists, somewhat forcefully, with the Calvinist discourse. In

Cats’s autobiography, the topic of Eros has found a new place and is treated within the framework of Calvinist values. In the case of Heinsius, his knowledge of the classical world and especially classical Greek remained unaltered. However, the rehierarchization and transformation can be traced in the subjects he chooses to study and the context in which they are studied. The new Leiden humanist circle had a profoundly Calvinist profile, something that can be learned from the works of Ludovicus de Dieu discussed. The discourse of the first decade of the seventeenth century had transformed from one clearly oriented towards antiquity to one in which biblical phrases and expressions were required even in scholarly works.