CHAPTER SIX

HUGO GROTIUS IN PRAISE OF JACOBUS ARMINIUS: ARMINIAN READERS OF AN EPICEDIMUM IN THE DUTCH REPUBLIC AND ENGLAND

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When the Leiden Professor of Theology Jacobus Arminius died in August of 1609, Hugo Grotius wrote a Latin poem of 86 *scanzotes* (limping iambics) to commemorate him. Grotius was by no means the only writer to express his opinions about the controversial theologian. His poem was published in two pro-Arminian pamphlets of 1609 with Latin writings by various authors. Over 20 years later, Grotius's poem was translated into English. Grotius's ties to the man who gave his name to the movement of Arminianism in England were remembered in that era. The social and historical context in which the poem appeared in both the Dutch Republic and England are outlined below. This illustrates the points of view about matters of theology that the readers of Grotius's poem held. An analysis of the text of the poem will establish what point of view the poet put across to the readers. It will then be possible to determine how and to what extent this poem was used to advocate the Arminian case in the Dutch Republic and in England.

THE DUTCH REPUBLIC IN THE YEAR 1609

In April of 1607 an armistice was signed between the Spanish and the Dutch. After more than 35 years, all fighting was suspended. Most of the people then living in the Northern Provinces had never known peace in their lives. Tension ran high between opponents and proponents of peace with Spain: Johan van Oldenbarnevelt, the most important politician of the young Dutch Republic, who was leading the way to a truce, came to stand opposite to the military leader Maurits of Nassau who was a member of the war party. Difficult negotiations surrounding a lasting peace between the two countries eventually led to the compromise of a truce. This Twelve Years' Truce was signed on

4 April 1609. Grotius was one of the people who predicted the internal trouble that lay ahead for the Dutch Republic now that the binding factor of a common enemy had disappeared.¹ The Dutch Republic was a loose federation of provinces with their own, differing interests that they sought to address in the first place. It turned out to be difficult to deal with problems that affected the Republic as a whole.

The clashing opinions between the divided Protestants of the Dutch Republic on questions of doctrine came to the fore after the Truce had been signed. These disputes over complicated theological questions became a matter of such importance that they spilled over into the political arena. Over the course of the Truce years, the question of the relation between State and Church became especially troublesome. The power of the States General did not reach into the ecclesiastical organization of the classes. The Counter-Remonstrants were opposed to state power over the Church, while the Remonstrant ministers who were backed by Oldenbarnevelt and his party supported this. Before the religious differences are addressed, their ultimate consequences for society as a whole and Hugo Grotius in particular are outlined here. The problems were catastrophic for the unity and stability of the state. In 1618, at the request of the States General, Maurits of Nassau took control of the government and arrested the leaders of the State party. Oldenbarnevelt was executed for high treason and Grotius was sentenced to life imprisonment. The Remonstrant movement was condemned at the Synod that convened in Dordt in 1618–1619.

THE RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCES

At the beginning of the Revolt against Spain, from the 1570s, the Dutch Reformation had focussed on the difference between their own religion and the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church of their enemies. When the Reformation became more firmly established, attention was turned to the foundations of Reformed doctrine. Disagreement about these principles soon arose, when the first ministers that had graduated from the Faculty of Theology of Leiden University (established in 1575) started discussing their opinions. Election and reprobation were the main issues upon which they disagreed.

¹ See *Briefwisseling*, 1, 100, dated 21.IV.[1607], to N.N.

In 1603, Jacobus Arminius became the closest colleague of the strict Calvinist theologian Franciscus Gomarus at Leiden University. Arminius was a man of questionable orthodoxy on matters such as election, reprobation and the will of God and man. In his letters to Franciscus Junius and in the works written before 1604, Arminius had put the main structures of his religious thought down in writing.² His opinions on election and reprobation will be summarized here. Strict Calvinism taught that the reason for God's preordination is beyond human understanding, which is a hard point of view that demands considerable resignation and trust on the part of the believer. For Arminius, God was essentially just. He claimed that God in his justice incorporated his knowledge of sinful behaviour in his decision to condemn some people before their lives had started. Humans were attributed with the will to make it possible to reject God's grace by committing sins, but although man is created with free will, he remains totally dependent upon God's grace. Arminius reproached the Calvinists with robbing humans of all responsibility for their actions, since the ultimate result of absolute predestination made God into the author of sin. Since this could not be accorded with God's justice, it was the worst thinkable blasphemy for Arminius. His views on the controversial topics were separated from the frame of his religious thought and he was consequently misunderstood as a squanderer of the Protestant faith. The orthodox Calvinists held that Arminius allowed the behaviour and actions of people room in God's decision about their ultimate destiny.

The language of Arminius's writings was Latin. This assured easy dissemination of his ideas into an international community of readers of the upper circles. Generally, the Latin language provided writers with some freedom of expression, since ideas expressed in that language

² Between 1599 and 1602, Arminius wrote *Examen modestum libelli, quem D. Gulielmus Perkinsius apprime doctus theologus edidit ante aliquot annos de praedestinationis modo et ordine, itemque de amplitudine gratiae divinae* in reaction to a booklet by William Perkins about the same subjects—see Den Boer, *Duplex amor Dei*, p. 6. Arminius's work, however, was not printed until 1612. The theses (titled *De natura Dei*) presented at his graduation on 19 June 1603 complement the *Examen Perkinsiani*. They were printed in 1603 in Leiden. Judging by Grotius's unpublished poem for Arminius written in 1603, Grotius appears to have perused both Arminius's theses as well as his doctoral oration held at Leiden on 11 July 1603 about the priesthood of Christ. For the poem, see Grotius's *Dichtwerken* I 2A/B3, pp. 195–200. The existence of the poem in manuscript shows that Grotius had a sympathetic interest in Arminius from the age of 20.

were reserved for the privileged top layer of society which was considered wise enough to handle such information with care.³ The lower strata of the population were not supposed to enter the discussion about religious doctrine at any point. Arminius himself claimed that even the Leiden students were unable to judge the points of the controversy, because they did not have enough intellectual baggage to do so. The Remonstrants would always maintain that churchgoers were incapable of understanding the finer points of religious doctrine upon which they disagreed with the Counter-Remonstrants and that these questions should not be spoken about in sermons, since this would only bring about problems.⁴ But tempers flared since there were matters at stake that touched upon the core of religion and the Calvinist clergy was unable to refrain from publicly denouncing Arminius in order to seek support for their own point of view. One of Arminius's fiercest public opponents was the clergyman Petrus Plancius (†1622).⁵ As early as the 1590s Plancius had railed against Arminius from his Amsterdam pulpit.⁶ The government of Amsterdam had then interfered in the matter in favour of Arminius. But Plancius would not stop vilifying Arminius and during a sermon held in 1604, Plancius preached against Arminius so violently that he lost his self-control.⁷ Churchgoers and the Amsterdam magistrate were shocked by this unseemly behaviour.

In February of 1604 Arminius had, according to the university schedule, presided over disputations on the subject of predestination. Gomarus had reacted by organizing extra disputations on the same subject in October 1604.⁸ Disputations at the Leiden University were attended by students and professors and despite the fact that they too were a Latin affair, they caused further polarization in society at large. The Calvinists did not want the students of Theology, the future ministers of the church who were in charge of the spiritual welfare

³ See Helander, *Neo-Latin Literature in Sweden in the Period 1620–1720*, p. 6.

⁴ See Van Deursen, *Bavianen en Slijkgeuzen*, pp. 378–79.

⁵ See Keuning, *Petrus Plancius*. Plancius had no theological publications to his name. Any influence he had on people's opinions in the field was a result of the spoken word.

⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 21–22.

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 29.

⁸ Arminius's written reaction to these disputations, entitled *Examen Thesium Gomari de Praedestinatione*, was, according to Den Boer, *Duplex amor Dei*, p. 7, published in 1613, but I was only able to locate an edition from 1645.

of the people, to be exposed to Arminius's ideas. This was bound to happen through his lectures at the university, but also in the disputations that were held there under his chairmanship. After all, when students became ministers it was their task to treat selected passages of the Scripture at church services, thus taking the people who attended church on a regular basis through large parts of the Bible.⁹ The interpretation of these passages by the ministers influenced the religious stance of their congregation.

Arminius's reputation was tarnished by the reactions to his publications and since 1606, a list of the presumed heresies of Arminius circulated in manuscript.¹⁰ The role of the correspondence between scholars and clergymen must not be underestimated in this process of tearing down a person's name. Even confidential letters often reached far beyond the addressee. One example related to the present controversy occurred in 1607 when Sibrandus Lubbertus sent letters to international acquaintances about the *Conventus praeparatorius*, which was a meeting of the clergy for a national synod to be held about the difference of opinion.¹¹ At this meeting, Calvinists and those who held a different view were allowed to profess their opinions and as a consequence made matters worse. Lubbertus's report of the meeting informed theologians abroad. Arminius and his friend Johannes Wtenbogaert were kept very busy defending their cause within the Republic and outside.¹² The initial armistice with Spain had only been signed a month before the meeting (namely in April of 1607), and already the absence of hostilities left room for intense national discussion about issues of religion.

In the first months of the year 1608, the above-mentioned Plancius turned to the Amsterdam government to pronounce his objections to Arminius's point of view yet again. On this occasion, his brother in arms even contradicted some of Plancius's most critical statements.¹³ As a result of Arminius's and Wtenbogaert's complaint to the States of Holland about allegations of unorthodoxy and blasphemy such as Plancius had made, this institution organized a meeting between

⁹ See Van Deursen, *Bavianen en Slijkgeuzen*, p. 46.

¹⁰ See den Boer, *Duplex amor Dei*, p. 10.

¹¹ See Van der Woude, *Sibrandus Lubbertus*, p. 161.

¹² Around that time, Arminius's reply to the list of his 'heresies' probably circulated in manuscript as well (see Den Boer, *Duplex amor Dei*, p. 10).

¹³ *Ibidem*, pp. 31–32.

Gomarus and Arminius in front of the High Council on 30/31 May 1608. Grotius, then judge-advocate ('advocaat-fiscaal') at the Supreme Court, attended this meeting, where his friend Arminius and his opponent Gomarus spoke.¹⁴ It was thought that this chance for both parties to vent their opinions in front of a public yet restricted audience would make the controversy more manageable by the government. The speeches that the two theologians made at the meeting were never published. The outcome was not satisfactory, however, and the rowing continued until August of 1609,¹⁵ when Arminius was too sick to comply with the summons that the States had issued to him and Gomarus. He died in Leiden on 19 October 1609 at the age of 49. Despite the death of one of the parties involved in the controversy, it had escalated too far for effective control by the government.

It must be noted that Franciscus Gomarus could at this moment already be called a representative of a group of Dutch Calvinists, whereas Arminius was not backed by a collective that held the same opinions. This is not to say that nobody agreed with Arminius or that he was completely unique in his deviation from the strict Calvinist religious doctrine. But when Grotius wrote his poem, there was no question of an organized religious movement based on Arminius's ideas. It must be concluded that Grotius wrote his poem out of sympathy for Arminius and his ideas.

On 14 January 1610, a remonstrance was addressed to the States of Holland by those who agreed with Arminius. Johannes Wtenbogaert had used Arminius's writings to draw up this document. The remonstrance contained a plea for tolerance for the teachings of Arminius, which were summarized in five points. Among the 43 signatures are

¹⁴ He reported elaborately about the meeting in a letter, *Briefwisseling* I, 137, pp. 120–22; dated [beginning of June] 1608, N. van Reigersberch.

¹⁵ In October of 1608, Arminius defended himself yet again before the States of Holland. The speech was published against the ban of the States in 1610: *Verclaringhe Iacobi Arminii saliger ghedachten: in zijn leven professor theologiae binnen Leyden: aengaende zijn ghevoelen, so van de predestinatie, als van eenige andere poincten der christelicker religie; daerinne men hem verdacht heeft ghemaect: eerst mondelingh ghedaen in de volle vergaderinghe vande H.H. Staten van Hollant ende Westvrieslandt, opden 30. octobris 1608. ende daer nae schriftelick aen hare Mo. E. overgelevert* (Leiden, Th. Basson, 1610). Gomarus had been kept in the dark about this speech made by Arminius in October and he reacted by making his own speech in front of the States in December of 1608: *Francisci Gomari Waerschouwinghe, over de vermaninghe aen R. Donteclock* (Leiden, Jan Jansz. Orlers, 1609). This oration was also published against the States' ban in the year 1609 (see Rabbie, *Ordinum Hollandiae ac Westfrisiae pietas* (1613), p. 6).

famous names such as Simon Episcopius, Caspar Barlaeus and Petrus Bertius. Of these men, Episcopius, one of Arminius' students, became the theologian of the Dutch Remonstrant movement.¹⁶ Arminius was made into the champion of a movement that derived its name from him, but that did not continue to base their ideas entirely on his writings. The Calvinists were also known as Gomarists after their main representative. With reference to the documents in which they laid down their views, the parties were called the Remonstrants and the Counter-Remonstrants. Attempts first made by the government in 1610 to repress publications about the controversy written by the two parties were not effective.¹⁷

GROTIUS'S POEM

Now that the context has been outlined, we will turn to Grotius's funeral poem. First its content will be summarized, then its remarkable form will be discussed. Verses 1 to 18 contain praise for Arminius who is in Heaven. Whether he was wrong or right in his views of the Dutch Reformed religion, Arminius's conscience is clear. Arminius is pictured as looking down on earth, where the Christians are fighting amongst each other (verses 19–45). Theologians and people fight, while truth flees (verses 19–27). Disapproval of the discord among Christians is illustrated by a comparison to the Tower of Babel (verses 38–41). Other religions profit from the disharmony (verses 42–45). Images of the ideal Christian religion and the ideal believer are sketched in verses 46–69. An ideal, uncomplicated religion is described first. Religion should not be about thoroughly understanding doctrine, nor about the question of whether the outcome of things is set at the beginning and in what way God might create or reject evil. God directs all things with his will. In verses 57 to 69 the good Christian is described. The believer should not occupy himself by gathering riches and respect on this earth, but he should strive to get to know God and he should read the Bible. His will is curbed by God's grace. He must be tolerant towards those who hold a different opinion, be modest and know when to speak about what he knows and when to be silent in order

¹⁶ As a representative of the Remonstrants in Dordt, Episcopius was exiled. He was one of the founders of the Remonstrant Brotherhood in Antwerp in 1620.

¹⁷ See Weekhout, *Boekencensuur in de Noordelijke Nederlanden*, p. 43.

to keep peace. All his life, Arminius proclaimed these beliefs (verses 70–77). The poem is closed by Arminius's prayer to God: Christians must breathe as one (verses 78–86).

As concerns the metre of the funeral poem, Grotius wrote it in choliambics or sczontes, an iambic metre in which each verse is closed by a reversed or limping iambe. In Antiquity and early modern times, this metre was mostly used for slanderous poems.¹⁸ It is difficult to believe that Grotius meant to poke fun at or ridicule the death of Arminius. Later on in his life, Grotius used this metre to celebrate his escape from prison in two poems.¹⁹ As is the case with the funeral poem for Arminius, the poet does not seem to ridicule the subject of these two poems either: he uses the choliambic metre in poems that do not satirize or slander the subject.

Grammatically speaking, the poem can be divided roughly into ten parts (mostly corresponding to sentences).²⁰ As concerns content, four parts can be discerned: an introduction of the main character Arminius (verses 1–18), a sketch of the troublesome situation in which the Christians find themselves (19–45), a description of what the Christian religion should be like (46–69) and in conclusion the sincere efforts of Arminius to make religion better, for which he continues to pray from Heaven. The first and the last of these four parts are about Arminius, while in the two middle parts he is not mentioned at all. This middle part, verses 19 to 69, consists of 27 verses that are mainly negative in content, followed by 24 verses that are mostly positive in content. The negative part is introduced by verse 18 in which Arminius is described in his blissful position in Heaven, looking down on mankind, who is not doing well at all. The passage is so long that readers will have trouble retaining the person of Arminius in their minds, since the description is not connected to him in any way. The passage culminates in a sketch of the weak position of the whole of the Christian religion as opposed to Islam and Judaism (verses 42–45). Against this spectre the opposite picture of an ideal Christian religion is painted from verse 46, starting with the signal word 'felix' that is repeated in verse 58 where

¹⁸ See J.G. Vossius, *Poeticarum Institutionum Libri Tres* (Amsterdam, 1647), p. 95, where the use of choliambics is described to be used 'in conviviando'.

¹⁹ See Van Oosterhout, *Hugo Grotius' Occasional Poetry (1609–1645)*, pp. 156–60 and 369–73.

²⁰ Early modern punctuation is notoriously difficult to understand for us, so a different division is well possible. The proposed division is: ll. 1–6, 7–17, 18–27, 28–37 (which passage comprises 6 questions), 38–41, 42–45, 46–56, 57–69, 70–77, 78–86.

the description of the ideal Christian believer starts. It is only in verse 70 that this positive image is connected to Arminius, who is after all the principle character of the poem. The connection is made by the words 'haec monebas' in verses 70 and 72). 'Haec' roughly refers to the above, but it is not clear whether the passage about the disharmonious Christians should be included.

Many adjectives are used in the poem to reinforce the morally good and bad images in the poem. A few examples suffice to demonstrate this. The age is dark indeed: see verse 4 'saeculo tenebroso' and again in verse 75 which as a whole belongs to 'saeculi' in verse 74: 'fastidiosi, pertinacis, ingrati'. Of course in the poem Arminius is surrounded by positive adjectives: he is 'sublime pectus' (verse 2) and he inhabits 'the splendid fields of blessed light' (verse 6). In the poem, Arminius is pictured as a sympathetic man who strove for a sympathetic ideal in an indefatigable manner. Removal of the tens of adjectives from the poem leaves the reader with a much weaker and less persuasive piece of writing.

The attraction of the poem for the reader of the year 1609 lies in the reduction of the importance of the complicated dogmatical issues in favour of a minimum of practical precepts. In verses 46–69, a small list of points is supplied which should not be questioned by believers. Grotius, who never received a formal theological education, would continue down the same road: he was averse to religious dogmatics and in favour of a small number of practical indications on how to live one's life. The actions of man stood above doctrinal finery. In order to be a good Christian it was unnecessary to have a precise understanding of the subjects of the controversy between Arminius and Gomarus. But these men were professionally occupied with questions of doctrine. Theologians should, according to Grotius, know the proper time and place to speak about these issues (see v. 69). In other words, they should be careful about spreading information and opinions that may cause problems among churchgoers. This elitist point of view shows that Grotius ascribed great influence to spoken and written words on the part of listeners and readers.²¹

Grotius's epicedium in honour of Arminius was the poet's first public statement on Christian theology.²² He was to repeat this vision of

²¹ See Van Deursen, *Bavianen en Slijkgeuzen*, p. 278.

²² See Ter Meulen-Diermanse, *Bibliographie Grotius*, nos. 919–1209.

peace among Christians later on in his life. In his view peace was necessary to arrive at the truth; bickering about doctrine only diverted Christians from more important matters, such as reading the Bible. Grotius clearly shows his sympathy for Arminius in the poem and he was automatically classified with the Remonstrants. In the years that followed, he became Oldenbarnevelt's right-hand man and a leading figure of the State party that protected the Arminians by enforcing toleration of their views. Grotius was clearly confident about this politico-religious course, since in 1616, when tension between the State party and the Counter-Remonstrants was mounting daily, he still saw fit to include the epicedium on the death of Arminius in his collected poetry, the *Poemata Collecta* (Leiden, 1617). Verses 7 to 9, however, are mitigated in this edition. It is highly probable that these verses refer to the renounced Roman Catholic religion that is here classified as an oppressing slavery of a godless cult, but the verses may also be understood as being about Arminius's opponents. The mitigation of the passage points to the second possibility, because by that time Grotius had become more careful about antagonizing people unnecessarily. Grotius had grown wiser over the years, especially since his tract on the supremacy of the government in church affairs, the *Ordinum Pietas* of 1613, had received a negative response.²³ One of the people Grotius had involved in the publication was Petrus Bertius, whom we shall meet in the next paragraph. The after-effects of this publication were very severe. From that point on, Grotius became meticulous about what he published and with whom he collaborated.

A PAMPHLET BY PETRUS BERTIUS

Grotius's poem is meant to incite or strengthen sympathy for Arminius, and this intention is reinforced by the publication in which it was included. At the funeral on 22 October 1609 in Leiden, Arminius's friend Petrus Bertius held the funerary oration. He had been instructed by the States not to speak of the troubles in which the dead man had been involved. The oration was published along with several epicedia in *Petri Bertii Oratio In obitum Reverendi et Clarissimi viri D. Iacobi Arminii*. Grotius's poem was the first to follow Bertius's description

²³ For this publication, his collaborators and the aftermath, see Nellen, *Hugo Grotius*, pp. 148–63.

of Arminius's life and death. The most notable poet among the other authors in the pamphlet is Simon Episcopius, whose poem called *Threnus*, which is a song of mourning, runs to over seven pages.²⁴ While nowhere did the authors of the pamphlet openly name Arminius's opponents, they nonetheless managed to cast these people in a poor light, because they resorted to praise of and emphasis on the superiority and good intentions of Arminius. The accumulation of texts that are unanimous in their views causes the message to be drummed into the minds of the readers by repetition.

The text of Grotius's poem in the pamphlet contained five printing errors (see app. crit. to the poem). In a letter to Grotius of 21 December 1609, Bertius blamed the copier or typesetter for these mistakes.²⁵ The most annoying error occurs ten lines before the end of the poem, where Bertius's text reads 'solus' ('alone') instead of 'totus' ('totally'): '[...] regna solus arderes.' ('[...] you alone desired ardently the realm.')

The meaning of the verse has changed in Bertius's version, making Arminius the only one who truly longed for Heaven. Bertius wrote to Grotius that he was himself accused of attributing the evil intention to the poet Grotius of wishing to have all others damned and ascribing the kingdom of the heavens to Arminius alone, thus leaving other theologians (read: those who did not agree with him) out. Bertius apologized profusely for this 'mistake'. Grotius's reply to Bertius's letter is no longer extant, but he must have been annoyed by Bertius's careless editing of the text of his poem.

The poem came to the attention of Franciscus Gomarus. His grievance is passed on to Grotius by way of a letter written by a friend on the same day as Bertius wrote to Grotius (21 December 1609).²⁶ It was not just the misprint that caused Gomarus's irritation; he clearly felt that Arminius's opponents (including Gomarus himself) had been made into the aggressors, because Arminius is depicted as the model of innocence and good intentions. Grotius wrote a letter to Gomarus explaining his motives for writing the funeral poem.²⁷ He wrote that he had always admired Arminius's striving for peace in the church. Grotius continued the letter by claiming that he had no exact knowledge

²⁴ The other poets are Justus van Swanenburg, Jacobus Lettingius and two poems called *Ad eundem Scizontes* and *Epigramma in morbus eiusdem* by V.R.

²⁵ See *Briefwisseling*, 1, 180, p. 157; dated 21.XII.1609.

²⁶ See *Briefwisseling*, 1, 179, pp. 156–57; from Janus Rutgersius.

²⁷ See *Briefwisseling*, 1, 181, p. 158; dated [24.XII.] 1609.

of the theological disputes. It is difficult to believe that Grotius is telling the truth here, for he was a man of the sharpest intelligence. It is rather more plausible that he is expressing his opinion on how questions of religious doctrine that cause tumult among theologians must be dealt with. Grotius always maintained that the basic principles of religion must be comprehensible to all believers.

In the letter to Gomarus, Grotius further mentions that the teachings of Arminius's predecessor Junius made a profound impression on him. Junius had been an advocate for tolerance of diverse opinions in the church as well as Arminius. Grotius sums it up to Gomarus as the only solution: 'Restat ut feramus alter alterum' ('It remains for us to tolerate each other'). In fact this means that it is up to Arminius's opponents to put an end to the troubles by tolerating Arminius's ideas. As we have seen, the enforcement of the tolerance of Arminians within the church by Oldenbarnevelt and his right hand man Grotius would fail in the long run.

Altogether Bertius's pamphlet contained 60 pages in defence of Arminius which Gomarus simply could not leave uncontradicted. Besides his comments upon Grotius's contribution to the pamphlet, Gomarus's objections to Bertius's oration were printed.²⁸ Bertius did not leave this pamphlet unanswered either.²⁹

A PAMPHLET BY DOMINICUS BAUDIUS

The version of Grotius's poem presented in the appendix to this chapter is the authorized text that is found in a pamphlet edited by the Leiden Professor of Rhetoric Dominicus Baudius: *Epicedium dictum honori Jacobi Arminii*. It contains the correct edition of Grotius's epicedium (funeral elegy) and it was published before the end of 1609.³⁰ The pamphlet further consists of Baudius's own lengthy poem on the death of Arminius. Baudius's epicedium contains elements similar to Grotius's poem; there is a warning not to ask too many questions

²⁸ Franciscus Gomarus, *Proeve van M.P. Bertii Aenspraeck* (Leiden: Jan Jansz Orlers, 1610).

²⁹ Petrus Bertius, *Aen-spraeck, aen D. Fr. Gomarum op zijne bedenckinghe over de lijck-oratie ghedaen na de begraefenisse van D. Iacobus Arminius* (Leiden: Jan Paets, 1610).

³⁰ Dominicus Baudius, *Epicedium dictum honori Jacobi Arminii* (Leiden: Andreas Cloucquius, 1609).

about doctrine, or peace will be disturbed and schism will be the ultimate consequence. The pamphlet is dedicated to the States General. The dedication to this important governing body may be an attempt to draw public attention and lend weight to his publication and the opinions expressed in it. In the letter of dedication, Baudius wrote that Arminius had failed to listen to his advice and that now only the authority of the State could put a stop to the religious troubles.

The fact that Baudius's involvement in the troubles was a matter of debate among scholars is something that becomes clear in a letter written by the humanist Ubbo Emmius, who encourages a friend to read Baudius's pamphlet: 'Legistine Epicedion eius in mortem Arminii, cum praeafatione dedicatoria ad Illustres Ordines? Lege, lege et ride aut ingemisce.'³¹ ('Did you read his epicedium on the death of Arminius, with a preface that is dedicated to the Illustre States? You should read it and laugh or sigh.'). According to Emmius, Baudius's efforts cause derision or annoyance. In a letter to Johannes Wtenbogaert, Baudius himself claims that his poem is misinterpreted as a poem that is critical of Arminius.³² In their two poems Grotius and Baudius voiced the same concern about undue curiosity to penetrate the dogmas, and in both poems the disagreement in the church is condemned. Grotius's poem, and therefore his opinion on the subject, was taken more seriously than that of Baudius. These contrasting reactions to the same ideas have to do with the general image of the two writers: Grotius was creating a serious reputation for himself as a scholar and a politician, while Baudius was known to be a bon vivant given to debauchery.³³ This shows that publications containing comparable points of view could nonetheless be received very differently due to established opinions about the authors.

Contrary to Bertius's pamphlet, Grotius's name is announced on the title page of Baudius's pamphlet: *Accedunt Grotii V.C. Epicedia in eundem* ('In addition there are funeral elegies on the same [Arminius] by the most famous Grotius'). Baudius wrote a short preface that precedes Grotius's epicedium in which he is critical about Bertius's role as the editor of Grotius's poem. Baudius states that Grotius had supplied

³¹ See Brugmans, *Briefwechsel des Ubbo Emmius*, 2, 341 p. 96, dated 7.II.1610, to J. Witten.

³² See Grootens, *Dominicus Baudius*, pp. 195–96.

³³ *Ibidem*, p. 227. Baudius was an alcoholic; he died in August of 1613 when he was unable to recover from another drinking bout (*ibidem*, pp. 223–24).

him with the authorized text of the poem for his pamphlet. Baudius further writes:

because without the permission of the people the funeral orator [i.e. Bertius], while claiming sovereignty over the Copy for himself, changed certain things in a fraudulent and incompetent manner, by very audacious conduct, and by not imitating capable people. Other mistakes can be ascribed to the carelessness of the typesetters, but this must not be excused by way of any indirect manner of speaking, that the word “solus” is substituted by “totus” in the tenth last verse of the scazon: a thought that brings about great damage and has a lot of striking depreciation of many pious men. Rightly and as it should be plain minds must act, if they do not know how to measure with their own standard and rhythm and they should not appropriate license to change anything in these works, the virtues of which they have barely learned to understand with their intellect and admiration.³⁴

The purport of the preface is that if an editor (read: Bertius) does not understand a poem, he should not make changes to it. Baudius does not consider all of Bertius’s typesetting errors to be mistakes. The instance where ‘totus’ is replaced by ‘solus’ is regarded as inadmissible.

After Baudius’s pamphlet had come off the printing press, such cutting accusations at the address of Bertius were considered undesirable and a piece of paper that contained the enlarged title of Grotius’s poem was printed to cover the preface. It is not known on whose order this happened: perhaps Baudius regretted his own rash actions or Grotius wanted Baudius’s critical preface to be omitted. In some copies of the pamphlet this piece of paper is glued across the preface, but sometimes it is bound into the booklet separately, so that all is in the open for the reader to peruse. This indicates the interest that was taken in the matter.

³⁴ From *Briefwisseling*, 1, p. 156, n. 4. The full text runs: ‘Benevolo Lectori. Quod hanc eximiam purpuram curavi intexendam panno meo, feci auctore non nolente, invitatus elegantia scripti, et gravitate sententiarum, in quibus elucet iudicii generosa libertas, et animus omni affectu maior aut intactus. Heic ipsum rarae mentis et laudis monumentum exhibemus ut est a patre natum: quia laudator funebris sine populi suffragio usurpans sibi Dictatorum maiestatem quaedam fraudulenter et absurde interpolavit, audaci sane exemplo, nec probis hominibus aemulando. Caetera possunt condonari typographorum incuriae, sed illud nullo schemate excusari debet, quod vox solus substituta sit pro totus in versu scazontis qui decimus est a fine: magna cum sensus iactura, nec non cum insigni multorum piorum deprecatione. Recte et ordine facerent vulgares animae, si suo pede ac modulo metiri nossent, nec sibi licentiam arrogarent aliquid immutandi in iis operibus, quorum virtutes vix intellectu et admiratione consequi didicerunt.’

The number of copies of these pamphlets is unknown, but we can assume that a maximum of 1000 copies per edition were made.³⁵ Moreover, pamphlets were passed along to other readers by the initial buyer which means the reading audience will have consisted of several thousands of people. The language of the pamphlet and of Grotius's poem is Latin, which immediately limits the public that was able to read it to the top layer of society in the Republic and to readers of Latin outside the country, for Latin pamphlets were export products. Printing houses sold or exchanged Latin publications with foreign bookshops, visitors to the Republic bought pamphlets and took them abroad and Dutch buyers sent pamphlets abroad to friends.³⁶ The readers of these pamphlets were scholars, men of government and ministers of the church who had also visited the Latin school. They will have been mostly male (women were not encouraged to learn Latin), and they will have been influential people. From the time of Arminius's appointment in Leiden, the number of pamphlets with politico-religious content grew, both in Latin and in the vernacular. Both pamphlets escaped the 1610 prohibition by the States of Holland on publications about the position of the government in ecclesiastical matters.³⁷

Grotius's epicedium appeared in the first year of the Truce between the Dutch Republic and Spain, at a time when the problems between the Leiden theologians quickly became a matter of public debate. Grotius was then an authoritative poet and a rising political star, whose opinions were considered well worth knowing. The text encourages the reader to sympathize with the theological ideas expressed in the poem.

³⁵ It is estimated that about 1,000 copies per publication were printed in the 16th century (see Maczkiewitz, *Der niederländische Aufstand gegen Spanien*, p. 179). One of the reasons underlying this estimation is that the lead type was worn badly after one thousand sheets of paper had been printed. The only information on print numbers of Grotius's publications is that 500 copies of his pamphlet *De Antichristo* were initially printed in 1640 (see Nellen, *Hugo Grotius*, p. 497). The printer had underestimated the interest in this controversial tract and a reprint was made quickly.

³⁶ Both pamphlets that have been discussed can today be found in many Western European university libraries. Bertius had his *Oratio in obitum Jacobi Arminii* printed by Jan Jacobszoon Paets, the university printer of Leiden, who operated the printing house from 1603 to 1619. Baudius had his *Epicedium dictum honori Jacobi Arminii* printed with Andries Clouck in Leiden, who operated his firm from 1602 to 1630. Bertius's pamphlet is in Amsterdam, The Hague, Utrecht, Leiden and Deventer, and abroad in libraries in Germany, England and Scotland, France and Italy. Baudius's pamphlet is in Amsterdam, The Hague and Leiden, and abroad in Germany, England, France and Denmark.

³⁷ See Weekhout, *Boekencensuur in de Noordelijke Nederlanden*, p. 43.

The poem rejects the fighting between theologians without explicitly mentioning Arminius's opponents. These facts made the poem interesting reading material for upper-class readers of Latin, who could easily obtain the poem, since it was included in two cheap pamphlets. Since the content of these pamphlets was pro-Arminian, readers ranged Grotius on the side of the adherents of Arminius. Grotius must have realised the effect the poem would have on his reputation and he consciously connected his name to Arminius and his views.

When the first edition of Grotius's poem was published by Petrus Bertius in a pamphlet that also contained his funeral oration for Arminius, its influence on the opinion of readers about the theological debate was a source of discomfort for Arminius's most vociferous opponent, Franciscus Gomarus. He feared the persuasive power of the text to agree with Arminius and to turn against his opponents. Since the poem as a whole does not point to specific persons or groups as the guilty party, Gomarus had to pour his objections into a single word near the end of the text which he interpreted as an attack. This word was declared an error by Grotius and the corrected text was quickly printed again by Dominicus Baudius. But while Baudius publicly strove to save Grotius's reputation among readers in a preface to Grotius's poem, his cutting words at the address of Bertius were considered undesirable by unknown others who were involved in the publication of Baudius's pamphlet. Somebody definitely did not want readers to connect Grotius's name with the negative sides of public debate surrounding the theological problems. The piece of paper that was supposed to be glued over Baudius's preface is not found in that place in all of the remaining pamphlets. Readers obviously wanted to learn the ins and outs of the meaning and intention of Grotius's poem in order to establish whose side the poet was on.

The matter of the poem was handled in private letters between Gomarus and Grotius. But Gomarus had his reactions to Bertius's funeral oration printed, this pamphlet challenging Bertius to another response in print. Over the course of the Truce years, the States of Holland attempted to prohibit such publications on the subject of theology that fed the ongoing difference of opinion between the Remonstrants and the Counter-Remonstrants. These publications obviously caused feelings to run much more highly than Grotius's poem, which did not fall within the scope of this censorship. The text itself does not encourage hostile feelings between the two parties. The poem was

reprinted among the hundreds of poems of Grotius's 1617 *Poemata Collecta*. Several reasons can be put forward for reprinting the epicidium despite the fact that it had publicly endangered Grotius's reputation six years before. In the *Poemata Collecta* the poem was taken from the pro-Arminian context of Bertius's and Baudius's pamphlets and it could thus be more easily appreciated for its literary value. It was, after all, a well written poem, of which the Latin had even been praised by Gomarus. When the collection of poetry was edited, the ecclesiastical politics of Oldenbarnevelt and his right-hand man Grotius were heavily criticized by the Counter-Remonstrants. Grotius must still have been convinced of the correctness of the political course concerning the trouble between the Remonstrants and the Counter-Remonstrants. He must have felt that his funeral poem for Arminius would not cause further problems, whilst serving to enhance his own reputation as a poet. The *Poemata Collecta* was read by fewer people and in this context the poem will not have been played a role in public debate about the religious problems.

GROTIUS AND ENGLAND

Grotius's funeral poem for Arminius was translated into English by a poet called William Cartwright (1611–1643), who was a dramatist and a preacher. This translation was first printed in 1651, but it was probably a product of the 1630s, when King Charles I and his closest advisor William Laud, the Archbishop of Canterbury, pursued a moderate Arminian course in English church politics. Since the English church model appealed to Grotius, he was an ardent admirer of Laud, whom he praised for his respect for the traditions of the early Christian Church, his repudiation of Roman abuses and his rejection of the Calvinist views on predestination. In the early 1630s Grotius attempted to set foot ashore in England, but although Laud said much in his praise, Grotius was unwelcome in this country.³⁸ In 1635 Grotius became ambassador to Sweden in Paris. He did not fare well in French politics and focussed his attention on other projects. He devoted progressively more time and effort to his irenicist ideals of a united Protestant Church. England was central to Grotius's programme of

³⁸ See Trevor Roper, *From Counter-Reformation to Glorious Revolution*, pp. 63–65.

religious reunion and he hoped to become the Swedish ambassador in that country. Grotius was optimistic about the negotiations to achieve a political alliance between England and France, in which Sweden and the Dutch Republic would also be able to participate. Were a pact to be signed, the unification of the Protestant Church would surely lie ahead. Grotius was also hopeful about the efforts of the Scottish clergyman and intellectual John Dury to prepare the way for a unification of the Swedish, German and English Churches.³⁹ But Grotius's contact with Dury turned sour,⁴⁰ and France and the Dutch Republic would never sign a treaty with England, since Laud's church politics were too fanatical to their tastes. Grotius was further disappointed when he received the news of the reservations that the Archbishop harboured concerning his offer of the programme of Christian reunion to the English rulers. Laud avoided direct correspondence with Grotius. An English destination became undesirable for Grotius himself when in the following year Arminianism fell in that country and Laud was locked up in the Tower of London.

Although Archbishop Laud discouraged Grotius from coming to England, there was sufficient interest in the poet Grotius for three printed publications of poetry from his early years to appear in England between 1637 and 1640. Over 20 pages of his epigrams were published in an anthology of Latin epigrams collected by the English priest Abraham Wright (*Delitiae delitiarum* or *Ultimate Entertainment*, Oxford, 1637).⁴¹ This collection was dedicated to William Haywood, Laud's chaplain and, from 1637 onwards, chaplain to King Charles I. In Wright's dedication, there is a reference to Grotius's funeral poem for Arminius, a poem which is not included in the anthology of Latin epigrams. The reference reads: 'Here you can read the investigator of lofty poetry, Grotius' ('Hic altae poeseos scrutatorem legas Grotium').⁴² Grotius is called 'altae poeseos scrutatorem' or 'the investigator of lofty poetry', which refers to the opening line of the epicedium on Arminius who is there called 'the investigator of lofty truth' ('altae veritatis scru-

³⁹ See Nellen, *Hugo Grotius*, p. 453.

⁴⁰ See Trevor Roper, *From Counter-Reformation to Glorious Revolution*, p. 69.

⁴¹ Abraham Wright (1611–1690) studied in Oxford, where he was well received for his eloquence. He was chosen to address Charles I in a welcoming speech in 1636 when Laud received the king. He was ordained into the priesthood, but was forced to relinquish his position. See Evans, *William Cartwright: Plays and poems*, and Goffin, *The Life and Poems of William Cartwright*.

⁴² See *Delitiae*, p. †3ij^r.

tator'). By making this reference, Wright presumes that sympathizers of Arminianism in English ecclesiastical circles (including Haywood), who were the intended readers of his publication, knew Grotius's epicedium for Arminius.

In 1638, Grotius's *Poemata Collecta* of 1617 were reprinted in London. Like Wright's collection of epigrams, this was an unauthorized edition (containing many misprints and pagination errors) with the addition of the biblical dramas *Christus Patiens* (written in 1608) and *Sophompaneas* (1635). There must have been considerable interest in Grotius's poetry in England at that time, or the printers would not have ventured to reprint the volume of 1617. Grotius heard of this volume in July 1639, but he was no longer interested in his *Juvenilia Carmina*.⁴³ The English editor was William Bray (†1644), another one of Laud's chaplains and a canon at Canterbury from 1638.⁴⁴ In this edition, Grotius's funeral poem for Arminius was released again into high English church circles. The third printed publication of Grotius's poetry appeared in 1640. It was an English translation of one of the plays that had been added to the London edition of the *Poemata Collecta*, the *Christus Patiens*.⁴⁵ The translated play was printed in 1639, titled *Christ's passion. A tragedy; with annotations* (London, 1640).⁴⁶ The translator, George Sandys (†1644), dedicated the play to King Charles I,⁴⁷ and an English poem of praise for Grotius and Sandys was added to the translation. The elogium was written by Lucius Cary, the second Viscount of Falkland (†1643), a politician and army man who supported the Arminians.⁴⁸

⁴³ See *Briefwisseling*, 10, 4219 p. 478, dated 23.VII.1639, to Willem de Groot.

⁴⁴ See Eyffinger, *Inventory of the Poetry of Hugo Grotius*, p. XXXIX. Bray was one of Laud's censors who was responsible for licensing books (see McCullough, 'Making Dead Man Speak', p. 407).

⁴⁵ The English translation of *Christus Patiens* was the only edition of his work that came out in England in the years 1637 to 1639 that was to Grotius's liking, for he thought it was well translated and the notes met with his approval as well (see *Briefwisseling*, 10, 4405 p. 771, dated 26.XI.1639, to W. de Groot). This judgement was shared by the readers, for the translation was printed several times (see Ter Meulen-Diermanse, *Bibliographie Grotius*, nos. 43–48).

⁴⁶ Full text of the play in the 1687 edition: <<http://eebo.chadwyck.com>>.

⁴⁷ Sandys dedicated all his works to King Charles I, such as narratives of his travels and other translations.

⁴⁸ As a member of the Parliament, he opposed the Grand Remonstrance of 1641, a document that reflected the mistrust of the English Parliament towards Charles I and accused Laud of misleading the King.

William Cartwright translated Grotius's poem into English for Arminius.⁴⁹ This translation must be seen in the light of the interest in the figurehead of Arminianism and as such the poetry had iconic value. Whereas the original version of the poem could only be read by those who knew Latin, translation made the poem available to a much larger audience who could read the poem for themselves and to others. The playwright and clergyman Cartwright was an ardent royalist, a wholehearted Laudian and a great admirer of Arminius, which is apparent from his writings.⁵⁰ Cartwright's poems enjoyed wide manuscript circulation, for the editor of the 1651 edition had trouble collecting them all.⁵¹ The number of readers of the manuscript version of the translated poem can only be estimated. The translation was first printed in the 1651 edition *Comedies, tragi-comedies, with other poems, by Mr William Cartwright* (London). The unknown editor claims that his edition contains only *juvenilia*, and that scarcely any of these poems were written after Cartwright turned 25, so after 1636.⁵² In view of this assertion, the translation of Grotius's poem probably dates from the early 1630s.⁵³

English readers of both the Latin and the English versions of Grotius's poem were able to identify with the difficult situation in which Arminius found himself as a result of his point of view in matters of theology. Of course, readers also knew what eventually happened to Grotius: he was exiled for serving the pro-Arminian party that was defeated. The combination of the poem and the fate of the poet were a powerful instrument in strengthening the opinion of readers in favour of the Arminian ecclesiastical politics of Laud. The poet must have been frustrated about the admiration for his Arminian past, while he harboured such great plans for a Christian reunion.

Unfortunately, there is no information about the reception of Grotius's poetry in England in that period. It therefore cannot be ascertained how many people read the translation of Grotius's epicedium

⁴⁹ See Evans, *William Cartwright: Plays and poems*, pp. 497–99 and Goffin, *The Life and Poems of William Cartwright*, pp. 70–72.

⁵⁰ See Tyacke, *Aspects of English Protestantism*, p. 235. See also Goffin, *The Life and Poems of William Cartwright*, p. xix. According to Goffin, Cartwright's death was mourned by the King personally (p. xxvii).

⁵¹ *Ibidem*, p. [5].

⁵² *Ibidem*, p. [10].

⁵³ See also Evans, *The Life and Poems of William Cartwright*, p. 729.

for Arminius and how these readers responded to the poem. It is plausible, however, that they were adherents of Laud's Arminian church politics, readers who were interested in a poet who they knew had given his best for the Dutch Arminians both in the Dutch Republic before 1618 and from Paris after 1621.

IN CONCLUSION

In early modern times, poetry was regarded as a pleasant textual genre that made readers susceptible to the news and/or the message put across by the poet. If a poet was authoritative like Grotius, reading his work produced an effect on readers. Examples of character and behaviour such as displayed by Arminius (according to Grotius's poem) were considered sound moral education for readers. Of the great many occasional poems written in Neo-Latin, Grotius's epicedium has been handed down to us because it was considered to be a good poem written by a famous author about a famous person. Readers were also interested in Grotius's public announcement of his sympathy for Arminius and his theological point of view, because the problems concerning the Dutch Protestant Church affected their daily lives. Grotius's poem helped them defend or strengthen their own opinions. Poems by lesser authors were less suitable to quote in conversation or debate. The influence of Grotius's epicedium on readers was therefore feared by Arminius's opponents.

By means of this poem Grotius connected his fate to that of the Arminian movement that was beginning to take shape. The poem marks the first step of Grotius's development as an Arminian champion. But during his years of exile, Grotius drifted away from Arminianism to sail his own irenicist course. He also became very critical of the occasional poetry of his younger years.

The role the epicedium played in the public debate about English Arminianism more than twenty years later was different. In England, it was reprinted in Latin and its translation circulated in manuscript. The poem might have influenced the opinion of upperclass readers of Latin and readers of English who could get their hands on the manuscript version. English readers were able to compare the Dutch ecclesiastical situation in which Arminius and Grotius lived to their own problems between the English Arminians and Calvinists. Of course, their knowledge about the development of Dutch Arminianism and Grotius's fate

interacted with their reading of the poem. It is plausible that adherents to the Arminian cause identified with the struggles of the man who gave his name to their movement as described by a poet who was to suffer severely at the hands of his countrymen who did not share his opinion about ecclesiastical politics. To English Arminians the poem has the iconic value of a literary *exemplum* of the near past.

APPENDICES

Editions of Grotius's funeral poem for Arminius

Dominicus Baudius, *Epicedium dictum honori Jacobi Arminii* (Leiden: Andreas Cloucqius, 1609), p. D3^r–D4^r; Petrus Bertius, *Oratio in obitum Jacobi Arminii* (Leiden: Ioannes Patius, 1609), pp. 46–48; Hugo Grotius, *Poemata Collecta* (Leiden: Andreas Cloucqius, 1617), no. 75, pp. 304–06; Hugo Grotius, *Poemata* (Leiden: Hieronymus de Vogel, 1639), pp. 262–65; Hugo Grotius, *Poemata collecta* (London: Richard Hodgkinson, 1639), pp. 304, 305, 310, 311 (wrong paging); Dominicus Baudius, *Poemata* (Amsterdam: Ioannes Ianssonius, 1640), p. 150; Hugo Grotius, *Poemata omnia* (Leiden: Hieronymus de Vogel, 1645), pp. 221–23; Hugo Grotius, *Poemata omnia* (Amsterdam: Johannes van Ravesteyn, 1670), pp. 210–12; C. Brandt, *Historia vitae Jacobi Arminii* (Amsterdam: Martin van Schagen, 1724), pp. 484–87; C. Brandt, *Historia vitae Jacobi Arminii, editio multo correctior* (Braunschweig: Frid. Guil. Meyerus, 1725), pp. 223–24.

Translations of Grotius's funeral poem for Arminius

C. Brandt (ed.), J. Guthrie (trans.), *The Life of James Arminius* (London, etc.: s.n., 1854), pp. 322–25; W. Mallinckrodt, 'Grotius' gedicht op het sterven van Arminius', *Geloof en vrijheid: Tweemaandelijksch tijdschrift*, 40, N.S., 17 (1906), text from PC 1639, pp. 70–73, trans. pp. 30–35. Ll. 28–35 and 78–86 quoted by Ellinger, *Geschichte der neulateinischen Literatur Deutschlands im sechzehnten Jahrhundert*, pp. 214–15.

*In mortem reverendi eruditissimique viri domini Iacobi Arminii,
in Academia Lugdunensi Divinae sapientiae Professoris,
Hugonis Grotii scazon*

Scrutator altae veritatis Armini,
sublime pectus, anima feta doctrinae,
sollertiaeque perspicacis exemplum,
tu nunc ademptus saeculo tenebroso
et semicaecae palpitantium turbae 5
claros beatae lucis incolis campos.
Et, sive nuper magna pars stetit veri
tuis sub armis, tot premente cervices
cultus profani servitute discussa,
seu parte in aliqua, more gentis humanae 10
et nescientis multa sorte naturae,
te cepit error (iudicent, quibus sacri
iuris potestas, visque tanta noscendi),
certe superni codicis frequens lector,
in verba certe non adactus humana, 15
labi timentis, nec rebellis in sese,
fers teste caelo conscientiae laudem.
Ibi satur quiete, gaudii plenus,
quaesita quondam discis, et vides, quanta
involvat homines inscientiae nubes, 20
quam nil sit illud, quod vocamus hic scire,
quo nos superbi tollimus caput caelo;
calcamus alios, invicemque calcamur.
Hinc tanta bella saeviunt magistrorum,
hinc odia plebis: interim fugit longe, 25
nec se videndam dimicantibus praebet
amica sanctae sancta Veritas Pacis.
Unde ista rabies, et libido pugnandi
insedit animos? Cur placet Deus belli
materia? Quo tot studia, tot novae partes? 30

Tit.] The title is glued into some copies of the edition or bound in separately to cover a 'praefatio' by Baudius, underneath which the title is 'In Iacobi Arminii mortem Hugonis Grotii scazon': In Mortem Jacobi Arminii P.C. 1 altae] almae **Bertius** 7 Et, sive nuper magna pars stetit veri] Et, sive multum debuit tibi verum P.C. 8-9] del. P.C. **all editions** 19 quaesita] quaesitae P.C. **1639 London** (v. 17)

Translation

A choliambic poem by Hugo Grotius on the death of the venerable, most erudite Jacob Arminius, Professor of Divinity at the Leiden Academy

Arminius, researcher of the profound truth, distinguished of heart, soul full of doctrine, exemplar of discerning understanding, you, who have been removed from this dark age and from the half-blind crowds of people who tremble, you inhabit the splendid fields of magnificent light. And, if a large part of the truth recently stood under your eloquent defence, when the slavery of an irreligious devotion, which presses on the necks of so many, was cast off, or an error has seized you in a certain respect, in the way of the human race and nature which is by its destiny ignorant of many things (may they pass judgement, who have the power of holy justice and such great force of perception), you, definitely a frequent reader of the celestial book, who are certainly not bound by an oath in human words, you carry the excellence of your conscience, which is afraid to lapse, and not rebellious toward itself, as heaven is your witness. (18) There, rich in tranquility, full of joy, you learn what was once sought and you see what a great cloud of ignorance surrounds people, how insignificant is that which we call knowing here, on account of which we haughty people lift up our heads to heaven; we trample on others and in turn are trampled on. Here, so many conflicts of masters rage, here, the hateful behaviour of the people rages: in the meantime holy Truth, friend of holy Peace, flees far away, and appears to be invisible to those who fight. (28) From where has this madness and craving for fighting taken hold of our hearts? Why is God popular as a cause for war? What purpose does so much partiality, do so many new parties serve?

An hostis atra nocte pestilens Christi
 insparsit agro semen? An furor pugna
 mortalitatis ingenique corrupti
 alimenta quaevis sumit et Dei causae
 permiscet hominem? Curiosus an mundus 35
 dum nil latere patitur et sequi gaudet
 sciri negata, iure sentit hanc poenam?
 Ut illa quondam, dum viam parat coelo,
 structrix superbae molis, insolens turba
 in mille linguas abiit atque aberranti 40
 sermone priscum vocis exuit foedus.
 Heu quid paramus? Lectus orbe de toto
 grex ille parvus lancinamur heu foede
 iterumque et iterum, scindimurque discordes,
 ridente Mauro, nec dolente Iudaeo. 45
 Felix remota factionibus vulgi
 religio simplex, arte non laborata,
 quae morte Christi certa dilui culpas,
 hic spem fidemque ponit, et dari credit
 gratis salutem promerentibus poenam; 50
 sanctique amoris lene munus exercens
 non curat altum sapere, nec nimis quaerit,
 an lege certa veniat omne venturum,
 exsors malorum quomodo malum nolit
 velitque Rector, summa quatenus causa 55
 potente nutu velle temperet nostrum.
 Felix et ille, quisquis ambitu liber,
 nec vana captans lucra, nec leves plausus,
 coelestiores excitatus ad curas
 In astra tendit et Deum studet nosse, 60
 qua Se Ipse pandit ambulatque suspensis
 periculosas gressibus per ambages,
 non mentientis fila persequens libri;

32 insparsit] insparsit **P.C. 1639 London** quaesita (v. 30) 45 Mauro] Turca (v. 43)
P.C. 46 remota] remoti **Bertius** 51 amoris] amore **P.C. 1639 London** (v. 49)
 51 sanctique] structique **P.C. 1639 1645** (v. 49); lene] lere **Bertius**

Has an enemy sown destructive seed in the field of Christ some dark night? Or does an aggressive fury, which belongs to mortal humanity and a depraved mind, take any kind of nourishment, and does it involve man in the case of God? Or does the curious world suffer this punishment justly, while it allows nothing to remain hidden, and it is glad to pursue what is refused to be understood? Like that insolent crowd of old, builder of a haughty heap, went apart into a thousand languages, while it creates a road to heaven, and, as language loses its way, it laid aside the old treaty of speech. Oh, what are we at? We, that small group, chosen from all over the world, we are torn asunder, oh, terrible, again and again, and we are divided in discord, while the Moor laughs and the Jew rejoices.

(46) Blessed, uncomplicated religion, without artificiality, removed from the factions of the people, religion, which is certain that faults are washed away by the death of Christ, places hope and faith therein and believes that salvation is given for free to those who deserve punishment and applying the generous gift of holy love, religion does not concern itself with understanding the sublime, nor does it ask so much whether everything that is to happen comes by a certain law, in what way the Ruler, who has no share in evil, does want evil or does not want it or to what extent the highest cause restrains our will by a powerful nod.

(57) And blessed is he, whosoever, free from ambition and not in pursuit of vain profit or frivolous applause, urged on to more heavenly cares, reaches for the stars and applies himself to become familiar with God, where He reveals Himself in person, and he walks with subdued footsteps along dangerous detours, persistently following the threads of a book that does not lie,

cui charitate temperata libertas
 certat manere dissidentibus concors; 65
 piaequae purus aequitatis affectus,
 damnatus aliis, ipse neminem damnat;
 modestiaeque limitem premens, donat
 nunc verba vero, nunc silentium paci.
 Haec saepe populo teste, saepe privatim, 70
 haec ipsa fato iam propinquus, Armini,
 adhuc monebas, cum laboribus vitae
 longis fatiscens, saeculique pertaesus
 fastidiosi, pertinacis, ingrati,
 indigniore parte fractus, et languens, 75
 meliore sospes, illa millibus multis
 monstrata per te regna totus arderes.
 Et nunc paterno sidus additum templo
 Deum precaris, det gregi suo lucem,
 hic quanta satis est, hac det esse contentum, 80
 det non loquentes sua reperta doctores,
 det consonantes semper omnium linguas,
 aut corda saltem, praepotente vi flammae
 caliginosas litium fuget sordes,
 ut spiret unum tota civitas Christi, 85
 vitamque terris approbet, fidem coelo.

67 neminem] nimium **P.C. 1639 London** (v. 65) 68 limitem] limites **Bertius**
 73 saeculique] saeculisque **P.C. 1645 1670** (v. 71) 77 totus] solus **Bertius**
 84 fuget] fulget **P.C. 1639 London** (v. 82)

whose freedom, moderated by grace, exerts itself to stay in harmony with those who disagree and pure in his inclinations to merciful fairness, even if he is condemned by others, he himself condemns no one and pressing the border of modesty, he now lends words to the truth, now silence to peace.

(70) It was these things that you used to recommend, close to your death already, Arminius, often in the presence of the people, often in private, when, getting tired by the long labours of your life and revolted by our time, which is disgusting, inflexible and unpleasant, your lesser part broken and getting weak, your better part unscathed, you desired ardently with all your heart that realm, which through you has been shown to the countless throngs. And now, as a star added to the paternal temple, you beseech God to give light to his own flock as much as is necessary here on earth, to give contentment about the light, to give masters who do not speak about their findings, to give that the tongues of all people, or at least their hearts, always resound harmoniously, by the supreme power of the flame, may He drive away the murky refuse of quarrels, so that the whole community of Christ breaths one spirit, and approves of life on earth and faith in heaven.