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**Boudewijn van Zwieten's legacy of the *Horae canonicae*
at St Peter's, Leiden 1443**

David seit, dat hi seven werf binnen den daghe den Heer lof geseit heeft'

(Dirck van Delf, *Tafel van den Kersten Ghelove*, Ch. XXX).

David said that he praised the Lord seven times daily.

From an early period in the history of the Church daily life in monasteries was regulated from hour to hour by the congregation reciting the *Horae canonicae*. This with other parts of the Divine Office consisted of reading and singing psalms, hymns, antiphons, versicles and responses, lessons and other passages appropriate to the day in the Church calendar.¹ Indeed, the performance of the hours became one of the clergy's main duties. From the practice of observing the hours within the community, reciting the prayers in public gradually became obligatory on all clergy. The service of matins originally took place deep in the night, but when it was combined with or followed at a short interval by lauds, the earliest morning service, the number of Hours was reduced thereby in practice to seven, called in the Low Countries 'de Zeven Getijden'; lauds, prime, terce, sext, none, vespers and compline.² The services were interspersed throughout the day at fairly regular intervals of about three hours. Lauds and vespers, the morning and evening prayers, were the more important and hence more elaborate parts of the daily routine, and this remains so today.³

A marked increase in the number of monasteries and other religious houses in the Northern Netherlands during the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries was matched by a large increase in the number of public services taking place.⁴ In particular, a strong growth

¹ The practice must be one of the oldest in the Christian liturgy. See e.g. Actus Apostolorum, 16, 25: *Media autem nocte Paulus et Silas orantes laudabant Deum, et audiebant eos qui in custodia erant* ('And at midnight Paul and Silas praying praised God. And they that were in prison heard them'). Cf. the letter of Pliny the Younger to Emperor Trajan concerning the Christians: *... quod essent soliti stato die ante lucem convenire carmenque Christo quasi deo dicere secum invicem* ('... because they are accustomed on a certain day before it is light to come together, and taking turns with each other to sing a hymn to Christ as if to a god').

² Condensing the Hours into seven after a brief interval is also long traditional. The *Regola Chrodogangi Episcopi Metensis* of about AD 760 refers to singing the Hours in the winter months, and Cap. V entitled *De officiis divinis in noctibus* begins: *Hiemis temporibus (...) et faciant intervalum* (In times of winter ... and they make an interval); Ferdinand Walter (ed.), *Fontes iuris ecclesiastici antiqui et hodierni*, Bonn, 1862, pp. 21-46, especially pp. 24-25.

³ Since the revisions of the 2nd Vatican Council, '... in its revised form [the Office] can be fitted into the actual hours of people's daily lives. The Hour of Prime has been abolished; the most important Hours are Lauds as morning prayer and Vespers as evening prayer, and these become the two hinges, as it were, of the daily Office', *The Divine Office. The Liturgy of the Hours according to the Roman Rite, as renewed by Decree of the Second Vatican Council, etc.*, Vol. I, p. xiii (publ. London, 1974).

⁴ A. G. Jongkees, *Staat en Kerk in Holland en Zeeland onder de Bourgondische Hertogen 1425-1477*

in the number of collegiate churches, staffed and administered by a college or chapter of canons, took place about this time in the Northern Netherlands, and it included St Pancras in Leiden.⁵ It was customary in these collegiate churches for the canons of the chapter to sing the Hours publicly, and in this way the laity were made familiar with the texts and the music. The ceremonies of the hours finally became so highly regarded by the public that they were introduced into many parish churches as a matter of prestige. There they were sung by the resident priest, at first together with his assistants or vicars and the local schoolboys, and later strengthened by professional choristers.⁶

The present study was carried out at the University of Leiden as part of a history research class (Doctoraal Werk College, DWC) about medieval piety and its related practices. The research class was conducted by Drs. D. J. Faber. This study in particular attempts to assess the importance of the Hours and their musical performance in the public life and piety of individuals in Leiden in the late medieval period. The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries saw the arrival in the Low Countries of a musical style, polyphony, which had its origins in Paris, and which has been associated ever since with a 'golden age' of music and with the dukes of Burgundy and their courts.⁷ One of the inspirations for this new trend lay in the public performance of the *Horae canonicae*.

The musical performance of the Hours

R. R. Post and D. P. Oosterbaan, with others, have given descriptions of how medieval church services were conducted throughout the ecclesiastical year.⁸ We shall refer to these practices when reviewing a number of fifteenth- and sixteenth century manuscripts which form the main part of this study. In medieval times the entire Office consisted of the Hours and the mass performed together, but the mass was the principal service. Despite survival of the mass read in Latin until recent times, its post-Tridentine form was not an unqualified reflection of medieval practice. Where formerly mass and Hours existed side by side and had provided an almost non-stop round of corporate prayer in monastic and collegiate communities, a shift began to take place in the fifteenth century. By the second half of the century mass and vespers were often celebrated more elaborately than the other parts of the Office, and this is reflected in the surviving liturgical polyphonic music, most of which was written for mass and vespers.⁹ The mass could be performed either in a highly ornate

(Groningen and Batavia, 1942), p. 21.

⁵ R. R. Post, *Kerkgeschiedenis van Nederland in de Middeleeuwen* (Utrecht, 1957); especially Ch. 11, 'Op de vooravond van de Hervorming', pp. 268-314.

⁶ B. Haggh, 'Itineracy to residency. Professional careers and performance practices in 15th-century sacred music', *Early Music* 17 (1989) 359-366.

⁷ See, e.g., the article by John Milsom in: *The New Oxford Companion to Music*, gen. ed. D. Arnold, Vol. 2 (Oxford, 1983) p. 1085-1089.

⁸ Post, *Kerkgeschiedenis*, pp. 268-314; D. P. Oosterbaan, *De Oude Kerk te Delft gedurende de Middeleeuwen* (The Hague, 1973), especially Ch. V, 'Gang door het kerkelijk jaar', pp. 219-287.

⁹ J. Harper, *The Forms and Orders of Western Liturgy from the Tenth to the Eighteenth Century; a historical introduction and guide for students and musicians* (Oxford, 1991), especially Ch. 6, 'The Divine

ceremonial manner suited to feast days and great public occasions as *Missa solemnis*, when it was accompanied by processions and music, or it could be read in a simpler, everyday manner, the *Missa dicta* or *Missa privata*.¹⁰ In both cases, whatever the degree of ceremony, the texts were the same on any day, but they were affected by the Church calendar.¹¹ The music accompanying mass and Hours during most of the Middle Ages was related to that which is sung by monastic communities today, called plain-chant or Gregorian. In fifteenth century written sources in the Northern Netherlands it was called *simpel sanck* ('simple song'), which describes it perfectly. This was monophonic, in contrast to polyphony which is referred to in the sources more formally as *musyck*.¹² But there was a third style of musical performance appropriate to church music, particularly in singing the psalms, called variously in the sources *faburden* or *faberdon*. This may have been a kind of improvised polyphony, achieved by adding parts above and below but parallel with the melodic line of Gregorian plain-chant. By its nature all this music required a certain expertise, and this in turn required training and practice. This ability was demanded of professional performers, according to the sources.¹³

There is no doubt that the fifteenth century was a period of transitions. G. Szoverffy discussed in his history of medieval hymnody some of the changes which the corpus of hymns underwent in the Middle Ages.¹⁴ He listed numerous points causing increases in the numbers and types of Latin hymns, and his comments have been adapted here because of their wider relevance to other aspects of church musical performance. The innovations included:

1. introduction of new feast-days, including feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary;

Office', pp. 73-108, 'The Mass', pp. 109-126.

¹⁰ For a contemporary description with details of the texts and the action of the medieval mass see: C. A. Kalveen, 'Iste est modus communis celebrandi ca. 1500', *Archief voor Geschiedenis van de Katholieke Kerk in Nederland* 11 (1969) 103-114. Kalveen concluded that the mass conformed in essentials to the *Ordo Romanus* and that there were no regional variants associated with the Rhineland or Utrecht.

¹¹ B. Kruitwagen, 'Studienmateriaal (Heiligen-Geografie) voor den Kalender van het Middeleeuwsche Bisdom Utrecht', *Het Boek* 25 (1938-39) 7-44 and 81-112.

¹² The term *musyck* (in various spellings) can be found in the accounts of Haarlem, Leiden, Gouda and Den Briel, for example, recording payments to the choir of the Zevengetijden (the Hours) and to music masters in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

¹³ Chr. S. Dessing, 'De Zeven Getijden in de St. Jans-Kerk te Gouda', *Haarlemse Bijdragen* 35 (1913) 141-164, 165-223, 347-372; for references to *simpel sanck* and *musyck* see also p. 166 and p. 176. There are transcriptions from manuscript sources describing finances, teaching and disciplinary matters relating to the Hours at Gouda. Dessing traced the changes from a choir made up of clergy to one consisting largely of professional, including lay, singers in the 16th century. See also the article by David Hiley, 'Faburden', *The New Oxford Companion to Music*, Vol. 1, pp. 653-656, who writes: 'The sound of faburden in practice is most satisfactory and peculiarly redolent of its period'; p. 656.

¹⁴ G. Szoverffy, *A Concise History of Medieval Latin Hymnody* (Leiden, 1985) p. 161. G. Szoverffy, 'Latin Hymns', *Typologie des Sources*, Fasc. 55 (Turnhout, 1989).

2. growing interest, throughout much of society, in personal meditation and private devotions such as the Hours and the Rosary¹⁵;
3. increased patronage not only by royalty and nobility but also by cities and citizens in promoting particular religious institutions and ceremonies;
4. increased competition between local churches in order to have their own distinctive liturgies;
5. the influence of popular taste, and a popular need for sequences to be sung in special masses for various occasions;
6. the effects of semi-religious or secular organisations operating outside the framework of the clergy;
7. the growth of educational facilities, including the training of singers;
8. the influence of new musical trends in polyphony, requiring singers to be trained, and leading ultimately to the employment of lay, professional choirs in churches.¹⁶

Evidence for these influences, some of them in their early stages, can be found in Boudewijn van Zwieten's legacy to St Peter's, Leiden in 1443.

Boudewijn van Zwieten's Foundation of the Hours at Leiden

Modern studies of church history at Leiden date from the first half of the twentieth century. R. R. Post dated the introduction of the Hours at St Pancras' collegiate church after 1300, but J. C. Overvoorde provided more detail, based on his studies of the sources.¹⁷ From the fourteenth century Leiden had been divided into three parishes. The oldest was St Peter's, established in 1121 and affiliated to the Teutonic Order. It was followed in 1314 by St Pancras, also known as the Hooglandse Kerk, which became a collegiate church in 1366. The third was the church of Our Blessed Lady (*Onze Lieve Vrouw*) consecrated about 1330 and raised to the status of parish in 1365.¹⁸ Other institutions had their own chapels. For instance, the hospital (*Gasthuis*) which functioned both as a hospital and as hospice for the poorer members of the community, had a chapel where public services were held for the inmates and others.¹⁹ About 1470 this caused a conflict when the Commander of St Peter's attempted to

¹⁵ A. Winston, 'Tracing the Origins of the Rosary. German Vernacular Texts', *Speculum* 68 (1993) 619-636.

¹⁶ Haggh, 'Itineracy to residency', pp. 359-366; Dessing, 'De Zeven Getijden', p. 161. For historical examples of polyphony see e.g. T. Gollner, *Formen früher Meherstimmigkeit in deutschen Handschriften des späten Mittelalters* (2 vols., Tutzing, 1961).

¹⁷ J. C. Overvoorde, *Inventarissen en Regesten van de Sint Pieters en Onze Lieve Vrouw Kerk* (Leiden, 1915) p. xvii. Descriptions of the Hours (Zevengetijden) in the Northern Netherlands can be found in: J. de Klerk, *Haarlems Muziekleven in de Loop der Tijden*, 7:23; J.A. C. Doove, 'Zevengetijden in Delft en Gouda', *Mens en Melodie* 23 (1968) 36-38; Dessing, 'De Zeven Getijden', passim.

¹⁸ A. Annegarn, *Floris en Cornelis Schuyt* (Utrecht, 1973) p. 3; T. Brouwer, *Sleutelstad-Orgelstad: Vijf Eeuwen Orgel Geschiedenis Leiden* (Zutphen, 1979).

¹⁹ It was used later by Protestant Wallonian refugees, and since then has been known as the Wallonian church.

restrict the number of public services held at the hospice. His intervention appears to have been motivated by competition between St Peter's and the hospital clergy for memorial services and the accompanying fees.²⁰

According to A. Annegarn there was a college of governors appointed to organize and regulate the performance of the Hours at Leiden, a *Zevengetijdencollege*, as early as 1316.²¹ Overvoorde, on the other hand, placed the origin of the college of St Peter's at the beginning of the fifteenth century, while the first public reference to regulation of its finances appeared in a local ordinance (*keurboek*) for Leiden in 1450.²² It may be conjectured that the services of the Hours arranged by the clergy of St Peter's at the earlier period were limited in number, or at any rate not on a daily basis. The only certainty is that with the endowment or legacy provided by Boudewijn van Zwieten in a document dated 15 May 1443 a firm financial basis was laid to form a college of singers for the daily performance of the Hours at St Peter's.

Boudewijn van Zwieten (born between 1370 and 1373, died 1454), a former treasurer of the province of Holland, had already shown his generosity to the religious community by helping to found the convent of Mariënpoel near Leiden in 1431.²³ In 1443 he made possible the daily performance of the Hours at St Peter's in Leiden through a fund which was to be financed from the annual income of properties belonging to Van Zwieten. The surviving document, his so-called will, reveals three main concerns. It contains provisions for financial arrangements relating to his properties and monies from them to be paid to St Peter's, together with religious-cultural details of ceremonies to be performed. Thirdly, there are some personal provisions for Van Zwieten, his family, friends and other beneficiaries.²⁴

The financial arrangements for the Hours were coupled to the incomes from a previous gift of two chaplaincies and an altar which Van Zwieten had given to St Peter's, and to these he now added the annual incomes from a number of houses and plots of land belonging to him, which are specified in the legacy. Apparently the lay authorities at Leiden found it necessary to have the fund supplemented by twenty pounds annually, which were to be paid by the church itself, because the income in their view would not be enough. The endowment provided money for direct payments to be made to the officiating clergy and singers for their participation. A second list of house properties in or near Leiden was contained in the legacy, the incomes from which were to be used for these payments. As for how they were to be paid, another document of a later period (see below) referred to the use of lead tokens (*lootjes*), and these were customarily exchanged at certain times in the year for current cash.

²⁰ P. Gerritsen, *De Waalse Kerk van Leiden* (Delft, 1989).

²¹ Annegarn, *Floris en Cornelis Schuyt*, p. 13.

²² Overvoorde, *Inventarissen*, p. xvii.

²³ Jongkees, *Staat en Kerk*, p. 94. For a biography and a description of the career and the pious works of Boudewijn van Zwieten (in the sources both names can take different spellings) see F. J. W. van Kan, 'Boudewijn van Zwieten, Tresorier van Holland', *Holland* 13 (1981) 288-305.

²⁴ Overvoorde (*Inventarissen*, p. xvii) called the document a will or testament. It is more properly described as a legacy or endowment. Its provisions relate only to the subject of the *Zevengetijden* (Hours) and accompanying details. Geemente Archief (GA) Leiden, Kerkelijke Archief (KA), inv. number 210.

The arrangements were in the form of a contract, and in cases of non-compliance with its provisions and stipulations there were a number of sanctions, fines and non-payments to offenders who neglected their duties. For example, there is a remarkable emphasis, perhaps difficult to comprehend for a modern reader, especially in view of the transgressions which do appear to have taken place, on the necessity for the officiants to wear the proper vestments. But this may perhaps be explained by the requirements of a strictly formalistic and legalistic mind in the drafting of the legacy, and doubts about the efficacy of ceremonies performed incorrectly.

The persons who were to be commemorated in the church services included Van Zwieten himself, his wife, their parents, children, friends and members of the ruling houses whom Van Zwieten had served. Two priests were also named; Jan Willemszoon, who was deceased apparently at that time, and Ghijsbert Mast.²⁵ The contract required Mast to say three masses each week on Van Zwieten's altar in St Peter's, and in return for this he was to receive payment and a life-long chaplaincy. On the other hand, if he failed to perform his duties he was to be fined two Flemish groats for each mass he failed to say. As a final touch Van Zwieten wished the two ornaments, his missal and the chalice which he had had made specially, to be used only during the masses on his altar, unless he should need them himself, presumably for devotions at home where he had a private chapel. In this provision there is indication of a widespread tendency at that time for testators to will valuable items such as books, missals, crucifixes and chalices to their parish churches as personal mementos of themselves in an effort to achieve permanent remembrance.²⁶ Finally, the document of 15 May 1443 was witnessed and sealed by members of Van Zwieten's family and by the burgomasters of Leiden, and accepted on behalf of the Church by Rudolph van Diepholt, bishop of Utrecht, in an appendage dated 1 June 1443.

Liturgical provisions

The liturgical and musical provisions in Van Zwieten's legacy are points of cultural interest. Besides, they may provide further evidence of his personal attitudes and piety. The most important provision of the legacy was for seven priests and two able (*bequaem*) choristers, a term which implies that they were to be professional singers. Dessing used the expression '*zorg en geoefendheid*' ('precision and practice') in this connection.²⁷ The choir was to perform the Office of the mass and the Hours daily. A distinction was made between feast days and week days. On week days the seven priests and two choristers were to officiate without further vocal support, but on feast days the Leiden schoolboys with their schoolmaster were to assist in the singing. There is broad agreement in this and other descriptions of endowments about how such choirs were to be financed, managed and conducted at this time, for example at St Donation's church in Bruges.²⁸

²⁵ Ghijsbertus Mast was described as parish priest of Zoetermeer in 1484 by A. N. Duiniveld, 'Pastoren van de Parochie van Zoetermeer', *Haarlemse Bijdragen* 55 (1938) p. 73

²⁶ E. Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England c. 1400 - c. 1580* (Yale, 1992) pp. 330-335.

²⁷ Dessing, 'De Zeven Getijden', p. 166.

²⁸ R. Strohm, *Music in Late Medieval Bruges* (Oxford 1958, revised ed. 1990); Haggh, 'Itineracy to

A daily mass was to be offered by one of the seven priests on Van Zwieten's altar, and when finished the celebrant had to go to Van Zwieten's memorial beside the altar and there recite a *Miserere*, a *De profundis* and a collect *Pro defunctis* for him and his dependents. On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays similar prayers were to be said at the tomb of the deceased priest Jan Willemsz. The officiating priest on any day was to receive two groats in payment. On each week-day the seven priests and two choristers, all properly clothed in clerical attire, were to go to the North transept of the church to offer prayers for all who had given or would ever in future give alms to the church.

There were special provisions in the legacy for services to be held on Mondays following the feasts of Our Lady. These and other details concerning payments of fees, the use of candles, the holy water sprinkler and vestments, and the prayers to be said, appear to be characteristic of a strictly formal and legalistic attitude towards religious ceremony which has its roots in antiquity and which was required by the solemnity of the occasion to make the ceremonies effective and binding. Sandwiched in between other details there was a proviso for good quality wheaten bread to be given in alms to the poor, evidence that Van Zwieten was concerned to be at least conventionally charitable to them too.

There are no direct references in Van Zwieten's endowment to polyphonic music by whatever name, to be sung in the masses or Hours. But there are indications pointing in that direction, namely provision for two professional choristers, and the requirement that the school children should take part in singing with the male choristers on Sundays and feastdays. Other documentary evidence from about this time describes how the Hours were performed at the convent of Mariënpoel, Van Zwieten's other foundation, in a largely traditional monastic style.²⁹ The Rules or Statutes of the convent, the text of which is similar to that published elsewhere, applied to all Sisters Regular at that time.³⁰ Most of the rules in force at the convent were limited to details of ceremony and decorum, but there were also some instructions on the manner of singing. For most days indications are that *simpel sanck* was intended, monody in the Gregorian style, performed alternately by two choirs of singers facing each other across the chapel (compare Pliny's word *invicem*, 'by turns'; see fn. 1). Moreover, the rules appear to be directed against the use of *faberdon*, for the nuns were expressly forbidden to sing above or below the melody:

`... also dat niemant so vermetel en si dat hi in enighen grade boven of onder en singhe dan dat convent singhet'.

`... therefore that no-one be so bold that [s]he sings in any degree above or below that which the convent may sing'.

Residency', passim.

²⁹ GA Leiden, KA inv. no. 882 contains the Rules of the convent at Mariënpoel. Two sections relate to the Hours, one entitled *Hoe dat hen die susteren hebben sullen in horen getiden* ('How the Sisters should comport themselves during the Hours'), and another *Van der manieren ende ghelijcformicheit des singhens* ('Concerning the manner and uniformity of singing').

³⁰ B. J. M., de Bont, 'Statuten der Susteren Regularissen des Capittels van Holland', *Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis* (New Series) 6 (1909) 48-120; see pp. 86-91 for the Hours.

For the rest, there was also great emphasis laid on phrasing, pronunciation and accentuation of the texts, and interpolation of suitable pauses into the music. All this would have contributed to a clear, measured rendering of the psalms and other hymns, making them understandable to all participating or listening. The emphasis was on simplicity, so much so that use of an organ to accompany the singers in the convent was forbidden:

‘... so ordelen wi dat men in gheenre manieren orghelen en besighe of henghe in de dienste Gods’.

‘... thus we order that organs are not to be used or allowed in any way in the service of God’.

Nonetheless, the statutes of Mariënpoel do allow for a more elaborate style of singing on feast days and other exceptional occasions if appropriate or if required.³¹ This may not imply polyphony in its most elaborate form, but more probably something like *faberdon*.

Apart from Van Zwieten's requiring the school children to sing with the choir, and the nuns' insistence on simplicity and clarity we learn nothing from these documents about how music might have been taught. The earliest statutes regulating the Hours at Gouda also failed to provide for teaching music. That was one of the schoolmaster's duties, and in any case both clergy and laity were familiar with the Gregorian plainchant from childhood on.³²

A new chapter in the history of the Hours

Other documentary evidence relates to Van Zwieten's college of the Hours at Leiden at later periods. The authors of the three documents now to be described are not named, nor are the manuscripts dated. But from evidence in these sources, two in the form of letters, it is obvious that the writers were ‘insiders’, people who were directly and intimately concerned with the choir and how it functioned.³³ One letter is addressed by the college procurators to the burgomasters of Leiden, and the second was written by a now-unidentifiable member of the choir to the governors of the Hours, the *Zevengetijdenmeesters*. The third document contains details of regulations intended to tighten up discipline in the choir of the *Zevengetijden*. The earliest communication may be from the second half of the fifteenth and the other two from the first half of the sixteenth centuries.³⁴ They can be seen as complementing each other, although this must be fortuitous to some extent.

³¹ For use of the organ in church: Annegarn, *Floris en Cornelis Schuyt*, p. 5.

³² Dessing, ‘De Zeven Getijden’, p. 159; R. Strohm, *Music in Late Medieval Bruges*, pp. 1-9, sketches a romantic picture of medieval Bruges, in which time and space were filled by the Church calendar and the musical sounds of its ceremonies and church bells.

³³ Their familiarity with the workings of the *Zevengetijden* is also evident from their use of certain obscure expressions, so that not all their remarks are

³³ Their familiarity with the workings of the e immediately understandable.

³⁴ GA Leiden, KA inv. nos. 206, 208 and 209. Inv. nos. 206 and 208 have been printed and published, but with parts of the texts omitted. A single sentence from no. 209 has also been published by the same author, Elsevier (no initials), ‘Bouwsteenen’, *Jaarboek der Vereeniging voor Noord Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis*, Part I (Amsterdam, 1872) pp. 75-77.

The first letter contains complaints of the governors of the Hours, the *Zevengetijdenmeesters* at St Peter's, writing to the burgomasters. In it there are two principal elements, one relating to the conduct of the ceremonies and the performance of the music, and the second a plea for financial support. On the question of how the music should sound they write:

`... soe wair wel onse meenyng ende guetduncken dat men die muysique cesserer soude, ende maken een heerlick choor van acht eerlijcke priesteren ende achte of ses koralen, ende die souden singen statelick, sonder haesten dat ment verstaen mochte, ende pauseren in den midden van den versen als betaemt ende behoirlick is ende als in anderen kercken ghedaen wort, dair guet regiment is'.

`... so it would be our opinion and wish that that polyphony [*muysique*] should cease, and that they should form a fine choir of eight respectable priests and eight or six choristers, and they should sing measuredly, without haste, so that it can be understood, and they should pause in the middle of the verses as is correct and proper, and as is done in other churches where there is good discipline'.

The reference here to abolishing *muysique* from the services was interpreted by Overvoorde to mean the use of the church organ,³⁵ but it is more probable that it was a reference to polyphony, and that the choir perhaps was being influenced by the modern trend towards polyphonic choral singing. The procurators' preference seems to have been for a style of singing such as was practiced in the convent at Mariënpoel, where the prohibition on the use of the organ mentioned this instrument explicitly. The procurators, therefore, were comparing *muysique* or polyphony unfavourably with the measured, stately monophonic style still practiced elsewhere at that time. Their conservative taste in that case could be explained by the fairly early date at which the letter was written, thought to have been about 1450 to 1480.³⁶

In the extant accounts of the cities of Holland at somewhat later dates payments are recorded of money and gifts made to members of the *Zevengetijden* choirs, who themselves are referred to collectively by the term 'music'. One of the earliest and more informative is in Brielle. On the occasion of the birth of Philip the Fair (son of Maximilian I and Mary of Burgundy, born 22 July 1478) the burgomasters of Brielle paid 20 stuivers for a celebratory mass³⁷:

`... gegeven die heeren van der capelle om een misse te singen in discant.'

`given to the gentlemen of the chapel for singing a mass in polyphony (*discant*)'.

³⁵ Overvoorde, *Inventarissen*, p. xvii.

³⁶ This date was assessed by Elsevier, 'Bouwsteenen', p. 75, on the basis of the handwriting and the paper used.

³⁷ GA Brielle, no. K6, 1477-1478, f. 118. Concerning the term *discant*: 'By the second half of the 13th century *discant* was (...) the most common term for polyphony itself'; David Hiley, *The New Oxford Companion to Music*, Vol. 1, pp. 559-560. The early date refers to the School of Notre Dame, Paris.

The following items are representative for the early sixteenth century. The first is from the accounts for 1506 at Dordrecht³⁸:

Item nae der cedul van der camer Barthout Dircxz. van zes steden kannen wijns, die stoep van seven groten, die de stede gesconcken heeft den sangmeester ter Grooter Kerck metter anderen gesellen van der musyck upte Verzworen Maendach. fac. metter draechgelt vi s. iii d.'

`Item according to the receipt of the chamber: given to Barthout Dircxz. for six city flasks of wine, the stoop for seven groats, which the city presented to the music master at the Great Church together with the other members of the `music' on `Oath-day Monday' [when officials were sworn in annually]; makes together with costs of the freight 6 s. 3 d.'

The second is from Haarlem in the account book for 1509-1510³⁹:

Den sangers van der muysicke in die parochiekercke van deser stede van vijff solenpnele missen bij hemluyden gesongen om die eere van der stede betaelt als blijkt bij quittance van meester Claes Glasemaker; mit ordinancie hier overgegeven iii lb'.

`To the singers of the `music' in the parish church of this city, for five solemn masses sung by them to the honour of the city, as appears from this receipt of Master Claes Glasemaker; paid here by order, 3 pounds'.

The procurators of the choir at Leiden recommended to the burgomasters that eight priests and six choristers should be employed in the singing of the Hours and the other church services (see above). That is a large increase in the number of singers provided for by Boudewijn van Zwieten in his endowment of 1443. If it implied that some increase had already taken place in the number of singers this would explain the shortage of funds to maintain the choir. Even at the beginning in 1443 finances had been no more than adequate, and so the second main point in the procurators' letter to the burgomasters is a plea for financial support:

Mer wij soe stijff niet en sijn dat wij dat loonen ofte betalen moghen, soe begheeren wij dat Ghy mijn heeren dair of ordineren wilt, want de incoomste van de Ghetyden so groot niet en sijn als men wel vermoet, dat bliken sal alst mijn heeren belieft.'

`But we are not so well funded that we can reward or pay for that, therefore we request Your Honours to arrange it, because the incomes for the Hours are not so big as people think, which will be apparent, if Your Honours please'.

³⁸ GA Dordrecht, Oud Archief inv. no. I, 442, anno 1506, f. 88v.

³⁹ GA Haarlem, Tresoriesrek. 1509-1510, inv. no. Kast 19, no. 89, f. 46.

The letter had opened with a restrained appeal to God's honour, but it ended in such an impassioned and devotional manner that a reader can scarcely doubt the governors' sincerity in a matter which so obviously went to their hearts⁴⁰:

Alzo dese sake groot is ende angaet die eere Goids, ende dat men weten mach dat die sake ons ter harten gaet, soe bidden wij u oitmoedeliken mijn heeren doir die passie ons liefs heeren Jesu Christi ende doir die reynicheyt end suetmoedicheyt van Marie ende doir die verdienste van allen Goeds heilighen dat ghij mijn heeren alsoe in versien wilt dat God mach ghedient ende gheeert worden in zijnen tempel als dat betaemt ende behoorlick is, ende soe doende sult verdienen die gracie Goids end zijn ewich leven'.

Because this is an important matter and concerns God's honour, and in order that people may know that it goes to our heart too, therefore we pray you humbly, Your Honours, by the Passion of Our Dear Lord Jesus Christ and by the purity of Mary and by the merits of all God's saints that you, Your Honours, make such provisions that God may be served in His temple in a fitting manner, just as that should be, and by doing so you will earn God's grace and eternal life'.

Tempora mutantur. Times change

The second letter (above) was written to the governors or procurators of the Hours by a man who was a member of the choir himself, whether a cleric or professional lay singer is not obvious, but probably the former. However, his only identification is to be found indirectly in the phrase *summige van ons midden in den chore* ('some of us in the middle of the choir'), and he writes⁴¹:

Mijn heren ende ghetide meesteren, als wij laest wisselen souden so waert ghij van mij begherende dat ic u sumige punten woude scriven daer die sanghers ghebreckelick in sijn ende Gods ere in vermindert wort, twelke u staet te beruspen. Alle datgheen dat thegen Gods ere is ende alle quade maniren die in den chore gheskien ic sel u mit corten worden scriven, ende u wisheyt ende verstant sel daer meer sijns uut nemen dan ic u scriven kan'.

Gentlemen, Governors of the Hours, the last time we were to exchange views you asked me to put in writing to you some points about the shortcomings of the singers, which diminish God's honour and which you criticise. Everything that is contrary to God's honour and all the misdemeanours which occur in the choir I shall now describe for you in a few words. In your wisdom and intelligence you will deduce more from that than I can possibly write to you'.

His complaints included precisely those excesses which Van Zwieten had hoped and intended to guard against: non-attendance, indiscipline, failure to wear the proper vestments.

⁴⁰ These quotations are from the manuscript GA Leiden, inv. no. KA 206.

⁴¹ This and the following quotation are from manuscript GA Leiden, inv. no. KA 208.

‘Elck haest hem uut den chore te wesen (...) sij en horen uut haer stallagie niet te gaen eer dattet uut is (...) die een comt niet te chore medallen, ende hevet sijn presentie twelke dat niet gheweest een [sic] is’.

‘Each of them hastens to leave the choir (...) they should not leave their stalls before it [the service] is finished (...) some do not come to the choir at all and yet receive their fee without having been there’.

But equally prominent in this list of errors is slovenliness in the way the church services are conducted and the responses sung, either too hastily or not sung at all, as the writer pointed out. But he added an optimistic note by promising a book in which the procurators would find a lot of good advice.⁴²

‘Item ic sende u eenen clen en boecxken, dat begheer ik dat ghij lesen wilt. Want ghijt wel verstaet, ghij sult daer veel guets in vinden die Seven Ghetiden angaende’.

‘Likewise, I send you a small booklet which I hope you will read. Because if you understand it well you will learn there much that is good concerning the singing of the Hours’.

The final source to be described here is a sixteenth century list of rules and regulations for the singers at Leiden, drawn up by the governors themselves.⁴³ Once more disciplinary matters, coupled with fines and confiscations of fees because of transgressions, predominated. By the sixteenth century the choristers were made up to an increasing extent by lay, professional singers. Besides, their general misbehaviour, absenteeism, drunkenness and the improper exchange of their pay tokens (*lootjes*), indicate increasing concern with material matters.⁴⁴

*‘Item noch is geordineert dat nyemant en sal de ander loet wisselen, noch geldt daer voir geven, ende waer dat ymant contrarie dat deed sal men dat loet nyet wissel[en], mar salt over geven den getijdenmeesters eer ende voir al dat men hem zijnen i eygen loet sal wyssel[en] of betalen’.*⁴⁵

‘Likewise, it is ordered that no-one shall exchange the token of another person, nor give money for it, and were anyone to act contrary to that then the token should not be

⁴² Strohm, *Music Bruges*, p. 14, gives a list of music books dating from 1354 to 1402, *ad usum scholarium* (‘for the use of pupils’). These contained graduals, antiphones and sequences to be sung by the boys.

⁴³ GA Leiden, inv. no. KA 209.

⁴⁴ Dessing, *De Zeven Getijden*, p. 147, emphasized that the duties of the governors at Gouda were largely taken up with recruitment of lay singers and with maintaining discipline. At Gouda the lead tokens with which the choristers were paid were exchanged for cash only every three months. This may have encouraged improper exchanges.

⁴⁵ This and the following quotation are from the manuscript GA Leiden, inv. no. KA 209.

exchanged. It should be handed over to the procurators of the Hours, before a person exchanges or receives payment for even one of his own tokens’.

The rules contain a mixture of measures, some relating to performances in church, others to disciplinary matters, but in general the sanctions seem severe. A year's suspension from the choir is the most frequent punishment, if the rules are to be believed, and confiscation of fees, or fines in cases of non-attendance. The following passages give an impression of this:

‘Item waert sake dat yemant eynyge quade maniere hadte of eynich gekyef maecke in de kercken, die sal men ter stont oorlof geven.

Item noch isser geordineert wy dat de getijdenmeesters oerlof geven, die en sel in een jaer daerna nyet in de sange mogen comen, mar sal absent blijven de spacie van xii maenden’.

‘Likewise, if anyone misbehaves or causes any quarels in the churches, then he will be dismissed at once.

Likewise, it is ordered that whomever the procurators of the Hours dismiss, he shall not be allowed back into the choir for a year, but will be excluded for the space of 12 months’.

On the other hand, the misdemeanours of the choir members were not trivial. Failure to articulate the responses properly during the singing, failure to wear the proper vestments, and outright disobedience all appear as of old to be the most common faults, if we are to judge by this document. But there were also new misdemeanours not mentioned earlier, and perhaps not contemplated by Boudewijn van Zwieten. May the following provision serve to give some impression of the disharmony affecting the *Zevengetijden* in Leiden about the middle of the sixteenth century.

‘Item is sake dat ymant droncken of ongelaten in de koor quame of enich confauys maecht, die sal men oerlof geven van stonden an ende sal gepunert wesen als boven verclaert is’.

‘Likewise, if anyone should come drunken into the choir or cause any conflict, then he shall be dismissed at once and shall be punished as declared above’.

Conclusion

The change from a mainly clerical *Zevengetijden* choir as Boudewijn van Zwieten had planned it to the mid-sixteenth century group of mixed clerical and secular, professional singers briefly outlined here may seem abrupt. Van Zwieten had held reckoning with eternity and had envisaged no change in the order of things. But times did change. By funding the choir of the Hours he had hoped to have his name and the names of his dependents remembered for ever in prayers, and perhaps to give added status to St Peter's, Leiden. For a time at least his plan worked. His mass became a recognized event in the church calendar, although not as he had wished it. Our unidentified chorister (above) complained that those

who did not attend Van Zwieten's mass were still paid. But Van Zwieten's contribution to the Hours was recalled more positively in 1511 in a payment to the choir⁴⁶:

Item die Sevengetijden in Ste. Pieters kerk hebben tsjaers opte scoel ii lb. Hollants, gecomen van Bouwen van Swieten, die nu betaelt die overcoster van Sinte Pieters kerk; daerom hier niet'.

‘Likewise, the college of the Hours in St Peter's church has annually 2 lbs. Hollands from the school, coming from Boudewijn van Zwieten, which the senior verger at St Peter's now pays; therefore not recorded here’.

In retrospect we may conclude that Boudewijn van Zwieten by providing incomes for the choir and office holders of the Hours, and bread for the poor, was no more than expressing conventional piety in accord with his times. But perhaps he had a more lasting on public taste in music than he knew or intended. Polyphony against which the procurators protested in their letter to the burgomasters was the avantgarde music of those times, as the choir members appreciated, and it triumphed in the compositions of Josquin, Alexander Agricola, Hendrik Isaac, Adrian Willaert, Cipriano de Rore, Orlando di Lasso and other, early copies of some of whose music are still kept in the archives at Leiden.

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⁴⁶ GA Leiden, accounts, SA I, inv. no. 590, f. 64.