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The National Synod of Dordrecht-1619
'Restaurate Religione' or 'Asserta Religione'

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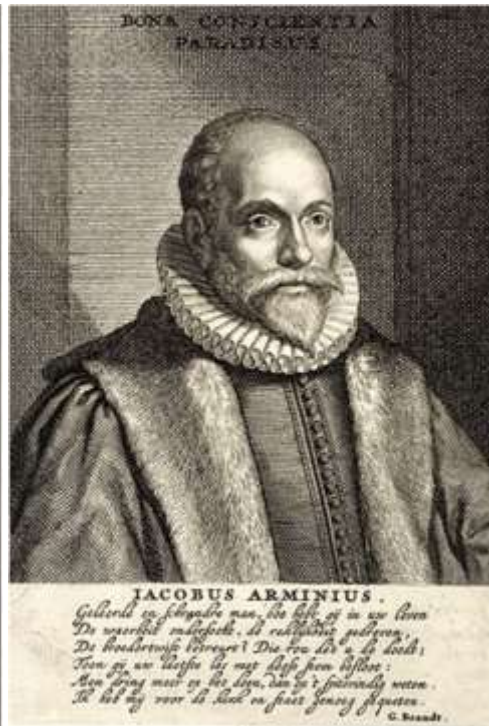
In the beginning of the seventeenth century there arose violent religious conflicts in the Northern Netherlands. The bone of contention was the religious concept of Predestination or Predetermination, concerning the relationship between the beginning of all things and the purpose of these things. It divided the Republic of the Seven Provinces into two camps: the Remonstrants and the Counter-Remonstrants.

The Remonstrants were followers of Jacobus Arminius, also known as 'Arminianismus', also called the 'rekkelijken'. The Counter-Remonstrants, also called 'preciezen' or 'Gomaristen', formed a Calvinist movement that derived their names from their opposition to the Remonstrants or Arminianism. The leader of the Counter-Remonstrants was Franciscus Gomarus. Prince Maurice of Orange-Nassau openly joined the Counter-Remonstrants, though it may be doubted whether this was a result of his religious belief but rather a question of political calculation.

His great political rival Johan van Oldenbarnevelt, Dutch Stadtholder of the States of Holland, supported the Remonstrants. In August 1618 Maurice carried out a coup. He had his main opponents arrested on the grounds of 'high treason'. Oldenbarnevelt was publicly beheaded on May 13, 1619 on the Binnenhof in The Hague.



Johan van Oldenbarnevelt¹
 (1559-1619)



Jacobus Arminius²
 (1563-1641)



Maurits van Oranje-Nassau³
(1567-1625)



Franciscus Gomarus⁴
(1547-1619)

The States-General convened a Synod, which took place in the upper room of the Dordrecht ‘Kloveniersdoelen’⁵ and opened on November 13, 1618 with theologians from home and abroad. After 180 sessions the Synod ended on May 29, 1619.



Kloveniersdoelen, Dordrecht⁶



Daniel Heinsius⁷
(1580-1655)

The Remonstrants lost in favor of the Counter-Remonstrants and the Counter-Remonstrant movement became the official doctrine of the Reformed Church in the Dutch Republic.

Following a proposal by Daniel Hensius, the States-General decided to give the foreign theologians a gold medal with on the obverse the words '*Restaurate Religione*' and on the reverse Mount Zion in stormy winds and the words '*Erunt sicut Mons Sion*'. The medal was made by Willem van Bylaer (1580-1635), engraver/die-cutter of the Dordrecht Mint and 28 copies were struck.

The representation on the obverse is taken from the print made in 1618 by Middelburg engraver François Schillemans (1575-1620).

The obverse legend: [rose] × ASSERTA • × • RELIGIONE (the religion assured) differs slightly from the original text.

The reverse legend: × ERUNT × VT × MONS × SION × CIO × IO × CXIX × [rose] (they shall be as Mount Zion, 1619). The words '*Erunt ut mons Sion*' are a citation from Psalm 125:1. Mount Zion was intentionally chosen as a symbol. In Psalm 125:1: "They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever." On the reverse is a temple on a steep mountain, where people are harassed on their way by stormy winds.

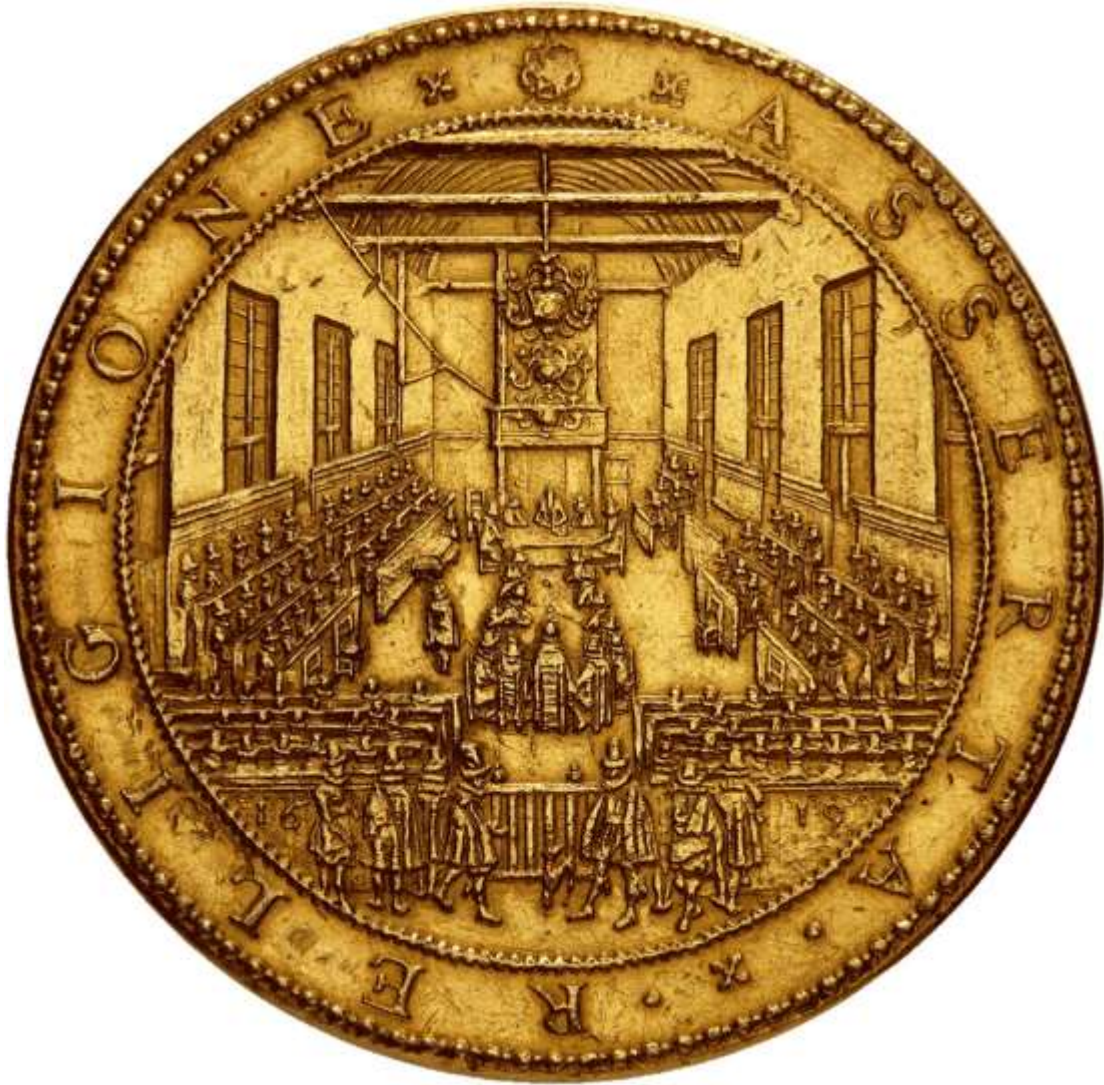


Joseph Hall shown wearing his synod medal⁸

On the occasion of the closing of the Synod the foreign delegates received after a grand farewell party this large gold commemorative medal. One of these medals was given to Joseph Hall, Dean of Worcester, who is pictured here in his old age. Hall was one of four representatives sent by King James I of England. Hall became ill and withdrew before the close of the synod and was replaced by Thomas Goad.⁹ The Dutch participants were given a silver medal.

Some gold examples of the triumph medal of the Synod of Dordrecht are preserved in public collections. In the numismatic cabinet of the Basel Historical Museum there is

an example given to the Swiss theologian Prof. Dr. Sebastian Beck in 1619. The only copy in a Dutch collection is the medal in the Dordrecht Museum. This medal was put up for sale in a Jacques Schulman auction in Amsterdam in May 1933. It was not sold and afterwards was purchased by the municipality of Dordrecht and the 'Old-Dordrecht Association' for Fl. 400.¹⁰



**Gold Triumph medal of the Synod of Dordrecht - 1619¹¹ (dies a/e)
The Synod in session**

Gold, 119.56 g, 12 h, diameter 58.6 mm. Medallist: Willem van Bylaer. Designer: François Schillemans / Daniel Heinsius. Technique: struck. Obverse inscription: [rose] × ASSERTA • × • RELIGIONE × (the religion assured).



Reverse inscription: [rose] × **ERVNT** × **VT** × **MONS** × **SION** × **CIO** × **IO** × **CXIX** ×
 (they shall be as Mount Zion, 1619). Dordrecht Museum, Collection Huis van Gijn,
 Dordrecht. Nr. 4375. Reference: v. Loon II, p. 105.

The temple on Mount Zion under the tetragrammaton (the Hebrew YHWH or Yahweh, God's name), with the wind (in the form of heads) blowing from four directions.

The temple here is a symbol of heaven. Pilgrims climb the hill. The pilgrims are a symbol of "the wind of false doctrine" and are "tossed to and fro" (Ephesians 4:14).

It is worth noting that more than one die was cut for the obverse and reverse, four for the obverse and two for the reverse.¹²

Obverse dies:

- a. with 1619, small dog in the foreground
- b. CUM PRIV[ILIGIO] 1619, ornament between 2nd and 3rd beams of the ceiling
- c. CUM PRIV 1619, without ornament
- d. CUM PRIV 1619, without ornament between 2nd and 3rd beams of the ceiling.
Signature I v B of J. (= Jan (or Jacobus) van Bylaer, assistant and brother of Willem van Bylaer)

Reverse dies:

- e. 3 people climbing the mountain
- f. 6 people climbing the mountain

**Silver Triumph medal of the Synod of Dordrecht - 1619¹³ (dies a/e)**

Silver, 61.8 g, 12 h, diameter 59 mm. Obverse inscription: [rose] × ASSERTA • × • RELIGIONE × (the religion assured). Reverse inscription: [rose] × ERVNT × VT × MONS × SION × CIO × IO × CXIX × (they shall be as Mount Zion, 1619). Medallist: Willem van Bylaer. Designer: François Schillemans / Daniel Heinsius. Technique: struck. Rijksmuseum Amsterdam. Inv. nr. NG-VG-1-612. Reference: v. Loon II, p. 105.

On the obverse there is a dog in the middle under the legs of the two gentlemen. Also the year of production 1619 is given.

In the collection of the Rotterdam Museum there is a unique specimen with the obverse the picture of the meeting of the Synod of Dordrecht and the “reverse” a mirror of the picture of the meeting struck incuse. It may have been used as a pattern or was a mis-strike using two obverse dies.



One-sided strike of triumph medal of the Synod of Dordrecht – 1619¹⁴ (die a/-)

Copper, 2.86 g, 12 h, diameter 57 mm and thickness 1 mm. With dog and without CVM PRIV 1619. Medallist: Willem van Bylaer. Designer: François Schillemans / Daniel Heinsius. Technique: struck. Museum Rotterdam. Inv. nr. 57665.

At a later date silver and bronze versions of the medal were offered for sale to the many enthusiasts who could afford it. This medal was also struck by Willem van Bylaer in the Dordrecht Mint. It is to be noted that the little dog is omitted. Probably it was not considered appropriate for this genteel and scientific meeting. Also noteworthy is that the text “CVM PRIV” can be seen above the year 1619. This suggests that Willem van Bylaer struck these silver and bronze medals and sold them for his own account.



Silver Triumph medal of the Synod of Dordrecht – 1619¹⁵ (dies c/f)

Silver, 61 g, 12 h, diameter 57 mm. Without dog and with CVM PRIV 1619. Medallist: Willem van Bylaer. Designer: François Schillemans / Daniel Heinsius. Technique: struck. Museum Rotterdam. Inv. nr. 57664.



Bronze Triumph medal of the Synod of Dordrecht - 1619¹⁶ (dies c/f)

Bronze, - . - g, 12 h, diameter -.- mm. Without dog and with CVM PRIV 1619. Medallist: Willem van Bylaer. Designer: François Schillemans / Daniel Heinsius. Technique: struck. Private collection.

The reverse of the commemorative medal also underwent changes. The halo was more sumptuous than in the original gold and silver medals. Also the number of persons climbing the mountain ranges from four to six. All this was no doubt done to please the deep believers.

Remarkably, 368 years after the triumph medal of the Synod of Dordrecht was issued in 1619, a replica was struck in 1987 at the former national mint in Utrecht, now the Royal Dutch Mint. It is recognizably a replica because on the reverse there is the mintmark of the Utrecht Mint (staff of Mercury with snakes) and the mintmaster's mark (an anvil) of the mintmaster (Ir. J. de Jong, 1980-87).

The year 1987 commemorated the 350th anniversary of the States Bible, the 1637 Dutch translation of the bible, an outgrowth of the Synod of Dordrecht. It was also the jubilee of a Dutch firm. In 1987 the religious book publisher Den Hertog in Houten celebrated its 75th anniversary with its religious beliefs through the issue of a replica of this triumph medal.



Bronze Replica Triumph medal of the Synod of Dordrecht - 1619¹⁷

Bronze, 99.6 g, 12 h, diameter 58 mm. Reverse mintmark: Mercury staff with snakes. Reverse mint master's mark: anvil. MPO/Heritage Auctions Europe, IJsselstein.



Sources:

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The original Dutch version of this article, “De Nationale Synode van Dordrecht 1619” was published in *Muntkoerier*, nr. 6, 2016, Year 45, pp. 4-8.

¹ Johan van Oldenbarnevelt (1547-1619), was grand pensionary of the States-General during the Eighty years' War. https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johan_van_Oldenbarnevelt. Michiel Jansz. van Mierevelt (1556-1641), Portrait of Johan van Oldenbarnevelt (1547-1619). Painting: oil on panel (h. 62.5 cm (24.6 in). w. 48.7 cm (19.2 in). Rijksmuseum Amsterdam. Inv. nr. SK-A-257. <http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.6739>.

² Pieter Sluyter (-), Portrait of Jacobus Arminius (1559 - 1609). (Latinisation of Jacobus Hermansz (oon). Dutch preacher and divine. Leader: Remonstrants. Engraving/etching: (h 179 mm x w 122 mm). Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, Inv. nr. RP-P-1609. <http://hdl.handle.net/10394/RM0001.COLLECT.176539>

³ Maurits van Oranje (1567-1625), Portrait of prince of Orange and count of Nassau. Stadtholder and army commander of the Republic of the Seven Provinces of the United Netherlands. https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maurits_van_Oranje. Michiel Jansz. van

- Mierevelt (1556-1641), Portrait of Maurits of Orange. Painting: oil on panel (h 65 cm x w 53 cm). Palace Het Loo, loan Historical Association Orange-Nassau. Nr. A1422.
- ⁴ Willem Iscaacz. van Swanenburg (1580-1612), Portrait of Franciscus Gomarus (1563-1641), (actually Francois Gomaer). Professor of theology (University of Leiden). Leader: Contra-remonstrants. Engraving: (h 222 mm x w 148 mm). Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, Inv. nr. RP-P-1609. <http://hdl.handle.net/10394/RM0001.COLLECT.181674>
- ⁵ *Kloeveniersdoelen*, a complex of buildings in Dordrecht. The '*doelen*' served as a gathering place and practice area for a number of companies of the local militia. These gunmen were armed with a primitive musket rifle that was called bus or splitter (from the French *couleuvrine*), hence the name 'kloveniers'.
- ⁶ Francois Schillemans (1575-ca. 1620), Middelburg, Opening van de synode van Dordrecht, 1618. Engraving: on silk (h 545 mm x b 795). Rijksmuseum Amsterdam. Inv. nr. RP-P-OB-77.279. <http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.359226>
- ⁷ Jan Lievens (1607-1674), Portrait of Daniel Heinsius (1580-1655). Engraving/etching: (h 268 mm x w 203 mm). Rijksmuseum Amsterdam. Inv. nr. RP-P-08-12.602. <http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.38717>.
- ⁸ Paul de Zetter, Portrait of Joseph Hall (1575-1657). Engraving/etching: (h 133 mm x w 104 mm). Rijksmuseum Amsterdam. Inv. nr. RP-P-1905-266. <http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.198254>
- ⁹ Schaff, Philip. *Creeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical notes. Volume I. The History of Creeds*, Chapter 65 p. 512. Online at Christian Classics Ethereal Library: <http://m.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/creeds1.ix.iii.iv.html>.
- ¹⁰ Sanders, G. p. 364.
- ¹¹ Dordrechts Museum, Collection Huis van Gijn, Dordrecht. Photo with permission of the Dordrecht Museum.
- ¹² O. Roovers, 'Triumfpenningen', nr. 44.
- ¹³ Rijksmuseum Amsterdam. Photo with permission of the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam.
- ¹⁴ Museum Rotterdam. Inv. nr. 57665. Photo with permission of Museum Rotterdam.
- ¹⁵ Museum Rotterdam. Inv. nr. 57664. Photo with permission of Museum Rotterdam.
- ¹⁶ Private collection. Photo with permission of the Historical Association Old-Dordrecht.
- ¹⁷ MPO/Heritage Auctions Europe, IJsselstein. Auction 48, November 24-28, 2015. Lot 7713. Starting price € 15.00. Realized price € 18.00. Photo with permission of MPO/Heritage Auctions Europe, IJsselstein.