



# DUTCH SOURCES FOR THE WILLIAMITE CAMPAIGN IN IRELAND

BY W. TROOST

**D**r. J.G. Simms in 'Eyewitnesses of the Boyne' in the *Irish Sword*, VI, pp. 16-27 quotes the letters of the Dutch envoy, Jacob Hop, and of Hans Willem Bentinck, first Earl of Portland, on the battle; in his *Jacobite Ireland* (London, 1969) the correspondence of the Dutch general, Ginkel, from the Huisarchief Amerongen is introduced. Apart from this, historians writing in English on the Williamite campaign in Ireland have made scarcely any use of the Dutch sources for the war, which are quite extensive.

King William, during his stay in Ireland, wrote letters to the Dutch states general and to the grand pensioner, Anthonie Heinsius. The states general was the assembly that governed the Dutch Republic. This republic, founded in 1579, was a confederation of seven almost independent provinces. These were very careful not to lose their freedom. Decisions in the assembly, where each province had one vote, had in theory to be taken unanimously. If one of the provinces voted against a proposal, then it did not go through. If one of the less important did not agree with a certain motion the other provinces might still carry it out, but it was different if the province of Holland was in opposition. Holland was the most powerful state within the Dutch confederation. It was a rich province: Amsterdam, its capital, was the staple market of Europe in the seventeenth century. Trade was the source of the wealth of the province, whose merchants did business with the whole world. Their economic strength enabled the Amsterdam merchants to dominate the assembly of the province of Holland, and as Holland on its own paid 58% of all monies required by the states general, it is easy to understand why Holland's vote on any issue was crucial. The most influential politician in Holland, and therefore in the republic, was the grand pensioner (*Raadpensionaris*). Originally the legal adviser of the provincial states of Holland, which ruled the province, he became the leader of the delegation representing the province in the states general. This explains King William's extensive correspondence with Heinsius, who was grand pensioner from 1689

**Y E R L A N T**

Verlost en Hersteld,  
Door den Onvermoeide Victorieuzen  
**WILLIAM de III** <sup>de.</sup>  
*Koning van GROOT-BRITANNIEN.*

Waar in kortelijck verhandelt werd zijn Majesteits Heyrtogt na  
Yerland. Het overgaan der Steeden en Casteelen. En zonder  
veel bloestforten het zelve Land onder gehoorzaamheid gebragt.

*'s Vluchten van den Gewezen Koning Jacobus voor de tweede Reys  
naat Frankrijk.*

En de Triumphante wederom Reys van sijn Britannische Majesteit  
binnen Londen gearriveert den 20 Septem: 1690.

**VENI, VIDI, VICI.**

Naaukeutig uit de autentijke bewijzen en raporten by een gestelt door een  
Liefhebber der Historien.

*Met figuren der Belegering van de voornaamste Steeden en andere Aliën versiert.*

**Tot AMSTERDAM,**  
By *Jansen Hoorn*, Boekverkooper over 't Oude Heere Logement. 1690.

Title page of 'Ireland Rescued and Delivered', Amsterdam, 1690.

until his death in 1720. Heinsius, it may be added, was the Dutch leader in the War of the Spanish Succession after William's death in 1702.

William's letters to the states general are in Het Algemeen Rijksarchief (A.R.A.), The Hague, archives of the

states general, inventory 5917. Number 5917 contains all the incoming letters from England for the year 1690. Those for 1691 are in number 5918. It is a fairly large collection. William's letters to the states general are not very important. His letters to Heinsius give more infor-



Officers of the Haarlem Militia Company by Frans Hals.  
 Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem.

mation. These are in the archives of the Dutch royal family in The Hague. Luckily, much correspondence of the House of Orange-Nassau has been published. William's letters to Heinsius are in volume one of the third series of *Archives ou Correspondence inédite de la Maison d'Orange*. The editor was F.J.L. Krämer, a former archivist of the royal archives. This volume was published in Leiden, 1907. In a letter of 14 August, 1690, William wrote to Heinsius that 'he had to stay a bit longer at Limerick because of an unhappy accident about which other people will give you more information'. (*Archives*, p.82). This was William's comment on the destruction of his convoy at Ballyneety, Co. Limerick. On pp. 87-9 is William's letter to the prince of Waldeck, captain general in the Netherlands, explaining why he had had to raise the siege of Limerick. The loss of the convoy at Ballyneety was not explicitly mentioned by William as a cause of raising the siege. However, a secretary of William, Constantijn Huygens, who accompanied his master to Ireland and kept a diary during the journey, made it clear that the withdrawal from Limerick was caused by lack of ammunition due to the burning of 12,000 pounds of powder at Ballyneety. He had heard this from another secretary of William, but this reason for breaking up had to be kept secret. His diary has been published; *Journal van Constantijn Huygens, den Zoon, van 21 oktober 1688 tot 2 september 1696* (2 volumes Utrecht, 1876). His remark on the lack of ammunition as the cause of raising the siege can be found in the first volume on page 334.

William was not only king of England, but also stadholder of the provinces of Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht, Gelderland and Overijssel. The archives of the secretaryship of the stadholder are in the Algemeen Rijksarchief in The Hague. The archivist in charge there tells me

they contain no letters of William from Ireland. However, quite a number of letters about the Irish campaign were written by Jacob Hop. He was a Dutch diplomat who had been sent to the Holy Roman Emperor after Louis XIV had declared war on the Dutch Republic in November, 1688. Hop negotiated a treaty with Leopold I and, as this treaty was very important for William, the states general in September, 1689, sent Hop on a mission to the English court to report on it. On 14 February, 1690, William asked Heinsius to arrange with the states general that Hop would accompany him on his trip to Ireland and, on 27 February, Hop was appointed envoy extraordinary of the states general. He represented the states general during William's campaign in Ireland until the end of July, when he returned to Westminster on William's departure for Limerick. Hop wrote about twenty-five letters on the Irish campaign to the states general and fifteen to Heinsius. His letters to the states general are in inventory 5917 of the archives of the states general. There is a special 'Heinsius archief' in Het Algemeen Rijksarchief in The Hague. The letters from Hop to Heinsius are in A.R.A., The Hague, Heinsius archives, inventory 160.

While Hop was a diplomat with a special mission, the states general also had an ordinary ambassador in London, Aernout van Citters, who wrote many letters about William's campaign in Ireland. His letters and those of his secretary, F. Bade, are also to be found in inventory 5917 of the archives of the states general. Letters from van Citters to Heinsius can be found in Heinsius archives, inventory 153. Copies of the letters from William, Hop and van Citters are to be found in the archives of the provincial states of Holland, inventory 2437. Another source of information about the campaign are the printed pamphlets of which there are four

collections. The most important is *de Catalogus van de pamflettenverzameling berustende in de Koninklyke Bibliotheek bewerkt door Dr. W.P.C. Knuttel* (The Hague, 1889-1920). This is the so called Knuttel collection of the pamphlets in the Royal Library in The Hague. Knuttel was a former librarian of the Royal Library and drew up the catalogue in which numbers 13381-13394 all deal with the campaign. Some are printed copies of the letters sent by the king and Hop, but there is also one containing the story of a Dutch cook in the company of William. He wrote about his experiences in Ireland to his wife in the Netherlands. A very big pamphlet is number 13397. It was written after William had returned from Ireland on 29 September 1690. The translation of the Dutch title reads: *Ireland Rescued and Delivered by ... William III, King of Great Britain. His trip to Ireland is extensively described, how cities and castles went over to him and in what way the country was brought into obedience without much bloodshed. The flight of the former king to France for the second time; the return of the king on the 20th of september 1690. Veni, vidi, vici. Accurately from authentic evidence and reports written by a lover of history. Decorated with pictures of the sieges of the important cities and other actions.* (Amsterdam, 1690). It contains 94 pages. William of course is the hero and the pamphlet gives the impression that he had already conquered Ireland, even though he had been forced to withdraw from Limerick. As regards the raising of the siege the pamphlet on page 83-4 says it was caused by the bad weather and the lack of ammunition. Another collection is *Catalogus van de tractaten, pamfletten over de geschiedenis van Nederland aanwezig in de bibliotheek van Isäac Meulman, bewerkt door F.K. van der Wulp* (Amsterdam, 1969). The Meulman pamphlets are in the library of the University of Ghent in Belgium. This collection is much smaller than Knuttel's one. Still it contains some interesting pamphlets about the Irish campaign. They are numbered 6606-6623. There are only a few pamphlets in *de Bibliotheek van de Nederlandse pamfletten, Verzameling van de Bibliotheek van Joannes Thysius en de Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit te Leiden* (Den Haag, 1882-1934). These pamphlets are in the library of Leiden University. The pamphlets of *de Bibliotheek van de Nederlandse pamfletten, verzameling van Frederik Muller te Amsterdam, Naar tijdsorde gerangschikt en beschreven door P.A. Tiele* (Amsterdam, 1858-1861), cannot be traced anymore as they have been dispersed.

Viewed as a whole these Dutch sources do not yield any startling new information on King William's campaign in Ireland in 1690, but they are nevertheless useful and confirm the existing narrative of the stadholder's actions there.

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