



# THE JACOBITE WARS: SOME DANISH SOURCES

BY JOHN JORDAN

**A** part from the official and semi-official reports to Copenhagen, Danish sources on the Jacobite wars include some personal accounts. One of these is a published book by Andreas Claudianus, who served in the battalion of Prince Frederick's regiment of foot. This is in Latin, and was published in 1718, under the title *Mavors Irlandicus, sive Historia de Bello Hibernico biennium in Hibernia gesto, chartis consignata a commiltone A.C.* Claudianus was later pastor and, apparently, also at least for a time a schoolmaster in the little town of Stenstrup, in north-west Zealand, and although his style is turgid, his Latin is that of an educated man. He based his account on notes he made of his own experiences and on accounts from comrades of operations where he was not present, which he recorded at once. He gives some interesting details of operations where he was present. During the 1690 siege of Limerick, he says that, on 10 August,

*'The night being very stormy a tremendous disturbance arose between the soldiers of the enemy and those of the king, the former ringing their bells under the impression that an assault was at hand, the latter assuming from the sound of the bells that there was a sortie coming. The cause of this scare was that in the approaches to the mines, weapons [i.e., charges] more powerful than usual were being placed, for which reason in fear almost as they were aroused from sleep, those in the town girded themselves for defence, while the English raised a tremendous shout at the sound of the bronze bell, roaring: Now ring Pater Peter to masse, go to church ye Popish rogues ... which insulting words as if by a dire and malignant wound greatly affected the breasts of the townsmen.*

We know from reliable sources that the night of 10 August was the night on which Sarsfield left the cavalry camp on the Clare side to carry out his raid on the convoy at Ballyneety. It does not seem to have struck Claudianus that the ringing of the bells and the commotion in the

town might have been a deliberate ruse to concentrate the attention of the besiegers on the walls while Sarsfield and his men moved off; he attributed the exploit to the rapparees, but we, with

fuller knowledge, must regard such a ruse as at least a possibility. Claudianus thought that the decision to raise the siege was caused by fear of the mines laid by the Irish under the walls which,



Frederick Herman, Duke of Schomberg (1615-90).  
Attributed to Sir Godfrey Kneller, c. 1675.

he says, would have blown up Protestant prisoners in the town as well as the stormers. This may or may not be the truth, or part of the truth, but it suggests that the virtual destruction of the Brandenburghers at the Black Battery during the assault on the counter-scarp on 27 August had a considerable moral effect on the Williamite rank and file.

Another personal record is the MS journal of F. Alteveld, preserved in the Royal Library, Copenhagen. Of its 24 pages, 20 are devoted to the war in Ireland. Almost nothing is known about him, not even his rank or unit, but as he mentions particularly the death of Colonel Munchgaar of Prince Frederick's at Aughrim, it is probable that he served either in the Guards or the Prince Frederick battalion. He writes in badly-spelled and incorrect German in a sprawling hand, and was barely literate. The following extracts are characteristic:

*On the 3rd November [1691] we got orders to march to Cork [from Waterford] and arrived there on the 8th December. That winter there was a little frost such that I could break the ice with my shoe. The Irish said that there had not been so severe a winter for a hundred years. I laughed then.*

*... There are four religions there side by side. I lay in quarters with a fisherman at Waterford. He has 3 sons. The 1st was a Catholic, the 2nd a Calvinist, the 3rd a Quaker, the mother a Presbyterian; but the father himself a Catholic. In the country there were also many rapparees. I saw at Clonmel over 40 heads set up over the gate.*

The official and semi-official accounts themselves are divided between the State Archive (*Rigsarkivet*) and the Royal Library (*Det Kongelige Bibliotek*). Their distribution between the two appears to some extent due to chance. The documents in the State archives may be classified as (a) Military accounts, (b) Documents concerning the convoy of the corps to British ports, (c) Inward correspondence of the Danish Chief Secretary for War, 1689-92, (d) Inward business of the War Chancery, 1689-92, and (e) Danish Army Establishments, 1689-91. The papers in (c) and (d) are of the first importance and interest for the study of the operations of the Jacobite war from March, 1690, onwards, and also contain a great deal of information about conditions in Ireland at the time, as well as throwing useful light on Irish, British and European politics.

Group (d), correspondence to Jens Harboe, Chief Secretary for War, may be subdivided into two groups, that from Würtemberg and that from other officers. Würtemberg and Harboe together mono-



**Portrait thought to be of Ferdinand Wilhelm, Duke of Würtemberg-Neustadt (1659-1701), commander of the Danish force in Ireland, 1690-91.**

polised the confidence of Christian V in all matters relating to the army and navy. The tone of the correspondence makes it clear that Würtemberg was not only anxious to keep Harboe fully in touch with the operations and administration of the corps, but also to keep the goodwill of the man on the spot who had the ear of the king during his own absence. The letters, all in French or German, make up a continuous series from September, 1689 to February, 1692, when the corps left Ireland. The second subgroup, letters from staff officers, commissaries and unit commanders, who no doubt were anxious to retain the goodwill of so important an official, are of varying importance, those of Colonel H.G. Walter, Würtemberg's principal adjutant before he was mortally wounded at Limerick on 10 August, 1690, being of considerable interest.

Group (e), inward business of the War Chancery, consists of the personal reports which Würtemberg made direct to Christian, with many enclosures by way of copies of letters, extracts from the corps diary, returns of casualties and effective strengths, etc. These cover many questions of high policy and are of interest from the point of the general historian of the period, and are of great value as regards the progress of the military operations.

In the Royal Library, Copenhagen, there are several groups of documents relating to the corps, principally

Würtemberg's journal of the first siege of Limerick from 14 August, a list of casualties after the siege (undated), and an account from 1689 to 1714, compiled by the Danish State Councillor Jessen (died 1783) more or less as a biography of a Colonel Brinck, who served from 1689 to 1697, first as a corporal, later as sergeant, in a cavalry regiment and later with other Danish forces in Saxon and British pay.

Ferdinand Wilhelm, Duke of Würtemberg-Neustadt, was a German aristocrat who had turned professional soldier. Born in 1659, he entered the Danish service at an early age. He fought with the Imperial army under Prince Eugene of Savoy against the Turks and French between 1681 and 1687. At the age of thirty he was lieutenant-general, and in 1689, was given command of William's Danish contingent. When the war in Ireland ended, he took his men to Flanders, and fought at Steenkerke and Neerwinden. In 1694, he defended Nieuport against the French, and he fought with distinction at the siege of Namur. After the Peace of Ryswick, he was appointed governor of Dutch Flanders. In 1698, he joined the Saxon-Polish service with the rank

of field-marshal, and by a series of skilful manoeuvres he recovered most of Podolia from the Turks. In 1700, he commanded the Danish forces in Holstein against the Swedes, but at the Peace of Travendal he returned to Holland and died there on 7 June, 1701.

Würtemberg in his reports was probably concerned to put his men's performance and his own in the best light, but he could be critical enough of his allies and of his commander, William. He is probably as impartial a witness of the siege as any who has been forthcoming up to now, and his narrative must have been written close to the actual event. His evidence goes a long way to settle the question of how far bad weather forced William to raise the siege. While there was very heavy rain before the assault on 27 August, it was not this rain but a shortage of ammunition that determined William's decision. Ballyneety had been even more successful than most of us have been taught to think. His story of his protest to William about the insufficiency of preparations for the assault on the 27th has the ring of professional sincerity about it. The main new item of information otherwise is that the Irish garrison were able to maintain so surprising a volume of fire during the siege.

(Compiled and abridged from 'Würtemberg at Limerick, 1690' in *Studies*, Summer, 1954, and 'The Jacobite Wars: Some Danish Sources' in *Studies*, Winter, 1954).