The Image of William III in Amsterdam after His Ascent to the English Throne: The Case of the Sheriffs’ Election in 1690

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In 1690 William III and the city of Amsterdam fought out one of their regularly occurring political battles. This time the fight centred around Amsterdam’s refusal to send the nomination of the city sheriffs to England, where William III stayed after his ascent to the English throne. Amsterdam appealed to a privilege of Philip II which stated that the nomination should be sent to the Court of Holland in case the stadholder was not in the country. Superficially the conflict dealt with the sheriffs’ nomination, but in reality Amsterdam wanted to show William III its independence. The city feared the increased power of their stadholder who had also become the king of England. Moreover the Amsterdam regents thought that the king had subordinated the interests of the Republic to those of England, when he negotiated various treaties with the English in 1689. The political struggle was accompanied by a pamphlet war in which the pro-Amsterdam pamphlets accused the king of wanting to become a sovereign in the Netherlands. The pro-Williamite forces, who were supported by Romeyn de Hooghe and Eric Walten, denied this and blamed the Amsterdammers for playing into the French king’s hands by threatening to stop paying for the war against France if their privilege was not upheld. In the end, Amsterdam lost the battle because the other Holland towns did not support Amsterdam’s struggle to maintain its privilege.

Introduction

The relationship between William III and Amsterdam had always been a rather tense one. For instance, at the beginning of September 1688, when the preparations for William III’s expedition to England had nearly been completed, Amsterdam had not yet given its consent to the undertaking of their stadholder. This meant that there would not be
enough money for the expedition to England, as Amsterdam was responsible for 29% of the income of the Dutch state. William III therefore decided to send Dijkvelt, one of his close confidants, to Amsterdam to concert the affair with Mr. Hudde (one of the Amsterdam burgomasters), for as the stadholder admitted: ‘I always fear this big city’. In the end the Amsterdam city council (vroedschap) approved the expedition on 26 September 1688, but this did not mean that the air between the stadholder and the city had been cleared.

Two years later, in 1690, the city and William III, who in the meantime had become king of England, clashed again seriously, this time about the election of the town sheriffs. Amsterdam feared the increased power of William III as King of England and did not like the way William III had subordinated the interests of the Republic to those of England, when he negotiated a number of treaties with an English delegation led by Secretary of State Nottingham in 1689. In order to show its independence the city therefore refused to send the nomination for the sheriff’s election to England, as the stadholder was not present in the Netherlands. Normally the stadholder was allowed to choose seven sheriffs from the fourteen names that were sent to him, but an old privilege stipulated that in his absence the nomination should be sent to the Court of Holland instead. William III, however, regarded Amsterdam’s action as a violation of his prerogative. The resulting clash between the stadholder-king and the city of Amsterdam will be examined from the pamphlets that were published about the affair. With more than 1000 printers and booksellers, Amsterdam had ample capacity for printing pamphlets. The Dutch historian Niek van Sas described the pamphlet as ‘the typical workhouse of crisis politics’. During the crisis of 1690 119 Dutch pamphlets were published of which 45 were reprints. Superficially the public debate orchestrated by both sides, dealt with the sheriff’s election, but what was really at stake was the position of William III in the Republic. We will see how William III’s opponents viewed the image of the new king and how William III’s supporters tried to maintain the rights of their stadholder.

The clash in 1690 was not the first confrontation between William III and Amsterdam, although the prince might have hoped that after his purge of the city magistracy in September 1672, he would command a majority in Amsterdam. In the reshuffle ten members of the Amsterdam vroedschap and five sheriffs were replaced. Those removed from office were republicans who had made clear their opposition to the reinstatement of the House of Orange, but those that replaced them were not conspicuous Orangists, but rather men who were prepared to support the prince during the crisis of 1672. Gilles Valckenier, the leading politician in Amsterdam after the purge of the magistracy, for instance, was not an Orangist. He had waited until July 1672 before committing himself to the group within Amsterdam which was working for the restoration of the House of Orange. As burgomaster in 1673 and 1674 he supported William III’s policies, but in 1675 he and the town objected to William’s plan to become duke of the province of Gelderland. This would make the stadholder a sovereign in the province, which would change the existing constitution of the Republic. Since 4 July 1672 William III held the office of stadholder in five provinces. William I of Orange, William III’s great grandfather had also been stadholder of the provinces of Holland, Zeeland and Utrecht. A stadholder
was the deputy of the sovereign in the province. After the States-General abjured their allegiance to Philip II in 1581, the States of the various provinces had become the new sovereigns. They had kept the office of stadholder as a tribute to William of Orange, but the stadholder was now a servant of the States. And this servant in the person of William III wanted to become a sovereign in the province of Gelderland in 1675. Amsterdam was not prepared to accept William’s move and due to the city’s pressure William III gave up his effort to become duke of Gelderland.

Another source of friction between William III and Amsterdam was the opposition of the city to the continuation of the war that Louis XIV had started in 1672. At the beginning of 1677 Valckenier concluded a political alliance with Hendrik Hooft, the leader of the rival faction in the Amsterdam vroedschap, in order to end the war. As a result William was forced to accept the separate peace treaty with France at Nijmegen in 1678.

William’s annoyance with Amsterdam over its refusal to accept him as duke of Gelderland and its pressure on him to end the war with France were nothing in comparison to his anger with the city in 1684. This new confrontation was caused by Amsterdam’s refusal to accept William III’s request to allow the recruitment of 16,000 new troops in order to assist Spain, which had been attacked by France. As a result Spain had to surrender the city of Luxembourg to Louis XIV. William III blamed ‘these scoundrels of Amsterdam’ for the loss of Luxembourg.

However, neither Amsterdam nor William III wanted the conflict to get out of hand completely. They succeeded in repairing their damaged relationship and as we saw above, Amsterdam eventually gave its consent to William’s expedition to England.

**William’s ascent to the English throne**

In the Dutch Republic, public opinion in general was enthusiastic about William’s expedition to England and his ascent to the throne. The large Knuttel pamphlet collection in the Royal Library at The Hague contains 866 pamphlets for the years 1688 and 1689. There is not one pamphlet of Dutch origin that was against the English enterprise. This absence of a negative Dutch attitude towards the English venture of William III and his ascent to the English throne however, was not only the result of a general admiration for the role of the stadholder during the events of 1688–1689. It was also caused by the large scale propaganda campaign organized by William III. An anonymous French pamphlet, which described William’s expedition as ‘a cover to make himself absolute master of Great Britain and the United Province with the purpose to govern them arbitrarily and in a purely despotic way’, was forbidden by the Court of Holland. The authorities in the Dutch Republic were successful in preventing the circulation of Jacobite pamphlets. Thus the impression arose that the English were also pleased with their new king.

Amsterdam, however, soon found out that there was no reason to be enthusiastic about William’s ascent to the English throne. In spite of the elaborate and costly celebrations that the city organized on the occasion of William and Mary’s coronation, former Amsterdam burgomaster Nicolaas Witsen found out that William III, as English king, was not prepared to pay any real attention to Dutch interests when he started
negotiations with the English politicians about English assistance in the war against France. William III had asked Witsen, Dijkvelt and Nassau-Odijk, a second cousin of his, to come over to England and assist him during these negotiations. In a report about these negotiations Witsen described how the interests of the Republic were subordinated to those of England. Dutch wishes to have the Navigation Act of 1651 repealed were not honoured by William III, who was afraid that this issue would increase anti-Dutch feelings in England. He pressed the Dutch delegates to let the matter drop, telling Witsen that ‘merchants have no understanding of politics’. The naval treaty between the two countries stipulated that an Englishman should command every unit of the fleet, however large or small, even if he were junior in rank to his Dutch colleague. In the offensive and defensive treaty, concluded on 24 August/3 September, the new allies agreed to suspend all trade with France and not to conclude a separate peace with that country. Witsen had been against these two clauses, but the English were able to overrule the Dutch delegation. The Dutch had also wanted to specify the number of troops each country would contribute to the combined Anglo-Dutch army, but on this point too, the English refused to comply with Dutch wishes. The Dutch did not get any support from the king, who wanted to conclude a treaty anyhow, even if this was at the expense of his countrymen. In the end Witsen signed the treaty filled with emotion as ‘my shaking hand can witness’. He realized that William III had only asked him to come over to England to give the impression that Amsterdam and the stadholder-king would cooperate during the war with France. Witsen therefore thought that the king had misused him during his stay in England and he wrote in his report ‘[I] wished [I] had never been asked to come to England, because then [I] would not have to feel so bad about the damage that happened to [me] and [my] country men’.

The sheriffs’ election of 1690

In his report Witsen also mentioned the change of the political climate in the Netherlands as a result of William’s ascent to the throne: ‘It seems that fear amongst the authorities in the Republic is increasing rather rapidly, with the result that they do not dare to initiate anything without the breath of this king, our stadholder’. Amsterdam, however, did not fear the new king. After Witsen had returned at the end of November 1689 feelings of disappointment and even anger brought about another clash between the city and the stadholder-king. The faction of burgomasters Huydecoper and Bors van Waveren, which had dominated the city government since February 1689, decided to challenge William III’s authority. Amsterdam probably did not dare to challenge William openly. The city therefore used a privilege granted by Philip II of Spain on 3 January 1581 which stipulated ‘that the election of sheriffs from a nomination of fourteen persons should be made by the stadholder and in his absence by the Court of Holland’. Out of these fourteen persons the stadholder had to elect the seven new sheriffs and the stadholder was expected to choose seven names that had been marked by the Amsterdam burgomasters. This 1581 privilege was based on one given by Mary of Burgundy on 14 March 1477 which
stipulated that the nominations should be sent on 28 January. In a normal situation, with the stadholder present in the province, he would have enough time to make his election, for the new sheriffs had to be sworn in on 2 February. As the stadholder was in England, Amsterdam argued that there would not be enough time for him to make the election in time. So Amsterdam had two reasons to ask the States of Holland, as their sovereigns, to order the Court of Holland to make the election. If the request was not complied with, Amsterdam would not contribute to the cost of the war.

In January 1689 the Amsterdam burgomasters had also sent the nomination of the sheriffs to the Court of Holland quoting the privilege of Philip II. The Court of Holland, however, sent the nomination to England. William III thanked the Court of Holland for not having made the choice itself, but he showed his annoyance with Amsterdam’s action by choosing two sheriffs that had not been marked. For the time being Amsterdam put up with the stadholder’s decision, but it was determined to prevent the Court of Holland sending the nomination to England again. William III was furious that the Amsterdam government tried to pass him over a second time. He regarded the affront and threat to his prerogative as a ‘pretext’ to rob him of his power. Moreover the action by Amsterdam came at a very awkward moment. The stadholder-king was planning to go over to Ireland to fight James II, the former king, who had arrived there in March 1689. Without the financial support of Amsterdam William III would be unable to start his expedition to Ireland. In order to crush Amsterdam’s opposition and to prevent the city getting the support of other towns in Holland, William III decided to send the earl of Portland, the former Hans Willem Bentinck and William’s favourite, to the Republic.

When Portland, as a member of the nobility of the province of Holland, wanted to take his seat at a meeting of the States of Holland on 20 January, the deputies of Amsterdam objected to this because he had become a naturalized Englishman, a member of the House of Lords and was serving another sovereign. They also declared that if Portland kept his seat in the States of Holland, Amsterdam would withdraw its deputies. The city actually did so, when the nobility and the other seventeen voting towns in the States of Holland dismissed Amsterdam’s objections. They did not think it was a proper time to attack William III and his favourite. Moreover, the ministers of the Reformed Church in Amsterdam and the merchants of the city did not support the actions of their superiors. The anti-aristocratic attitude of the citizenry was clear.

Both sides in the conflict wrote Justifications and Deductions, full of legal arguments, to prove their point. Amsterdam, however, did not succeed in convincing the nobility and the other Holland towns of the validity of their ideas, for on 28 January 1690 the States of Holland resolved that Amsterdam had to send the nomination of the sheriffs to England. This, the Amsterdam government refused to do and sent the nomination to the Court of Holland, which returned the nomination unopened.

The Pamphlet War

From that moment on the tone of the debate changed. Amsterdam decided to use stronger language in the battle with its opponents, for on 4 February Portland wrote to William III:
‘The malicious people do a lot of damage with their villainous pamphlets, although they are full of lies, but we will pay them in their own coin with a bit more force and ground’.

Some of these villainous pamphlets were aimed particularly at Portland himself. In Dutch cow the pro-Amsterdam author has him say ‘the Boss [William III] challenges [you] from England and who will stop me from putting myself in the position of vice-stadholder?’

In A missive of a sincere patriot to a member of the Amsterdam government the author discusses the naturalization of Bentinck as an Englishman and emphasizes the dangers connected with this: ‘If the Republic gets into a conflict with the present king of England, he [Bentinck] will have to show so much veneration and respect for his Majesty that he will absolutely have to take his side’.

In A letter from a friend to a friend, written from London William III himself came under fire. The author speaks about ‘the resolute way in which the rulers of Amsterdam are maintaining the rights and privileges of the country and the city’. The author blames William III for having suddenly prorogued the Convention Parliament on 27 January/6 February 1690 ‘to the great prejudice of the nation and the discontentment of all good inhabitants’. The writer of another pamphlet, The arisen spirit of Pieter de la Court also criticizes William III.

The name Pieter de la Court (1618–1685) needs some explanation. Pieter de la Court was a Leiden cloth manufacturer and a political ally of Johan de Witt. In his Interest of Holland, published in 1662 during the first stadholderless period (1650–1672), he wrote that Holland was, and would always be better off without a stadholder. He was a supporter of the idea of ‘True Freedom’ which was understood to mean the full sovereignty of the provincial States within a federation of seven republics, without the remnant of sovereign powers in an ‘eminent head’, that is the stadholder. According to De la Court all monarchy and quasi-monarchy harmed the true interest of the citizen, for any element of hereditary power subordinated freedom and the public good to dynastic concerns.

The author of The arisen spirit of Pieter de la Court echoed Pieter de la Court when he wrote: ‘An eminent head [William III] causes discord and rupture amongst rulers and subjects and by playing off one group against the other, controls them both’.

In Amsterdam, alone in its defence of freedom, written like a poem, the writer points out that whereas William III had restored freedom and the rule of law in England, he had abolished these in the Republic. And who is prepared to stop this gruesome deed, the writer asks?: ‘My Amsterdam alone, the country’s shelter and hope, the wet nurse of the public, the mother of Europe, while a multitude of Holland’s eighteen towns destroy themselves’. In A message from Rotterdam to a person in Amsterdam, the writer says that the effort to rob Amsterdam of its privileges resembles ‘the tyrannical conversion of [Huguenots] by dragoons in France’. He regards the opponents of Amsterdam as people who suck up to [William III] and like Esau have sold their birthright for a mess of pottage. They sell their country in order to get a job and they begrudge Amsterdam its prerogatives after they have given up their own privileges in a cowardly way.
In these pro-Amsterdam pamphlets the emphasis was put on the right of Amsterdam to maintain its privileges and the effort of William III to undermine them and become a sovereign ruler in the Netherlands.

What about Portland’s promise in the letter mentioned above to pay the Amsterdammers back ‘in their own coin with a bit more force and ground’? The Orange forces were certainly able to do so. They succeeded in enlisting Romeyn de Hooghe and Eric Walten in their fight against Amsterdam. Romeyn de Hooghe had been working for William III since 1672 and the Amsterdam regents had got annoyed with this Orangist pamphleteer and etcher. In 1677 he had been summoned before the sheriff law court in Amsterdam for what Wayne Franits calls a politically inspired accusation. De Hooghe had allegedly produced certain erotic prints for a translation of the pornographic novel *La putana errante* (The wandering whore), a book then erroneously ascribed to Pietro Aretino. After the court case De Hooghe went to Haarlem where he felt himself safer and made more violent attacks upon Amsterdam and France.

Eric Walten was one of the most prolific defenders of the Glorious Revolution. Amongst contemporary English writers Walten highlighted the works of Robert Ferguson, the radical Whig (and later Jacobite) propagandist and the more moderate Gilbert Burnet. He wrote on William III’s behalf defending his policies and praising his glory as a virtuous prince.

In his *Mirror of Truth*, in which Walten describes the discussion between a pious patriot and an Arminian, the mouthpiece of Amsterdam, the author uses the patriot to blame the regime of John de Witt for having neglected the army of the Republic to such an extent that it seduced Louis XIV to attack the country. In 1678 Amsterdam insisted on concluding a peace, not for the sake of peace itself, but in order to raise the public’s suspicion that the king refused to end the war and to give the impression that ‘the Amsterdammers were the only advocates of peace’. According to the patriot, William III could have concluded a stable peace if Amsterdam had not opposed him so much. The patriot even blames Amsterdam for the persecution of the Huguenots in France. Since Amsterdam in 1684 refused to accept William’s request for the recruitment of 16,000 men to assist Spain, as a result Carlos II and Emperor Leopold I had to conclude the Twenty Years Truce of Regensburg. This Truce gave Louis XIV a free hand ‘to tyrannize the Huguenots’, to force them ‘to forsake their religion and join the idolatry of catholicism’. This, the patriot concludes ‘can be put down solely to Amsterdam’s refusal to accept the recruitment of the 16,000 troops’. The patriot points out that Amsterdam ‘wants to make itself so powerful that like another Rome or Athens she can govern the other towns and provinces’. Walten strongly denies Amsterdam’s insinuations that William III wants to become sovereign ruler of the Republic. He regards them as calumnies from malicious people. These malicious regents of Amsterdam’, Walten continues, ‘still want to fight against the king by refusing to send the nomination of the sheriffs to England’, threatening to stop paying for the war against France. Walten of course misuses the Arminian to condemn the Amsterdammers. When he has the Arminian say ‘this looks like inviting the French in’, the patriot answers that the States of Holland had blamed them for doing so, but although the States had persuaded the town to stop their refusal
to send the nomination to England and pay for the expedition, ‘they persist in their refusal’. When the Arminian suggests ‘how the French wolf must laugh in his sleeve’⁶⁶, the patriot agrees with him. Walten’s message is clear: the Amsterdammers are behaving in a treacherous way.

In A Discussion between two travellers, one from Amsterdam and the other from The Hague Walten repeats this point through the person from The Hague by writing that the king of France ‘will benefit strongly from the disunity in the state caused by the mutineers [of Amsterdam]’. He even accuses the Amsterdammers of having hoped that William’s expedition to England would fail. When the Amsterdam traveller for instance defends himself against the ‘foolish and malicious accusations’ of the city’s opponents by saying that Amsterdam had not been against William’s expedition to England, since the town had paid for it, the person from The Hague hits back by saying ‘some regents hoped that the stadholder would take the Monmouth line’.⁶¹ The duke of Monmouth was the natural son of Charles II, who after his father’s death in 1685, sailed from Amsterdam with three ships full of arms and ammunition to challenge his uncle James, who had succeeded his brother. James II, however, defeated his nephew at Sedgemoor on 6 July 1685. So by hoping that William III would take the Monmouth line the Amsterdam regents had really wanted William’s expedition to fail and for Amsterdam to be able to shake off the rule of the stadholder.

William III himself believed that the Amsterdam government stood in contact with the French king. In 1683–1684 the Amsterdam city magistrates had been in contact with the French ambassador D’Avaux, so why could not they repeat it in 1690? To Portland William III wrote ‘they [the Amsterdammers] can not persuade me that they do not have some intrigue with France, especially Bors van Waveren, who is a papist at heart’.⁶² In The Discussion between travellers Walten also referred to the supposed catholicism of Bors van Waveren ‘although he visits our church’.⁶³ There is no evidence that Amsterdam had an ‘intrigue’⁶⁴ with France, but it was William’s perception that counted.

It was left to Romeyn de Hooghe to elaborate pictorially Walten’s idea that Amsterdam was betraying the Republic. He issued a satirical print⁶⁵, in which he portrays one of Amsterdam’s burgomasters, dressed in his shirt-sleeves, receiving a fat bribe from Louis XIV. The Sun King is seated on a privy placed atop his beaten enemies, wiping his back-side with sealed agreements.⁶⁶

We do not know exactly how much influence these pamphlets had. The fact is that Amsterdam did not win the battle over the election of the sheriff’s. The first sign of this became clear at the beginning of February when Witsen and Hudde, two moderate politicians, became burgomaster again. Huydecoper remained burgomaster as well, but it was clear that he had lost influence. When Witsen informed Portland that he was not against the interests of William III,⁶⁷ Portland was able to write to William III: ‘I am not without hope that division will split their government’.⁶⁸ He was right, for when on 28 February the States of Holland resolved that the sitting sheriffs had become illegal⁶⁹, Amsterdam climbed down. The city could not ignore this decision of their sovereigns, the States of Holland. On 2 March the Amsterdam city council decided by 16 votes against 7 to give up the fight.⁷⁰ The Amsterdam regent Joan Appelman, who made notes of the
discussions in the Amsterdam vroedschap, wrote on 2 March that Huydecoper, who had been very determined to maintain the Amsterdam privilege, had become weak. The same applied to Hudde and Witsen. Only Joan de Vries ‘persists vigorously’. Now that Amsterdam had given up its tenacity to sustain its privilege, burgomaster Witsen agreed with Grand Pensionary Heinsius that Amsterdam would send the nomination to the States of Holland and that they would then act as they thought necessary. And it will not come as a surprise that the States of Holland sent the nomination to England. In order to avoid Amsterdam losing face Witsen, Bentinck and Grand Pensionary Heinsius also agreed not only to delete the references in all documents to the sheriffs’ election, but also the resolutions of the States of Holland of 28 January and 28 February.

So in a period of less than three months the ‘sheriffs’ affair’ was solved in a way that benefited William III. From the start of the conflict the stadholder-king had been extremely worried about the outcome of the dispute. Amsterdam after all was a city that wielded a lot of influence in the Republic and, as said above, William III always feared ‘this big city’. Portland had hoped that the stadholder-king would have come over to purge the Amsterdam city magistracy: ‘Oh, if you could be here only for a week, things could be settled in such a way, that we would not never have to fear this city again’. He even expressed his fear that the Amsterdammers wanted to abolish the stadholderate ‘I am informed that if they do not succeed in this affair they have more than ten or twelve points or pretensions to restore the situation in which they were after the year 1650’. In 1650 William II, William III’s father, had died after he had tried to occupy Amsterdam in an effort to crush the opposition of Amsterdam that had resisted William’s effort not to reduce the army after the Peace of Munster. When William III was born eight days after the death of his father, the Holland regents decided not to appoint young William to the stadholderate, a situation which lasted until 1672. William III admitted that if he had been able to go in person to Holland ‘one should have stopped them [the Amsterdammers] from doing me any harm in the future’ but that given the situation in England, like the preparations for the Irish campaign, he was ‘unable to cross the sea’. Luckily for William III, the Amsterdammers were defeated because they did not get any support from the other Holland towns and the nobility.

**Aftermath**

The end of the political battle between William III and Amsterdam did not mean that the pamphlet war also ended. The Amsterdam regents were outraged by Romeyn de Hooghe’s accusation that they were betraying the Republic. The author of *Amsterdam, alone in its defence of freedom* had already referred to him as the ‘God forsaken knave in Haarlem’. And in *The Counter-Mirror of Truth*, a counterattack on *The Mirror of Truth* of Eric Walten, he was referred to as ‘the vomit of Amsterdam, a man respected by nobody, upon whom the whole world cries shame and who is trusted by nobody because of his thievish character’.

Now the Amsterdam government wanted its revenge on Romeyn de Hooghe. They commissioned Nicolaes Muys van Holy, a lawyer and a professional hackwriter, to write
a number of extremely malicious libels against him. In one of them *The first part of the life and actions of archicornutus ab alto, alias Romeyn de Hooghe* Muys van Holy accuses De Hooghe, the prototype of a cuckold, the cheated husband, of theft, atheism, of having prostituted his wife and worst of all having incest with his daughter. 78

De Hooghe and Walten responded with a pamphlet *The first part of the life and actions of archiconutus actionistes, alias Nicolaes Muys van Holy*. Muys van Holy was described as the head of the unscrupulous cuckold lawyers. 79 De Hooghe and his allies tried to clear de Hooghe’s name and incriminate Muys van Holy and his backers. The Amsterdammers were furious and persuaded the sheriff of Haarlem, Adriaan Backer to legal action against Romeyn de Hooghe. He summoned him for interrogation, but in the end it was Haarlem’s Orangist burgomasters and behind them, William III’s entourage, who provided protection for the artist. 80

**Conclusion**

The twenty pamphlets dealing with the pamphlet war between Muys van Holy and Romeyn de Hooghe were the result of De Hooghe’s role in the pamphlet war between Amsterdam and William III. The slight majority of anti-Amsterdam pamphlets during this war (13 against 10) shows that the Williamite camp took Amsterdam’s actions against the stadholder-king very seriously. The Orange camp felt it necessary to emphasize that his role as king would not clash with his duties as stadholder, a possibility the pamphlet *Missive of a sincere patriot* 81 had not ruled out. In fact, such a clash had already taken place when as stadholder-king William III had negotiated various treaties with the English in 1689. Still in *The continuation of the discussion between two travellers* Walten has the person from The Hague say:

> the king of England will never do anything to damage the sovereignty, freedom and privileges of this country. He has not given the least reason to suspect him of doing us any harm, all the more so while he continues in his old favour towards and care, favour, affection for these lands [the Netherlands]. 82

That of course was not true and if Amsterdam had attacked the treaties that William III had negotiated with the English in 1689, a real debate between the king and Amsterdam might have taken place. Amsterdam instead decided to use the sheriffs’ election as a platform to attack William III. Amsterdam was right in holding on to its privilege, but the city could not defend its position convincingly as the other towns were not prepared to discuss the privilege. I think that Amsterdam chose the wrong moment to defend its privilege. The city did not understand that practice is stronger than theory. 83 The war of 1690 was not the right moment to discuss the privilege of Amsterdam. The threat of Louis XIV was more important than the 1581 privilege of Amsterdam. The city showed a certain clumsiness in refusing to see this.
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Notes

1 William III to Hans Willem Bentinck, 4 September 1688, N. Japikse (ed.), Correspondentie van Willem III en Hans Willem Bentinck, eerste graaf van Portland (5 vols., The Hague, 1927–1937), i, p. 54.
2 Ibid., p. 16.
3 F. Deen et al. (eds.), Pamphlets and Politics in the Dutch Republic (Leiden, 2011), p. 15.
4 R. Harms, Pamfletten en publieke opinie. Massamedia in de zeventiende eeuw (Amsterdam, 2011), p. 176.
5 These 45 pamphlets were sometimes identical reprints or underwent slight alterations in comparison with the original one.
6 D. Haks, Vaderland en vrede 1672–1713. Publiciteit over de Nederlandse Republiek in oorlog (Hilversum, 2013), p. 296. The author told me that such debates did not take place in France, where the king had sufficient power over the press to make these debates impossible.
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13 Idem.
14 Ibid., p. 114.
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16 William III to Dijkveld, 9/19 December 1688, Japikse, Correspondentie, v, pp. 74–75.
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20 J. R. Bruijn, Varend Verleden. De Nederlandse oorlogsvoet in de zeventiende en achttiende eeuw (Amsterdam, 1998), p. 122.
21 ‘Uittreksels’, part 3, vol. 2, p. 163.
22 J. A. F. de Jongste, ‘The 1690s and after: The Local Perspective’, in Anthonie Heinsius and the Dutch Republic 1688–1720. Politics, War and Finance, eds. by J. A. F. de Jongste and A. J. Veenendaal (The Hague, 2002), pp. 67–68.
23 ‘Uittreksels’, part 3 vol. 2, p. 159.
24 Ibid., p. 149.
25 J. Israel, The Dutch Republic, p. 855.
26 J. Wagenaar, Vaderlandse Historie verwattende de geschiedenis van de nu Vereenigde Nederlanden (21 vols., Amsterdam, 1749–1759), xiv, p. 52.
27 S. Spruijt-Mets, ‘Gelijk hebben is één ding, gelijk krijgen is een kunst. Het conflict over de Amsterdamse schepenbenoeming in 1690’, Jaarboek Oranje-Nassau, 2008 (Amsterdam, 2009), p. 68.
28 Request of 4 January 1690 in Korte Memorie van de resolutien en andere stukken rakende d’electie van schepenen der stad Amsterdam voorgevallen in de jaren 1689, 1690 en 1691; Stukken betreffende de verschillen tussen Amsterdam en de Prins wegens de benoeming van de veertienen, AGA (Amsterdams Gemeentelijk Archief) inventory 5059, no. 48. Korte Memorie, no. 7.
29 S. Spruijt-Mets, ‘Gelijk hebben is één ding’, p. 59.
30 Request of 28 January in Korte Memorie, no. 2.
31 Korte Memorie, no. 3.
32 Korte Memorie, no. 5.
33 Spruijt-mets. ‘Gelijk hebben is één ding’, p. 59.
William III to Portland, 16–17 January 1690, Japikse, Correspondentie, i, pp. 67–68.

35 D. M. L. Onnekink, The Anglo-Dutch Favourite. The career of Hans Willem Bentinck, 1st Earl of Portland (1649–1709) (Aldershot, 2007) describes the clash between William III and Amsterdam in his third chapter.

36 On the basis of a resolution of the States of Holland of 7 March 1586, see Spruijt-Mets, ‘Gelijk hebben is één ding’, p. 62.

37 As they had already done in 1684.

38 Portland to William III, 20 January 1690, Japikse, Correspondentie, i, pp. 71–72.

39 Two letters of Portland to William III on 25 January 1690, Japikse, Correspondentie, i, p. 77 and pp. 79–80.

40 Missive van een vrient aen een vrient (s. l., 1690, Knuttel 13466), p. 1.

41 Resolution in Korte Memorie, no. 12.

42 Korte memorie, no. 13; Spruijt-Mets, ‘Gelijk hebben is één ding’, p. 67.

43 Portland to William III, 4 February 1690, Japikse, Correspondentie, i, pp. 89–94.

44 Hollands Koe (s. l., 1690, Knuttel 13514), p. 3.

45 Missive van een oprecht patriot aen een lidt van de regeeringe (s. l., 1690, Knuttel 13467), p. 5.

46 Missive van een vrient aen een vrient (s. l., 1690, Knuttel 13466), p. 1.

47 Ibid., pp. 2–3.

48 Israel, The Dutch Republic, p. 759.

49 Ibid., p. 760.

50 See pamphlet nos. 13443, 13446, 13449, 13452, 13455, 13458, 13460, and 13462. The Amsterdam opponents put forward that Bentinck had always been a member of the States of Holland and had played an important role in William’s expedition. It would therefore be unfair to refuse his admittance to the States. They also suggested that the nominations for the sheriffs could be sent earlier than 28 January to enable the new sheriffs to be sworn in on 2 February. Amsterdam, however, retorted that the privileges should be observed.

51 Portland to William III, 4 February 1690, Japikse, Correspondentie, i, p. 77 and pp. 79–80.

52 See pamphlet nos. 13443, 13446, 13449, 13452, 13455, 13458, 13460, and 13462. The Amsterdam opponents put forward that Bentinck had always been a member of the States of Holland and had played an important role in William’s expedition. It would therefore be unfair to refuse his admittance to the States. They also suggested that the nominations for the sheriffs could be sent earlier than 28 January to enable the new sheriffs to be sworn in on 2 February. Amsterdam, however, retorted that the privileges should be observed.

53 Five pamphlets, Knuttel 13500–13504, deal with the Jan Hol affair. Jan Hol was supposed to have been a courier between the Amsterdam regents and Louis XIV. This fictitious news was used to blacken the Amsterdam regents. See Harms, Pamfletten en publieke opinie, p. 191.

54 M. van Gelderen, ‘In Defence of William III: Eric Walten and the Justification of the Glorious Revolution’, in Redefining William III. The impact of the King-stadholder in international context, eds. by Esther Mijers and David Onnekink (Farnham, 2007), pp. 153–4.

55 M. van Gelderen, ‘In Defence of William III: Eric Walten and the Justification of the Glorious Revolution’, in Redefining William III. The impact of the King-stadholder in international context, eds. by Esther Mijers and David Onnekink (Farnham, 2007), pp. 153–4.

56 Spiegel der Waerbeyt (s. l., 1690, Knuttel 13480), p. 70.

57 Ibid., p. 76.

58 Ibid., p. 82.

59 Ibid., p. 85.

60 Ibid.

61 ‘T Samenspraek gehouden tusschen twee reysigers (s. l., 1690, Knuttel 13496), p. 15.

62 William III to Portland, 31 January 1690, Japikse, Correspondentie, i, p. 85.

63 T Samenspraek gehouden tusschen twee reysigers, p. 8.

64 Five pamphlets, Knuttel 13500–13504, deal with the Jan Hol affair. Jan Hol was supposed to have been a courier between the Amsterdam regents and Louis XIV. This fictitious news was used to blacken the Amsterdam regents. See Harms, Pamfletten en publieke opinie, p. 191.

65 Mardi Gras de Coq à l’Ane (Antwerpen, 1690, Knuttel 13516), p. 1. In another satirical print The fable of the cows, the shepherd and the wolf Amsterdam was depicted as a whimsical cow that refused to stay with the herd, Harms, Pamfletten en publieke opinie, p. 183. Footnote 66 mentions the books where the reproduction of Mardi de Coq à l’Ane can be found.

66 Van Nierop, ‘Romeyn de Hooghe’, p. 208. M. Hale, ‘Drie koningen, een haan en een ezel. De spotprenten’, in Romeyn de Hooghe. De verbeelding van de late Gouden Eeuw, eds. by H. van Nierop et al. (Zwolle, 2008), pp. 104–109. While Van Nierop says that the people underneath Louis XIV’s privy were his allies, I think that Hale is right in calling them his beaten enemies.

67 Portland to William III, 4 February 1690, Japikse, Correspondentie, i, p. 91.

68 Portland to William III, 22 February 1690, Japikse, Correspondentie, i, p. 114.

69 Korte Memorie, no. 34.

70 J. F. Gebhard Jr., Het leven van Mr. Nicolaas Cornelisz Witsen (1641–1717) (2 vols., Utrecht, 1818–1882), i, p. 390.

71 Ibid., p. 389.

72 Spruijt-Mets, ‘Gelijk hebben is één ding’, p. 72.

73 Portland to William III, 1 March 1690, Japikse, Correspondentie, i, pp. 123–26.

74 Portland to William III, 7 February 1690, Japikse, Correspondentie, i, pp. 98–100.

75 William III to Portland, 14 March 1690, Japikse, Correspondentie, i, p. 145.

76 Amsterdam alleen in’t spits voor de vrijheydt, p. 3.

77 Vindiciae Amселodumenses, of Contra-Spiegel der Waarbeyt (Molqueren, 1690, Knuttel 13484), p. 14.
Notes on contributor

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