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CAMBRIDGE TEXTS IN THE HISTORY OF POLITICAL THOUGHT

荷兰起义

The Dutch Revolt

Edited by

MARTIN

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中国政法大学出版社

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The Dutch Revolt

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剑桥政治思想史原著系列

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在政治理论领域，“剑桥政治思想史原著系列”作为主要的学生教科丛书，如今已牢固确立了其地位。本丛书旨在使学生能够获得从古希腊到 20 世纪初期西方政治思想史方面所有最为重要的原著。它囊括了所有著名的经典原著，但与此同时，它又扩展了传统的评价尺度，以便能够纳入范围广泛、不那么出名的作品。而在此之前，这些作品中有许多从未有过现代英文版本可资利用。只要可能，所选原著都会以完整而不删节的形式出版，其中的译作则是专门为本丛书的目的而安排。每一本书都有一个评论性的导言，加上历史年表、生平梗概、进一步阅读指南，以及必要的词汇表和原文注解。本丛书的最终目的是，为西方政治思想的整个发展脉络提供一个清晰的轮廓。

本丛书已出版著作的书目，请查阅书末。

CAMBRIDGE TEXTS IN THE HISTORY OF POLITICAL THOUGHT

Series Editors:

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This series is intended to make available to students the most important texts required for an understanding of the history of political thought. The scholarship of the present generation has greatly expanded our sense of the range of authors indispensable for such an understanding, and the series will reflect those developments. It will also include a number of less well-known works, in particular those needed to establish the intellectual contexts that in turn help to make sense of the major texts. The principal aim, however, will be to produce new versions of the major texts themselves, based on the most up-to-date scholarship. The preference will always be for complete texts, and a special feature of the series will be to complement individual texts, within the compass of a single volume, with subsidiary contextual material. Each volume will contain an introduction on the historical identity and contemporary significance of the text concerned, as well as such student aids as notes for further reading and chronologies of the principal events in a thinker's life.

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Preface

This volume presents five texts which were published in the Low Countries between 1570 and 1590, during the crucial decades of what is nowadays labelled, with understatement, the 'Dutch Revolt'. From 1555 a series of revolutionary events led to the abjuration of Philip II by the States General of the Dutch provinces in 1581 and to the subsequent foundation of the 'Dutch Republic of the Seven United Provinces', one of the great powers of the seventeenth century.

Despite the general recognition that the rise of the Dutch Republic was of major political, cultural and economic importance for the course of European history, historians have tended to neglect the political thought of the Dutch Revolt. However, as more than 2,000 publications (published between 1555 and 1590) exemplify, the political debate of the Revolt was not only immense, but also comprehensive and, above all, passionate. The purpose of this volume is to make some of the most important texts of the Revolt available in a modern edition.

The first major issue which the protagonists of the Revolt had to confront was how to justify first the protest and resistance against the government of Philip II and eventually his abjuration by the States General. Closely related to the reflections on the limits of political obedience and the justice of political resistance was a fundamental debate on the true and desirable character of the Dutch political order. This quest for 'the best state of the commonwealth' and for good government focused on the problem of sovereignty, on the relationship between political and ecclesiastical authority and on the question of religious toleration.

Although other problems are not neglected, the main focus of the

Preface

five texts in this volume is on the justice of political resistance and on the search for the optimal commonwealth. The texts have been selected because they not only exemplify the political ideas developed during the Dutch Revolt with regard to these issues, but are also amongst the most innovative treatises of the Revolt's political literature. Their ideological importance is discussed in the Introduction, which is an attempt to locate the following texts in the political and intellectual context of the Dutch Revolt. The introductory essay relies heavily on my monograph 'The Political Thought of the Dutch Revolt, 1550–1590', published by Cambridge University Press.

In their original version my translations of the sixteenth-century texts were a frail compromise between my knowledge of modern English and sixteenth-century Dutch and French. As such the translations have been revised and greatly improved by Simon Kuper, whom I should like to thank for his meticulous work.

I should also like to thank the editors of the 'Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought' and Richard Fisher from Cambridge University Press for their encouragement and patience. Finally I thank Raimund Schulz and Marie-Ange Delen for their assistance in retracting some of the more obscure references in the following texts.

Introduction

I

On a late October afternoon in 1555, the political elite of the Low Countries gathered in the Great Hall of the Ducal Palace in Brussels. The principal nobles, clergymen and representatives of the major towns in the Netherlands had come to bid farewell to Charles V. The Emperor, a native of Ghent, answered for his life and deeds and renounced an impressive number of titles in favour of his son Philip. It was a ceremony of both grandeur and disillusionment. For although Charles seemed a broken man, the very fact that his son inherited all titles covering the 'Seventeen Provinces of the Netherlands' as they were known – such as Duke of Brabant, Duke of Guelders, Count of Flanders, Count of Holland and Lord of Friesland – could be seen as the crown on the policy of centralization of the Burgundian–Habsburg dynasty in the Low Countries. After the formal unification of the Low Countries, which in 1549 had been declared 'one and unbreakable' by 'pragmatic sanction', Philip was the first, and, one should add, the last to govern the Low Countries as a whole.¹

The new sovereign was probably the sole dissonant in the political theatre played out in Brussels on that October day. As Philip did not speak Dutch, Antoine Perrenot,² Bishop of Arras, had to answer for

¹ In this introduction words such as 'Dutch', 'Netherlands' and 'Low Countries' refer to the 'Seventeen Provinces' in the north-west of continental Europe, which included the present Benelux and French Flanders in the north-west of present-day France.

² For Perrenot see 'Biographical Notes'.

his lord. In a memorable speech he pointed out that it was natural for the prince to protect and uphold the liberty of the country.³

Perrenot, Lord of Granvelle, was an important figure in Philip's Dutch government, whose policy soon became increasingly unpopular. As usual, taxes were a major source of conflict. In an attempt to improve his catastrophic financial situation, and to make the provinces pay for their government, Philip virtually started his reign by proposing a series of new taxes. The proposal was vigorously opposed by the States of the core provinces Brabant, Flanders and Holland, and Philip was dragged into the quagmire of Dutch bargaining politics. The fact that Philip could not levy taxes without the States' consent was an important power resource for these provincial representative assemblies, who saw themselves as the main counterweight to central government. The States were of the opinion that important political decisions such as those concerning successions, financial policy, legal issues and foreign affairs should not be taken without their counsel and consent. The provincial States were united in the States General, which had been created by the Burgundian Dukes in the course of the fifteenth century to foster the idea of unity amongst the provinces, which in turn regarded the States General primarily as a useful instrument for increasing their influence on central policy. In negotiations, as Philip was to find out, their deputies never had full powers to act. The basic rule of the decision-making process was that provincial deputies could only grant what their principals, the estates far away in the provinces, had allowed. This not only made it almost impossible for the sovereign to exert the charismatic powers of his office, it also turned the negotiations into a time-consuming affair with great possibilities for creative obstructionism. Although eventually the States agreed to levy taxes, Philip interpreted their behaviour as an attempt to tilt the balance of power in favour of a sort of parliamentary government. When he left the Low Countries in 1559, Philip decided that the States General formed a grave threat to royal power and that, therefore, it should not be summoned again.

Soon, however, the king was to find out that there were other sources of opposition in the Low Countries. The 1559 papal bull 'Super universas' decreed a thorough reorganization of the rather outdated diocesan structure of the Catholic church in the Nether-

³ *Oratione di Carlo V, Imperadore de Romani, da S. Ces. Maesta recitate nella dieta di Brussell* ... (Florence, 1556), fol. B.

lands. The plan aroused vigorous opposition. The noble members of the Council of State – the main governmental council of the Low Countries – had not been consulted at all. Moreover, the papal bull gave Philip II the right to appoint the bishops, who in most cases would acquire membership in the provincial States, thereby strengthening Philip's grip on the States. Granvelle, for example, who was appointed Archbishop of Malines, became a principal member of the important States of Brabant.

The conflict over ecclesiastical reorganization strongly contributed to a rupture between the leading nobles and Granvelle, who became part of the inner circle of the new Governess, Margaret of Parma,⁴ and was soon regarded as the top policymaker in Brussels. As such he was, however wrongly, considered to be the evil genius behind the plan for ecclesiastical reorganization. In the eyes of noble members like Lamoraal, Count of Egmont, and William, Prince of Orange,⁵ Granvelle was usurping power – their power. Egmont was a celebrated military commander, second only to the Duke of Alva in Philip II's forces. William of Nassau, the oldest son of a German Lutheran noble family, had inherited the principality of Orange together with numerous rich manors in Dutch provinces in 1544, which made him one of the principal nobles of the Netherlands.

These grandees had strong political ambitions, which since Philip's accession had been repeatedly thwarted. Within the Council of State, for example, the high nobles were continuously confronted with the overbearing presence and influence of professional bureaucrats such as Granvelle. The resulting struggle for power eventually ended with the withdrawal of Granvelle in 1564. The grandees revelled in the triumph. Philip II, however, had by no means accepted the policy demands of the high nobles. Above all, the crucial issue of the persecution of heretics remained unresolved.

The harsh policy of repression with regard to Protestant heretics, as favoured by Philip II, was highly controversial in the Low Countries and met with mounting opposition. In addition to the rising number of Protestants there was a large 'centre group' of people who, though themselves not Protestant, despised harsh persecution for legal, political and humanitarian reasons. The towns considered the growing activity of inquisitors an important threat to their autonomy.

⁴ For Margaret of Parma see 'Biographical Notes'.

⁵ For Egmont and Orange see 'Biographical Notes'.

and privileges. Particularly the 'jus de non evocando', the right to be put on trial only by the court of Aldermen in one's own town, was threatened. Moreover, the severe persecution of heresy was regarded as an important threat to the cherished values of public order and civic unity. The towns also had economic reasons for opposing the inquisition, as its actions threatened commercial relations with unorthodox foreign merchants. Finally, in the circles of the town magistrates and the nobles many were appalled at the idea of executing people merely because they happened to have another version of the Christian faith.

Hopes for moderation, however, were crushed. On the one hand, Philip II insisted on his rigorous religious policy, as he informed the Dutch in his famous letters from the woods of Segovia, which were an outright rejection of the demands for moderation. On the other hand a process of gradual radicalization took place within the ranks of the Reformed Protestants. At around 1560 they had come into the open. During Easter 1562 the first public sermon was held in Flanders, followed by the first armed 'mass-meeting' at the churchyard of the Flemish village of Boeschepe in July 1562. Increasingly the arrests and executions of Protestants provoked demonstrations and riots, and successful attempts were made to free those who had been imprisoned. In the spring of 1566 large-scale hedge-preaching started; in August the Iconoclastic Fury, beginning in the Flemish 'Westkwartier', started to sweep over the Low Countries. The culmination of the radicalization process among Reformed Protestants was the decision in the autumn of 1566 at a synod in Antwerp to defend their religion with military means, a reaction to the withdrawal of far-reaching concessions the Governess had made under the pressure of the Iconoclastic Fury. Chances for a middle course were crushed and the grandees, wavering between upholding their moderate principles and supporting the Governess in restoring public order, were forced to make a choice. Eventually this led to a split. Whereas Egmont, Hoorne and many others swore a new oath of loyalty to the government, William of Orange decided to go into exile. He returned to his family in Dillenburg. The defeat of Protestant armies, the surrender of the besieged towns Tournai and Valenciennes to government troops, and the arrival of the Duke of Alva as the commander of a Spanish army, commissioned by Philip II to restore

order, were devastating blows to both the Reformed Protestant cause and the pleas for moderation. Like Orange, many opted for exile.

The intellectual legacy of what can be seen as the first phase of the Dutch Revolt was an impressive number of political treatises, which protested against Philip's policy of religious persecution, demanded moderation and started to discuss the questions of the limits of obedience and the legitimacy of political resistance.

From the very beginning many of these treatises accused the government in Brussels of hurting the very liberty it was supposed to uphold. However, as Jacob van Wesembeeke amply explained in a number of political tracts published during the late 1560s, liberty was the political value *par excellence*. According to Wesembeeke the Dutch people in particular had esteemed and cherished liberty throughout the centuries, as became particularly manifest when attempts were made to take away the 'old liberty', 'the liberty of which they [the Dutch] with an exceptional and extremely powerful assiduity had always been very great lovers, supporters and advocates'.⁶

Wesembeeke and others emphasized the intrinsic connection between the liberty and the prosperity of the Netherlands, an idea that was familiar to town magistrates and had been used throughout the past centuries in debates with encroaching central institutions. In 1568 the *Complaint of the sorrowful land of the Netherlands*, for example, argued that 'Marchandise', 'Manufacture' and 'Negotiations' were the sisters of 'Liberté', who herself was said to be the daughter of the Netherlands.⁷

In the political literature of the Revolt it was argued that the political order had originally been created with the deliberate aim of protecting liberty. This goal should be achieved by means of a constitutional framework consisting of a set of fundamental laws, the privileges, rights, freedoms and old customs, and a number of institutions, in particular the States.

Dutch privileges consisted of a diversity of charters acquired or extorted by cities, guilds, crafts, clergy and nobility from imperial princes, vassals, dukes and counts, who had ruled the Netherlands during the late medieval period. Some of them dealt explicitly with

⁶ J. van Wesembeeke, *De Beschrijvinge van den geschiedenissen in der Religien saken toeghedra-gen in den Nederlanden* (1569), p. 12. For Wesembeeke see 'Biographical Notes'.

⁷ *Complainte de la desolée terre du Pais Bas* (1568), p. 3.

the division of power between prince and subjects, as shown by the privileges of 1477 (granted, or rather negotiated, on the occasion of the unexpected death of Duke Charles the Bold on the battle fields of Nancy which had led to a grave political crisis) and the famous Joyous Entry of Brabant, a constitutional document to which, from 1356, every Duke of Brabant had to take a solemn oath on the occasion of his inauguration by the Brabant States.⁸

The 1477 privileges and the Joyous Entry had been principal vehicles for formulating political rights and duties. They offered the inhabitants protection against arbitrary and corrupt rule and sought to guarantee civic rights, especially with regard to the administration of justice. Both the Joyous Entry and the 1477 privileges contained a clause of disobedience which stated that if the prince violated the privileges, the subjects and, as the 1477 Grand Privilege added, 'each of them in particular', had the right to disobey him, to refuse him services until he had repaired his ways. Finally, privileges such as the Grand Privilege and the Joyous Entry contained articles which restricted central power and articulated claims to participation in the decision-making process on behalf of the provinces, towns and inhabitants of the Low Countries. Thus, the 1477 privileges sought to decentralize the administration of justice, to strengthen the grip of the provinces on central policy, to guarantee the respect of all privileges and to strengthen the position of the States General.

As such the privileges of 1477 were the expression of 'a conception of a federal state, dominated by the great cities'.⁹ Throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth century the towns of Brabant and Flanders in particular sought to create a political order marked by a weak but efficient central government and dominated by cities which wanted to act as self-governing city-republics.¹⁰

The 1477 privileges and the Joyous Entry were amongst the principal means to achieve this ideal of self-governing independence.

⁸ It was confirmed again in 1406, 1427, 1430, 1467, 1477, 1494, in 1515 (by Charles V) and in 1549 (by Philip II).

⁹ W.P. Blockmans, 'La signification constitutionnelle des privilèges de Marie de Bourgogne (1477)', in W.P. Blockmans (ed.), 1477. *Le privilège général et les privilèges régionaux de Marie de Bourgogne pour les Pays-Bas*, in the series 'Ancien Pays et Assemblées d'états', vol. 80 (Kortrijk-Heule, 1985), p. 516.

¹⁰ See W.P. Blockmans, 'Alternatives to monarchical centralization: the great tradition of Revolt in Flanders and Brabant' in H.G. Koenigsberger (ed.), *Republiken und Republikanismus im Europa der frühen Neuzeit* (Munich, 1988), pp. 145-54.

Thus these charters were an important part of the late medieval legacy of constitutionalist and republican ideals in the Low Countries and in appealing to them the political literature of the Revolt placed itself firmly within a well-established tradition.

II

For Orange, Wesembecke and their friends in exile, the political situation worsened rapidly. Alva, the 'Iron Duke' and Philip's new Governor, eliminated the remnants of opposition by means of a forceful new tribunal, soon called the 'blood council' as it executed more than a thousand people, including the counts of Egmont and Hoorne. Moreover an invasion led by William of Orange failed dismally due to lack of overt popular support, a disastrous shortage of funds and Alva's military superiority. The prince was forced to withdraw his forces from the Netherlands. Again in exile he renewed his efforts to set up a more effective resistance movement and to organize another military campaign for what was in his view the liberation of the Netherlands. Foreign aid was crucial to the success of such plans. Thus Orange sought to consolidate his contacts with French Huguenot leaders and with German princes. One of the attempts to enlist German support was a petition presented on 26 October 1570 to the Reichstag at Speyer, the *Libellus supplex Imperatoriae Maiestati*. The English translation, *A Defence and true Declaration of the things lately done in the lowe Countrey whereby may easily be seen to whom all the beginning and cause of the late troubles and calamities is to be imputed* – the first text in this volume – was published in 1571 by the office of John Daye in London.

Until recently it was assumed that the Reformed Protestant minister Petrus Dathenus was the author of the *Defence*.¹¹ New research, however, has argued that Marnix van St Aldegonde, a principal assistant and friend of William of Orange and a leading publicist of the Revolt, was the author of the petition.¹² The work was translated

¹¹ See, for example, Th. Ruys, *Petrus Dathenus* (Utrecht, 1919), pp. 265–7.

¹² See D. Nauta, 'Marnix auteur van de Libellus Supplex aan de rijksdag van Spiers (1570)', *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis*, 55 (1975), pp. 151–70. Nauta's argument is based on a letter in which Marnix mentions that he has been asked to write a request to the German Reichstag, and on a comparison between the argument of Marnix's 1567 *Vraye narration et apologie* and the *Libellus supplex*. Of course, the striking similarity does not necessarily mean that Marnix was the author of the *Libellus supplex*.

by Elias Newcomen (1550–1614), perhaps at Cambridge where he was a student and later a fellow of Magdalene College.

The *Defence* offered both an account of the origins and causes of the troubles in the Netherlands and a defence of the Dutch exiles and their activities. It asserted that Europe was afflicted by the conspiracies of ‘certain idle men’, who under the cloak of religion tried as inquisitors to usurp civil government. For more than fifty years the inhabitants of the Netherlands had patiently endured the attempts to frustrate hope for liberty of religion and to introduce ‘a far more grievous tyranny’, which would deprive the Dutch ‘of all the residue of their right and liberty’.¹³ In fact it had been their goal to turn the country into a kingdom, to have it, as the *Defence* put it, ‘reduced into one body, and made subject to one form of laws and jurisdiction and brought to the name and title of a kingdom’.¹⁴

With great eagerness the conspirators had sought to destroy the privileges of the Netherlands. They had ‘espied’ that the flourishing country was not only well defended militarily ‘with strong towns and castles’, but also with ‘good laws and ordinances, and with large privileges, prerogatives, immunities and other liberties’.¹⁵ In other words, the conspirators had acknowledged that the privileges were the fundamental laws of the country, whose purpose was to guarantee the country’s liberty and thereby to protect and foster its prosperity.

The role of the conspirators, Granvelle being a principal exponent, was unravelled in detail in the *Defence*. Their main focus, it argued, was on the position of the States. Continuously, according to the treatise, they tried to undermine the authority of the States’ assemblies, for in their view ‘the ancient liberty of assembly of the estates in parliaments’ was a serious threat to ‘the power of the prince’.¹⁶ The *Defence* pointed out that following the ‘most ancient usage of their forefathers’ and ‘the promises and covenants of the princes themselves confirmed with their oaths’, the prince had no authority to undertake any action that affected the liberty of the people and the authority of the laws without ‘the will and assent of the estates of the whole country’.¹⁷

The petition follows and extends the language and arguments as set up by earlier treatises and although Marnix was undoubtedly one of the main publicists, his line of argument was by no means unique.

¹³ *A Defence and true Declaration* . . . (London, 1571), p. xxiii.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, fol. A7.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, fol. A6.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, fol. A7.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*