For Holland's Garden

The War Aims of the States of Holland, 1572-1588

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My topic has to do with partisan conflict among supporters of the Revolt against Spain. The mention of partisan conflict perhaps brings to mind dramatic scenes from the recurring strife between *prinsgezinden* and *staatsgezinden*, such as the execution of Oldenbarnevelt (1619), or the murder of Johan de Witt (1672). But in the early years of the Revolt (1572-1588) all the enemies of King Philip II were *prinsgezind*.[1]
So long as William of Orange lived, people of differing opinions claimed to be acting in his name, and after his death they continued to invoke his memory. Moreover, while one may find here or there a nobleman who chafed at having to gain the consent of the States assemblies, *prinsgezinden* in this narrow sense were few; everyone else, among the rebels, was *staatsgezind* as well as *prinsgezind*. The dispute lay between two sorts of *staatsgezinden*, the partisans, respectively, of the States of Holland and of the States General. This conflict will be presented here under three headings: 1) the war aims of the States of Holland; 2) the war aims of the States General; and 3) the struggle between the two over the allocation of financial resources, a struggle in which Holland's control of the purse-strings proved decisive. My argument amounts to a justification of the strategy that aimed first and foremost at keeping the war beyond Holland's borders. Since Holland's insistence on attending to its own interests has usually been condemned by historians, I conclude with 4) some thoughts on the historiography of the Revolt.

1. The Party of Holland's Garden

From 1572 to 1576, the Revolt in Holland meant civil war. Though most cities adhered to the Revolt during the spring or summer of 1572, some, notably Amsterdam, remained loyal to King Philip II. In the fall of that year Fadrique de Toledo, Alva's son, marched from loyalist Utrecht along the dike road to Amsterdam, and thence to Haarlem, where his men dug in for what proved a long siege.[2] Following Haarlem's capitulation (summer 1573), Holland north of the IJ was cut off from the rest of the province. North Holland became in fact a kind of fortress, under the leadership of Orange's military governor, Diederik Sonoy, who compelled local farmers to stand watch along the creeks and canals.
If the Spaniards tried to break through North Holland's defensive ring - as when Toledo, after his victory at Haarlem, approached Alkmaar along the North Sea coast - Sonoy had the dikes cut, flooding the farmland around Alkmaar, and forcing the enemy to withdraw.[3]
South of the IJ the Spaniards held the initiative, owing to their greater numbers and also their greater mobility. The dike-roads connecting one town to another were often impassable, as rebels could easily cut the dikes. But Spanish commanders had good knowledge of the streams running through Holland roughly from east to west.[4] Royal troops

Abraham Ortelius, *Map of the province of Holland* (ca. 1580)

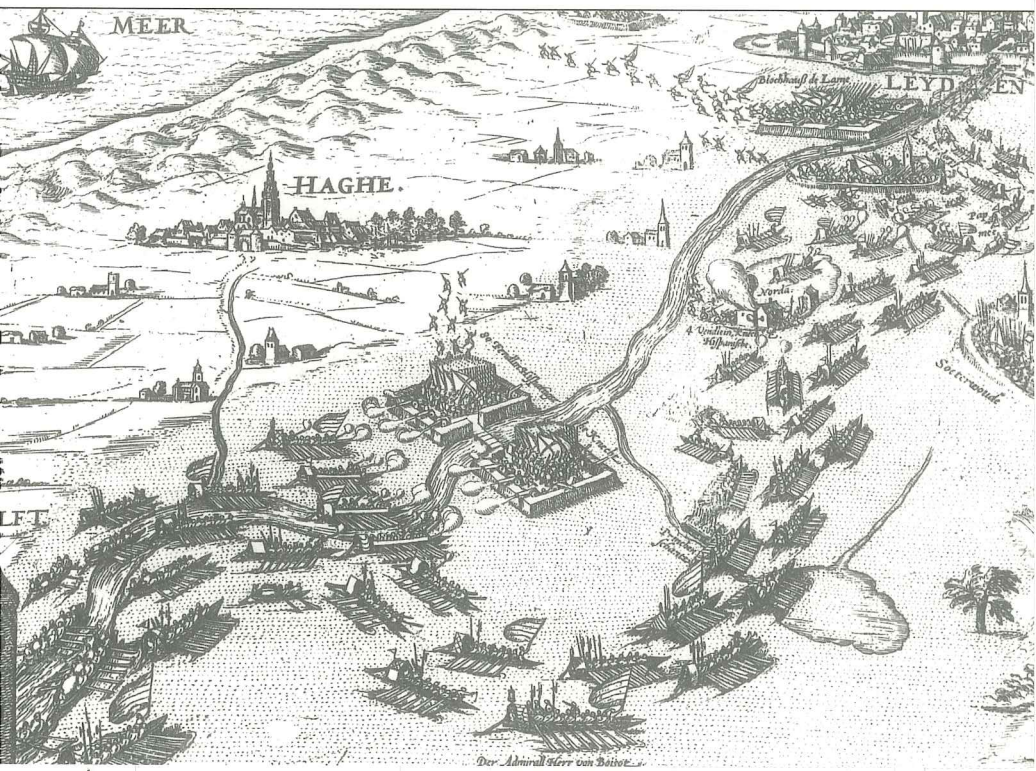
pushed into Holland in 1574 along the Waal, and in 1575 and 1576 along the Linge and the Lek. Leiden, the next major town to come under siege, was stoutly defended by its burghers; but what caused the Spaniards to withdraw (October 1574) was a massive flooding of the countryside, after Orange forced through a decision by the States to cut the dikes as far south as the Lek and the Maas. Victory at Leiden was a great relief for the *prinsgezinden*, and is regarded by historians as a turning point in the Revolt.[5] But Spanish troops were back in force the next year, and, unlike

Leiden, most cities could not rely on burgher militias for their defense; they had to be protected by companies of mercenary infantry, who had orders not just to watch for the enemy but also to keep an eye on the burghers.

The king's troops had no problem maintaining themselves in the countryside. It seems likely - though not susceptible of proof - that Holland's peasants would have been, if forced to make a choice, more *koningsgezind* than *prinsgezind*: they were still Catholic,[6] and they were not happy with the rebel practice of defending cities by flooding the countryside.[7] Whatever the opinions of rural folk, the king's soldiers held much of the countryside south of the IJ, so that rebel towns were often cut off from one another.[8] Hence for *prinsgezinden* the most urgent priority was to keep up the monthly pay for the garrison companies that defended these urban islands of Revolt. The Lords States of Holland, made up of deputies from the towns, solemnly promised William of Orange to provide a "monthly contribution," for wages of the mercenary companies.

This phase of the Revolt came to an end with the great Spanish mutiny of the summer of 1576. In the ensuing Pacification of Ghent, the Netherlands provinces banded together, through the States General, to oppose the king's soldiers.[9] As provided by the Pacification, the States of

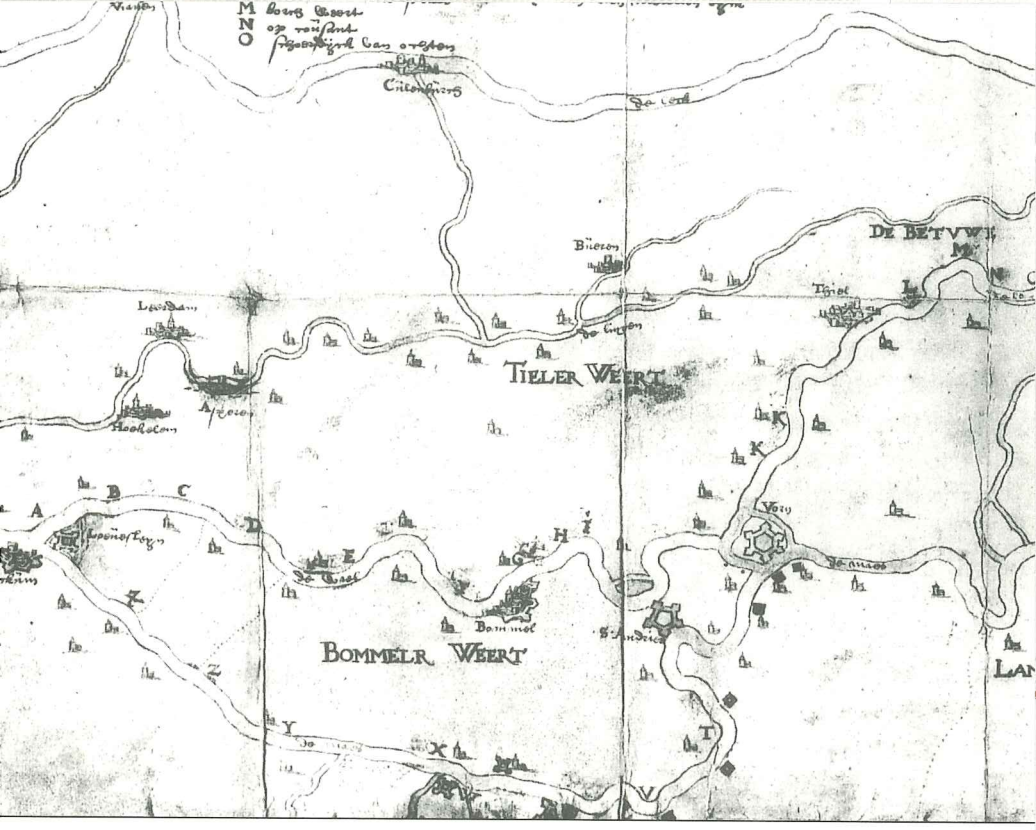
Frans Hogenberg, *The relief of Leiden*



Holland opened negotiations for treaties with the loyalist towns that had hitherto held out for the king. Haarlem, Schoonhoven and three smaller towns agreed to be incorporated once more into the "body" of Holland. But Amsterdam insisted on terms the Lords States would not accept; instead, they organized a siege of the city on the IJ, lasting intermittently for some months. Once again, as during the siege of Leiden, neighbor took arms against neighbor. Finally there was a revolution from within; in a bloodless coup subsequently known as the *Alteratie, prinsgezind* exiles seized power and sent Amsterdam's loyalist magistrates packing.[10] As of 26 May 1578, Holland was no longer divided.

The bitter memory of civil war in Holland, now concluded, provides the key for understanding the war strategy pursued by the Lords States for the next decade or so: division and civil war must never come again. The fighting and its consequences had devastated Holland's countryside, and dealt a serious blow to its external trade. Recovery - a new springtime for "Holland's Garden"[11] - was possible only if war could be kept beyond the borders. First, the Lords States allocated a fair portion of their scarce resources to improving the fortifications of small towns along the frontier.[12] Second, mercenary companies no longer needed to guard towns that lay well within Holland's border were posted to towns or sconces along the frontier. But Holland's Garden could not be "closed tight"[13] against the foe without cutting off access along the streams flowing through Utrecht and Gelderland into Holland - the pathways for Spanish invasions a few years previously.[14] In June 1578, Holland and Zeeland jointly agreed to maintain twenty-five infantry companies beyond their borders, in addition to their garrison companies at home.[15] Many units were initially deployed in Brabant. But with the formation of the Union of Utrecht (January 1579), and the beginning of an offensive along the upper Maas by Alexander of Parma, Philip II's new Governor-General, the Lords States sent word to William of Orange that Holland could no longer support troops in Brabant, south of the great rivers.[16]

About half the garrison companies "standing to Holland's charge" were stationed within the province or on the frontier, while the rest were posted beyond the border, especially in Gelderland.[17] Over time, Holland had to pay for an ever larger number of companies: 46 "banners" of 150 men in 1578, 80 by 1587.[18] Of necessity, there was a roughly proportional increase in the "monthly contribution" meant for the payment of the mercenary companies, from 80,000 guilders per month in 1578 to 128,500 by the beginning of 1586.[19] But despite all else that happened during these ten years, Holland's war aims did not change. The 80 companies of 1587, like the 46 companies of 1578, were mainly to be found either along Holland's border, or in towns beyond the border that guarded the "gateways" to Holland's Garden, like Zaltbommel and Grave on the



Nicolaes de Kemp, *The waterways flowing into Holland* (ca. 1600). From the top: Lek, Linge, Waal, and Maas. On the extreme left the Holland town of Gorinchem.

Maas, or Tiel on the Waal.[20] Prior to the 1590s, when Count Maurice of Nassau was able to go on the offensive, the Lords States invested their resources in defense. Their strategy may be summarized by a contemporary catch-phrase: the war had to be fought "on someone else's ground."[21]

2. The Party of the States General

Since the time of Philip the Good, duke of Burgundy († 1464), the central government in Brussels had from time to time called on the provincial States assemblies to send delegates to a "General" States assembly, usually for the purpose of considering a subsidy request. The government's need for money to fight its wars was constant, but so was the determination of each province to have its revenues go for its own defense. Hence the often contentious tone of discussions between rep-resentatives of the sovereign and the provincial delegates. For example, in 1537, with a French army invading from the south, Holland balked at money-raising proposals because the government would not agree that the hereditary Admiral of the Low Countries had no jurisdiction in Holland. Mary of Hungary,

sister of Emperor Charles V and Regent of the Low Countries (1531-1555), had "harsh words" for Holland's deputies, calling them "difficult" and "stubborn."[22]

Lecturing did little good. The next year, when Mary asked the States General for funds to "put out the fire" on the French border, the Hollanders replied that since Artois and the French-speaking portion of Brabant were "next to the fire," they should put it out themselves.[23] In 1549, when the Hollanders held up agreement to a tax on wine by insisting on the use of a local measure of volume, Mary accused them of causing "more trouble than any other province."[24] It bears noting that young William of Orange was a loyal member of Mary's Council of State from 1551. Like others of his rank, he had no patience for what he saw as provincial selfishness.[25]

In order to minimize bickering among the provinces, Charles V made it a policy to make as little use of the States General as possible. His Regents - Margaret of Austria, his aunt (1519-1531), then Mary of Hungary - had instructions to negotiate separately with the States of each province, so as to raise the subsidy quota that was asked of it.[26] Thus even though provinces sometimes requested (for reasons of their own) a convening of the larger assembly,[27] the General States were normally summoned only to hear the opening "Proposition" in which the Regent or her spokesman explained why the new subsidy was needed, and what the global sum was. On occasion, "Particular Propositions" were addressed directly to the individual provinces, without the formality of a States General or a "General Proposition."[28]

In the early years of Philip II's reign the government reversed this policy. Owing to interminable negotiations with provincial States about the subsidy that had to be raised in 1556 for the war against France, a majority of the king's Council of State decided to ask the provincial States to send deputies that would be empowered to take a decision on the government's proposals, without the usual obligation of reporting back to their principals.[29] The price for this novel arrangement was an agreement by the government to allow the States General to take over the raising and the management of the even larger war subsidy needed in 1557.[30] Initially, the gamble seemed to have worked: the States General agreed to an unprecedented "Nine-Year Subsidy," to be raised and disbursed by officials of the States General. But these officials were not as good as the government's men were at browbeating the provinces to raise the sums to which they had agreed; in 1560, Philip II canceled what remained of the Nine-Year Subsidy, and went back to Charles's policy of negotiating separately with the States of each province.[31] Yet the failure of the States General to manage the country's finances effectively apparently made no impression on politically conscious Netherlanders. On the contrary,

Anonymus artist, *Mary of Hungary*

because the deputies of the various provinces had for the first time enjoyed an opportunity to discuss among themselves "matters of state and of high policy," the idea took hold that the States General properly represented the whole community of the realm.[32]

In the tense years ahead, growing opposition to a number of the king's policies went hand in hand with calls for a re-convening of the States General. Then, following the Iconoclastic riots of 1566, the duke of Alba imposed on the country, from 1567, an iron-fisted rule such as had not been seen before.[33] Antoon van Stralen, who had been treasurer-general

during the brief period of the States General's stewardship of finances, was among those singled out by Alba's Council of Troubles for arrest, summary trial, and execution. Jacob van Wesenbeke, Antwerp's town pensionary and an erstwhile leader of the States General, joined William of Orange in raising the standard of rebellion.[34] In 1574, while Holland and Zeeland, led by Orange, fought a lonely battle against Philip II, one Holland pamphleteer appealed to the States General as a forum to which issues lying between the king and his rebel provinces might be submitted. Did partisans of the king, he asked, really want the provinces to be:

> but one body over tax matters, but when steps are needed to stop the total destruction of the whole country each province to deal with the matter independently without taking measures in common with the others? When His Majesty reminded the States of the distress of the French war in 1557, how could they have taken that heavy burden upon themselves except unitedly? And how could they have succeeded in carrying it out but thanks to their exceptional loyalty to the lord of the country and the admirable harmony with which, to the highest praise of His Royal Majesty, they raised the Nine-Year Subsidy?[35]

The Pacification of Ghent allowed William of Orange to return to Brussels and guide the deliberations of a States General that was, albeit briefly, united in its determination to oppose the Spanish mutineers. But the provinces were no less focused on local interests than they had been in Charles V's time. Holland and Zeeland held apart from the other provinces in their ban on Catholic worship. This problem was alleviated in 1579, as Calvinist factions seized power in the main towns in Flanders and Brabant and banned Catholic worship there as well. But other problems persisted. Holland insisted on managing the money it raised for its own purposes, as did the Four Members of Flanders, led by the proud city of Ghent. Thus when William of Orange addressed the deputies of the various provinces, either in person or through lengthy memoranda, he spoke as Mary of Hungary and the members of her council had spoken. In sixteenth-century French, one's self-interest was one's *particulier* ("particular"). Orange faulted the deputies because "Everyone in his own province or town acts as he thinks is beneficial to himself or his particular affairs without realizing that when some town or province is under attack, it may be useful to help it for the time being so that in the end the whole country, including those towns and provinces, may be saved."[36] In effect, Orange and many of his partisans - those whom we may call the party of the States General - espoused the idea of a unified realm embracing the various provinces, a single *patria*, whose interests were represented by the General States.

Christoffel van Sichem, *William of Orange*

There was not, however, a clear drawing of lines between the States assembly in Holland and the States General, because there were other forms of association intermediate between the provinces and the general union. Holland had formed a Union with Zeeland in 1576, at Orange's behest, and in 1579 both provinces joined with Utrecht in the Union of Utrecht, which soon included Friesland and Gelderland as well. Holland's allegiance to this "Closer Union" (*Nadere Unie*) superseded its obligations to the States General, at least in the eyes of the Hollanders. Within the "Closer Union" Holland's quota amounted to roughly three-fifths of the total "monthly contributions,"[37] but in other ways Holland depended on its sister provinces. Though Zeeland contributed only about a fourth of

what Holland did, Holland would never have become a maritime power without Zeeland, for Zeeland controlled the Habsburg Arsenal at Veere, with its rich store of war material. Friesland, whose "monthly contribution" was a bit larger than Zeeland's, had the resources to prevent Spanish forces based in Groningen from expanding the area under their control.[38] Utrecht's contribution was only a small fraction of Holland's, but Utrecht too had its role to play. In the dark days following Alexander of Parma's capture of Brussels and Antwerp (summer 1585), it appeared that the war would now be fought in Gelderland and Utrecht. Hence the Utrechters' message to their colleagues in The Hague: if Holland did not want the war fought on its own ground, they said, let Holland provide an extra 50,000 guilders per month to help Utrecht abide by its obligations under the Union of Utrecht. The Lords States of Holland hastened to send a soothing reply.[39] In effect, Holland's system of forward defenses would have lacked legitimacy had it not had the active collaboration of allied provinces - in this case, the Lords States of Utrecht.

The question was where decisions would be made. Would the States General set priorities? Or the member provinces of the Union of Utrecht, acting in common? Or the States assemblies of the individual provinces? The issue had been acute since 1583, when Alexander of Parma launched an offensive aimed at recapturing Flanders and Brabant for the king.[40] The case for government by the States General, in the interest of the general good, was forcefully presented in an anonymous pamphlet, "About the present condition of government in the Netherlands:"

> Each province has its own States and its own public revenue. But this has brought them together in a common union [...] This union has formed a Community which manifests itself when the envoys of the States of each province meet at the appointed place. This is called the States General, not because they represent the states of each province in particular, but because they represent the community of the general union.[41]

Among partisans of the Revolt who had enjoyed a classical education, this view may fairly be regarded as representing enlightened opinion; there was no political theory, ancient or modern, that did not call for a part of the commonwealth to subordinate its interests, its "particular," to the general good.

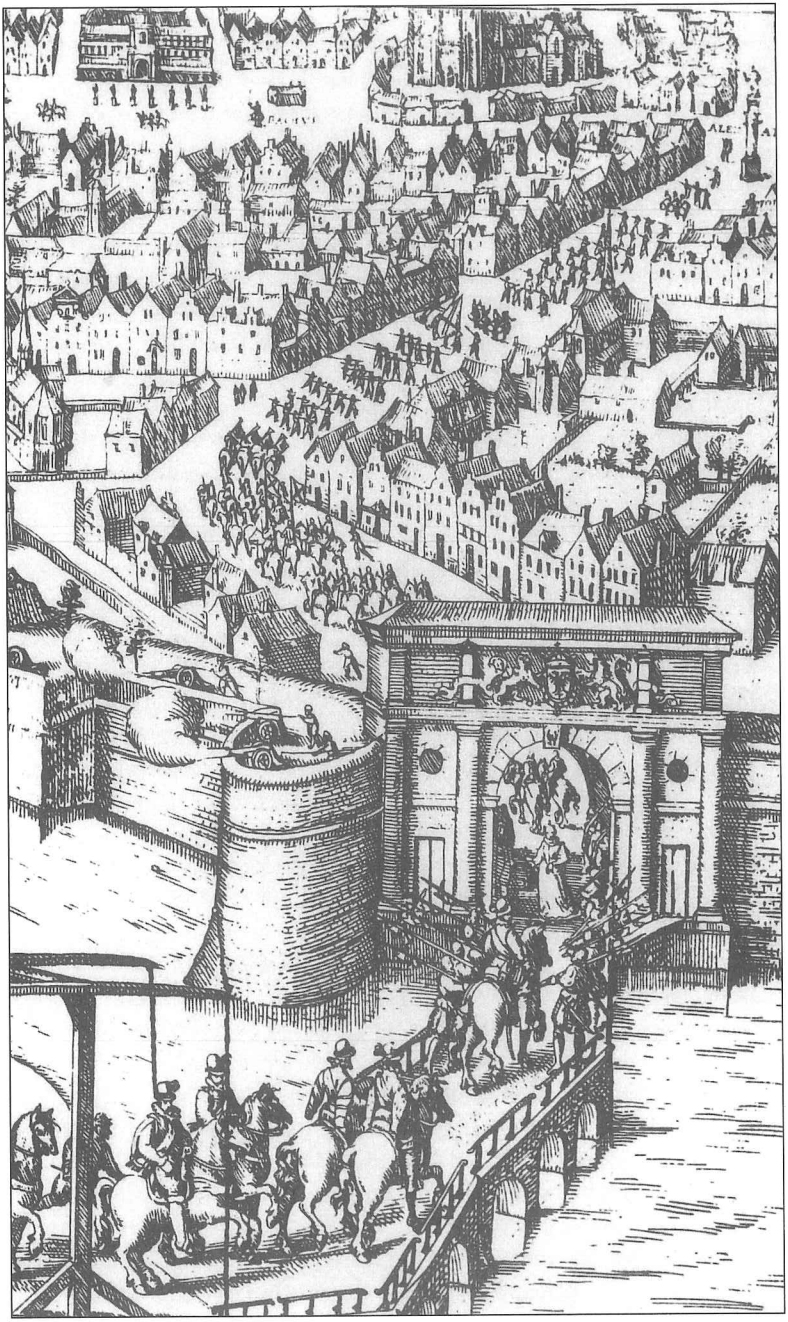
3. The Battle for the Allocation of Resources

From 1579, the "monthly contributions" from Holland and the other provinces were regarded as contributions to the war budget of the Union of Utrecht. One should not imagine that cartloads of coin trundled off to

the city of Utrecht, head-quarters of the Union. Rather, it was a question of accountability: member provinces of the Union had to provide documentation that the money they raised had indeed been spent for the needs of the war. The Union's audit committee was thus charged to review and evaluate incoming piles of receipts, mainly having reference to the payment of wages for the garrison companies. Starting in 1583, Holland and the other Union of Utrecht provinces remitted their receipts to the audit committee of the States General.[42]

As Parma's lengthy sieges forced the surrender of one important town after another, the "monthly contributions" of Flanders and Brabant, by far the wealthiest provinces in the Habsburg era, dwindled to insignificance. By 1584, Holland's "monthly contribution," previously the lion's share of the Union of Utrecht war budget, had become the lion's share of the States General's war budget.[43] Because of Parma's advances, the assembly of the General States moved its venue first from Brussels to Antwerp, then to Middelburg in Zeeland, and finally to The Hague. But even though it had abandoned the historical capital of the country, the States General's did not abandon its claim to control the country's finances, by having the tax revenues of the individual provinces "gathered into one purse."[44] This was nothing more than a corollary of the principle that government must be through the States General. More specifically, the argument was that only a unified or centralized financial administration could make it possible to find money for a field army of decent size, so as to go on the attack and provide relief for cities under siege. Yet the Lords States of Holland showed no disposition for changing the existing arrangements: the States General's board of auditors should continue to receive receipts for money spent by the provinces, nothing more.

One could put off the States General, but not William of Orange. His Excellency let the Lords States know in no uncertain terms that he wanted Holland's "common means" (*gemene middelen*) - that is, the taxes from which the monthly contribution was paid - placed "in his hands."[45] This caused some embarrassment for Holland's deputies, for no one wanted to be in the position of opposing the prince's will. At first they made excuses: income from the common means could not be given free and clear to the Prince of Orange, because it was pledged for the repayment of war loans by Holland's burghers.[46] It was, however, easy enough to solve this problem by telling the burgher-lenders that repayment of their loans must be postponed, and reassigned on some other source of income, as yet unnamed. Hence in the months following Orange's assassination, when the demand for fiscal centralization was renewed by the Council of State, the Hollanders offered to provide the cash "equivalent" of what the common means yielded - but only on condition that the money had to be used, in the first instance, for payment of the garrisons



Frans Hogenberg, *Parma's troops entering Antwerp*

standing to Holland's charge.[47] But the yield of the common means always fell short of the cost of monthly wages of the garrisons; thus from "the equivalent" of the common means, if used for the garrisons, there would be no money left over to pay for a field army. This was, in other words, only an apparent modification of the existing system.

There were other ways of paying for a field army. By now, the monthly contribution had come to be called the "ordinary" contribution, meaning that it was expected month after month, year after year. In time of need - and every year was a time of need - the provinces would also be asked for an "extraordinary" contribution over and above the monthly or ordinary contribution, usually in connection with efforts to form a field army. Initially, Flanders and Brabant were assigned the largest quotas, as had been true in the Habsburg era; but by 1585 neither province was able to pay anything. In this sphere too, Holland's contribution became, by default, the largest.[48] The Lords States of Holland were certainly not unwilling to raise "extraordinary contributions" for the defense of the provinces south of the Maas, even if the sums in question had to be gotten by levying further loan-quotas on Holland's towns. Nonetheless, Holland never granted quite as much as the Council of State required. In 1587, for example, Holland, asked for an extraordinary contribution in the amount of 1,000,000 guilders, agreed to a grant of 600,000 - not a small sum by any reckoning.[49] Yet 600,000 guilders was still not to be compared with Holland's ordinary contribution, now 128,500 guilders per month, or 1,536,000 for the year. To put the matter more clearly, the Lords States were willing to allocate as much as 600,000 for the general needs of the war, mainly in provinces south of the Maas, while reserving about two and a half times as much for the garrisons standing to Holland's charge, whose primary task was to shield Holland's Garden from the war.

Might Holland's garrisons not be deployed for purposes decreed by the Prince of Orange, or the States General? Orange certainly thought so. In 1578, he created a garrison for the city of Brussels by dispatching to Brabant a regiment of ten companies that were no longer needed for garrison duty in Holland. His intention was that these companies would continue to be carried on Holland's budget. But the Lords States had other ideas. As noted above, they asked in July 1579 to be relieved of responsibility for troops stationed in Brabant.[50] Some years later, during the siege of Antwerp (1585), some of Holland's companies were seconded to a force meant to break through the siege of the city on the Scheldt, and replaced by soldiers from towns that had already surrendered to Parma. This was done by order of Count Philip von Hohenlohe, who had been named field-commander of Holland's forces after Orange's assassination.

But the Lords States had not been consulted either about denuding the frontier of veteran soldiers, nor about replacing them with men of questionable fighting qualities. Hohenlohe was instructed to recall his veterans at once, for, in this time of great danger, there could be no question of diluting the forces that made up Holland's defensive cordon.[51]
It was, as has been stated, a question of priorities. The Lords States were not indifferent to the fate of cities like Ghent and Antwerp, but their highest priority remained the same, whatever might happen south of the great rivers.

Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, sent by England's Elizabeth I as her commander-in-chief, landed in Flushing in January 1586. The mandate he had from his queen was not only approved by the States General, but strengthened, much to Elizabeth's displeasure. One of his first steps was to form a Council of State, including not just men from Holland and other Northern provinces, but also prominent refugees from the Southern Netherlands. These men cast a suspicious eye on their hosts, for it was their view that wealthy Holland might have done more for Flanders and Brabant.[52] For Leicester and many of his councilors - and indeed, for most foreigners who thought they understood the Low Countries - a financial administration that was not properly centralized was an open invitation to wastage and corruption.[53] Leicester accordingly demanded that the revenues of the various provinces be placed in his hands, without reservations or conditions. In Zeeland and in the landward provinces, like Utrecht and Gelderland, there was considerable support for the idea of a central authority strong enough to mobilize the country's resources against Parma. Leicester's demands were very much against the will of the Lords States of Holland, but the gentlemen deputies understood that in every political struggle there comes a time for strategic retreat.[54]

Thus during the summer months of 1586, the States had to impose loan quotas on the towns for the purpose of paying the wages of Holland's garrisons,[55] because money from Holland's monthly contribution, meant for this purpose, was being remitted instead to Leicester and his Council. But Leicester did not have much success as a field commander,[56] and he also alienated many erstwhile supporters by not paying sufficient heed to jealously guarded provincial privileges. In October, after it became known that Leicester had been recalled to England for consultation, the States of Holland seized the opportunity: for the following year, 1587, Leicester and his Council would collect, as before, receipts for money spent by Holland, not cash.[57] Upon his return during the summer of that year, Leicester and his backers were not able to reverse this decision. When he left for England a second time a few months later, his departure signaled a defeat for the idea of unitary fiscal administration, and a victory for the party of Holland's Garden.

Leicester's tenure as Governor-General provoked a debate that was of great importance for the subsequent history of political theory in the Dutch Republic. In the spring of 1587, Thomas Wilkes, Elizabeth's agent in The Hague, attacked Holland's position in a *Remonstrance*, arguing that sovereignty resided not in the States assemblies, but in the people themselves.[58] For a rebuttal, the Lords States turned to François Vranck, the town pensionary of Gouda. Vranck's *Corte Verthoninge* (October 1587) locates sovereignty not in the people, but in the oligarchic town councils (*vroedschappen*) whose delegates made up the States assembly:[59]

> These boards must be as old as the towns, as no one remembers their origins [...] [they] alone have the power to resolve upon all matters affecting the state respectively of the province and the town, and the citizens accept these decisions as binding, for they have never infringed or opposed these decisions [...] From this it is clear that these boards of town magistrates and councilors, together with the corporation of nobles, undoubtedly represent the whole state and the whole body of the inhabitants.[60]

Insofar as it purported to offer an overview of Holland's history, this tract left much to be desired.[61] But Vranck's theory of the sovereignty of the Estates of Holland, and, by logical extension, of the other provinces of the Union, came to be generally accepted over the next two centuries.[62] In the same way, his *staatsgezind* interpretation of Holland's past launched a school of history, of which Hugo Grotius's *Tractaet vande Oudheid vande Batavische nu Hollandsche Republique* (1610) has been called the highlight.[63]

4. Holland's "Particularism" in Historical Perspective

During the history of the Dutch Republic (1572-1795), there were times when a strong-minded prince of the House of Orange, backed by the States General, compelled Holland to bend to his will.[64] But for the most part, Holland and its town oligarchies held sway; in consequence, the staatsgezind view of history propounded by Vranck and Grotius was often reproduced at the writing-desks of Dutch historians. For Jan Wagenaar († 1773), Amsterdam's eighteenth-century town historian, and author of a multi-volume history of the Northern Netherlands, free government meant government by the States, and, implicitly, by the town oligarchies whom the deputies represented.[65] But the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War (1780-1783) was a national catastrophe that made the weaknesses of de-centralized government painfully apparent. There followed a spirited debate between "Patriots" who envisioned a representative government based on the will of the people, and "Orangists" who advocated a central-

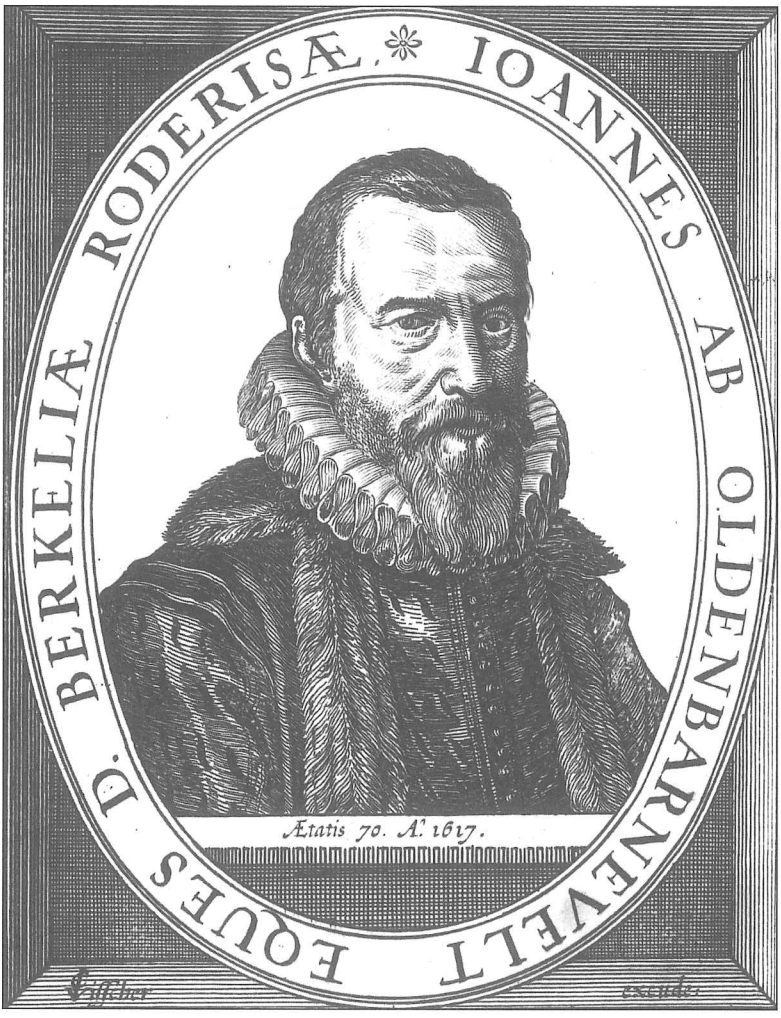
Anonymus artist, *Stop rooting in Holland`s Garden, Spanish Pigs* (ca. 1572)

ization of power in the hands of Stadtholder William V. Then the Netherlands, like the rest of Europe, was overtaken by the events of the French Revolution. Under the so-called Batavian Republic, the debate about what form of government the country should have was settled in favor of a unitary state: the Constitution of 1798 dissolved the historic provinces altogether, and replaced them by purely administrative districts analogous to the *départements* of Revolutionary France. The principle of the unitary state, once established, outlasted French rule. King William I (1813-1840), son of Stadtholder William V, ruled in conjunction with a States General, but ministers were answerable only to the king.

The process of centralization was subsequently consolidated in a constitutional monarchy, as established by the Constitution of 1848, which was drafted by a committee headed by a Liberal university professor, J. R. Thorbecke. Provincial States, elected by citizens of means, were re-established, if only for the purpose of choosing deputies to the States General, to which government ministers were now responsible. This constitution "formulated the principles of the Dutch political system in such a way that it could function, virtually unchanged, for over a century, and even today forms the basis of Dutch government."[66]

The historic shift toward centralized government brought a corresponding shift in how Dutch scholars viewed the history of the Republic (1572-1795). Adriaan Kluit - who argued that the counts of Holland, not the States, had been sovereign prior to 1572 - may have owed his professorship at Leiden (1807) to his Orangist credentials.[67] Prior to his political career, J. R. Thorbecke had been an *ordinarius* professor at Leiden (1833), appointed, he believed, "in order to continue the school of Kluit." Thorbecke's pupils, including Robert Fruin, remembered him saying that the Netherlands would have been able to play a more effective role in world history, had the country had a real head of state after 1581.[68] In 1860 Fruin became the first holder of a new chair at Leiden for "Fatherland's history." Fruin began his prolific career as a historian as "liberal-*staatsgezind*"; for example, he viewed Leicester's program of centralization as contrary to "the privileges and the interests of the provinces, the cities, and the corporations" [guilds]. In later works, however, reacting to what he saw as threats to national unity represented by new confessional parties in the Netherlands, he adopted a "liberal-Orangist" view of the past. He now saw the republican character of the state that developed after 1581 as an "interruption" of the kind of logical historical progress toward constitutional monarchy that had occurred in other European lands; localist forces, animated by merchant-politics, had prevented the House of Orange from building a strong unitary state, and playing a more honorable role in European power politics.[69]

P. J. Blok, Fruin's pupil and successor at Leiden (1884), believed, like his teacher, that history must serve the cause of national unity. He saw in the Dutch Revolt a clash between reactionary local interests on one side, and an anti-national king on the other; between the two, representing "the highest ideals of humanity in both the political and religious sphere," stood William of Orange.[70] In 1918 Johan Huizinga, one of Blok's pupils, became a professor of general history at Leiden. To foreign universities, Huizinga presented the Republic created by the Union of Utrecht as a federalist system with a weak central government, over which Holland, the richest province, exercised a "salutary" pre-eminence. But as developments in Germany began to portend an ominous future, he judged that audiences at home needed something other than a "Hollandocentric" view of their national past. Speaking to a conference on Dutch national unity, he argued that the Holland had not in fact dominated the Union, because the other provinces had been able to provide a "salutary counterweight."[71] To my knowledge, the only major Dutch historian of the nineteenth or the first half of the twentieth century who had good words for a "Hollandocentric" Republic was Pieter Geyl; in his view, the States of Holland, led by Johan van Oldenbarnevelt, "were undoubtedly the only purposeful force in the Union at present, the only one able



Claes Jansz. Visscher, *Johan van Oldenbarnevelt*

to save the country from complete anarchy in the face of the enemy."[72] But one voice does not a chorus make. In the dominant tradition among Geyl's scholarly compatriots, national unity was celebrated, and the constitution of the Republic was found wanting.

Historians from outside The Netherlands have largely followed the same line, and for similar reasons. Those of us who have worked in the second half of the twentieth century as historians of the body politic have been, more than we care to admit,[73] influenced by the presuppositions of our nineteenth-century forebears, for whom the national state represent-

ed the logical terminus of a long historical development. The idea of "particularism" expresses this consensus across the different languages of Europe. Formed from the French *particulier*, referring to one's personal interest, the abstract noun referred initially to the doctrine that God's predestination extended only to some individuals. The word then took on a moral sense, that is, the habit of preferring one's own interest to the general good. Finally, from about 1850, debates about national unification in Germany gave *Partikularismus* and related words a political connotation; depending on one's point of view, it meant either a legitimate defense of the autonomy and the distinctive customs of a single region within a larger whole, or a regrettable unwillingness to allow the good of the nation to override local interests.[74]

This latter, derogatory sense of the term has regularly been applied to the political arrangements of the early Dutch Republic by modern historians. For Martin van Gelderen, even though William of Orange "worked hard to overcome particularism", "the individual towns and provinces were unwilling to make sacrifices for the common good." With regard to the decision by Holland and Zeeland (1581) not to offer sovereignty to the Duke of Anjou, as proposed by Orange and the States General, Geoffrey Parker comments as follows: "Although this was an extreme example, provincial particularism was by no means confined to Holland and Zeeland. All provinces grudged every penny they voted unless the money was earmarked for local purposes." E. H. Kossmann finds it appropriate to insert the abstract noun "particularism" (which did not exist in the sixteenth century) into his translation of one of William of Orange's complaints to the States General.[75] At this point the argument comes full circle, for modern historians are in effect endorsing the view of events one finds in Orange's public harangues: if cities and provinces refused to do as he asked, it was because they were too selfish to make sacrifices for the common good.

The mere fact that an opinion is so often repeated is perhaps reason enough for calling it into question. But there are better reasons for taking a different view of what was "selfish," and what the "common" good was, having to do with a) the political consciousness of sixteenth-century Netherlanders, b) the success of Holland's military strategy, and c) possible explanations for Holland's extraordinary economic boom, from, about 1585 or 1590.

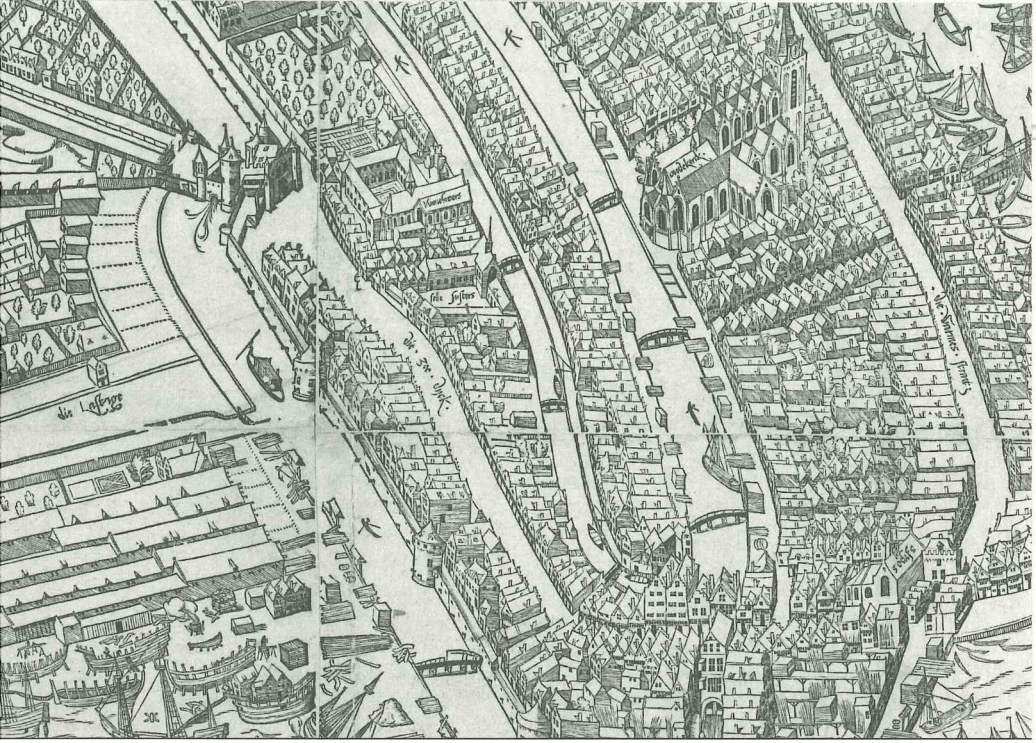
Political consciousness:

Both in Charles V's time and in the early decades of the Revolt, the various States assemblies acted as if they understood the Netherlands not as a unified realm, but as a loose union of semi-independent provinces, each properly concerned first and foremost with advancing its distinctive

interests, and protecting its distinctive privileges.[76] One may assume over the course of time a growing sense of unity among the provincial élites, as they had more and more occasion to interact with the central government, particularly through its appellate courts.[77] But in the Revolt against Spain, especially early on, the war effort depended, more than in any previous war, on the free co-operation of ordinary burghers, mainly in Holland; as they themselves knew, it was their taxes and especially their loans that kept the war going, and they were quite capable of making their views felt through the town oligarchies represented in the States assembly.[78] Under Habsburg rule, men of their sort had been frustrated by watching their tax revenues go for "putting out fires" elsewhere, even as enemy soldiers made punishing forays into their own *land*, that is, their province.[79] Now they had a chance of making sure the same thing did not happen again. While not begrudging every penny that went for the defense of the whole commonwealth that the States General claimed to represent, they mainly wanted to pay for the protection of Holland's Garden.

Military success:
Alexander of Parma achieved a great deal for Philip II by his conquest of Flanders and Brabant; it might also be said that Holland's ability to defend its borders during these years owed more than a little to the fact that Parma had other objectives, south of the great rivers. But Parma also had behind him the superior resources that an offensive strategy requires. By contrast, the Lords States, by choosing to protect Holland's Garden, picked a strategy which was more suited to the province's more slender resources, and which also worked remarkably well in its own terms. To be sure, it was not possible to prevent cross-border raids altogether; villages in Holland were sometimes burned, as in Gooiland, or in the vulnerable district around Heusden, on the south bank of the Maas.[80] But the main point is that after 1578 there were no battles fought within Holland, and no Holland town was laid under siege. Holland's Garden, spared from the war that continued to rage elsewhere, became a land of refuge. As cities in Flanders and Brabant capitulated to Parma, those who did not wish to submit to the king of Spain and the Catholic religion were given time to dispose of their goods and prepare for exile. Many came to Holland, some for the freedom to worship as Protestants, others for a better opportunity to pursue their craft or their business.[81]

Holland's economic boom:
Holland's burst of prosperity is commonly dated from about 1590, though some economic historians see the upswing beginning as early as 1585.[82] Amsterdam was the leading edge of this development, for the



Cornelis Anthonisz., *Map of Amsterdam* (1544), detail: Warmoesstraat and Lastage.

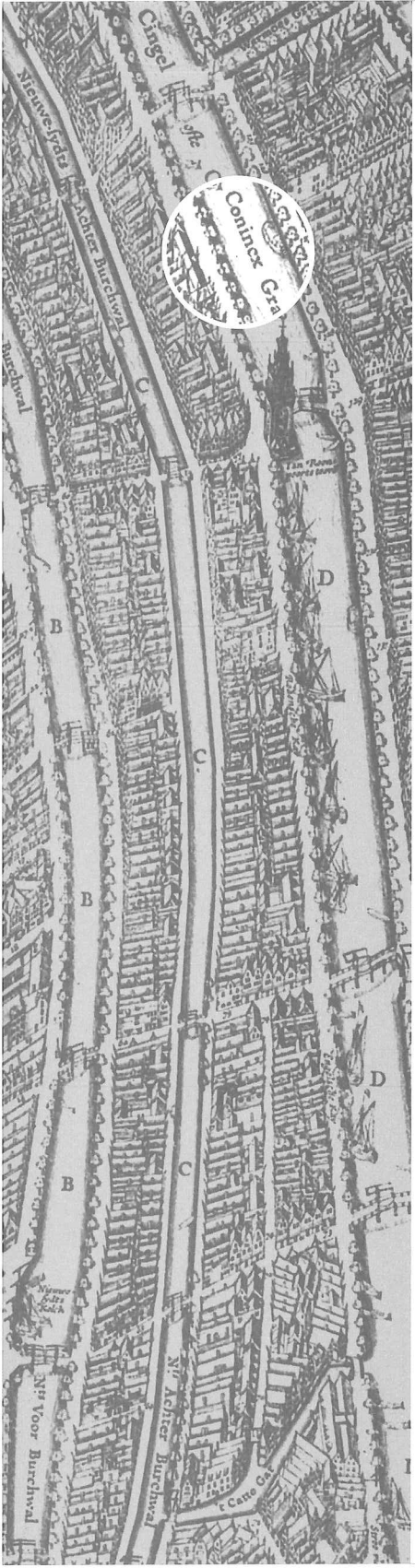
return of the exiles who organized the 1578 *Alteratie* - many of them active grain merchants - marked the beginning of "a new chapter in the history of Dutch foreign trade."[83] The fact that Holland was able to increase its monthly contribution from 80,000 guilders a month in 1578 to 128,500 in 1586 (as noted above) can now be seen as fitting into a larger picture; because Holland became so wealthy over the next several decades, the taxes and loans of Holland's burghers were able to support an ever-expanding military budget.[84] What was the source of this extraordinary prosperity? Economic historians have generally favored economic explanations, relating, for example, to a freer labor market in Holland. But Clé Lesger has recently propounded a somewhat different view that dovetails nicely with the argument presented here: commerce flourished in these years mainly because of the trading connections brought refugee merchants from the southern provinces; and these men chose to relocate in Amsterdam or one of the nearby towns because Holland was the only island of peace and security in a sea of war.[85] In other words, it seems that the Lords States, by keeping the war out of Holland's Garden, laid the foundations for the unprecedented economic growth that paid the costs of an interminable war. On this view, one might conclude by saying that the United Provinces withstood the power of the Spanish monarchy not in spite of, but precisely because of Holland's particularism.

1. With the possible exception of the Calvinist ruling faction in Ghent: Johan Decavele, ed., *Het eind van een rebelse droom* (Ghent, 1984).
2. J. W. Wijn, *Het beleg van Haarlem* (Nijmegen, 1982).
3. H. F. K. van Nierop, *Het verraad van het Noorderkwartier: oorlog, terreur en recht in de Nederlandse Opstand* (Amsterdam, 1999), pp. 81-104.
4. On the four "entries" to Holland, *Commentaires de Bernardino de Mendoza sur les évenements de la Guerre des Pays-Bas*, transl. by H. L. G. G. Loumier (2 vols., Brussels, 1860), vol. II, p. 239.
5. Robert Fruin, *The siege and relief of Leiden*, transl. by Elizabeth Trevelyan (The Hague, 1974).
6. Van Nierop, *Het verraad*, pp. 58-61.
7. *Resolutiën van de Staten van Holland*, hereafter abbreviated as RSH, 4 September 1574: petition by the town of Oudewater and nine nearby villages for suspending the order to cut the dikes. By contrast, Philip II issued in 1574 a general order forbidding his commanders from cutting dikes to flood the countryside: Geoffrey Parker, *The Dutch Revolt* (Ithaca, 1977), pp. 161, 300-301 (note 44).
8. J. H. van Dijk, "Bedreigd Delft," *Bijdragen voor vaderlandse geschiedenis en oudheidkunde*, 6th series, VI (1928) pp. 177-198.
9. *Opstand en pacificatie van de Lage Landen: bijdragen tot de studie van de Pacificatie van Gent* (Ghent and The Hague, 1976).
10. Pieter Christianszoon Bor, *Oorsprong, begin ende vervolgh van de Nederlandsche Oorlogen* (3 vols., Amsterdam, 1679-1685), vol. I, book x, p. 896; book xi, pp. 906-908; book xii, pp. 927-928, 952-953; Henk van Nierop, *Het foute Amsterdam* (Amsterdam, 2000).
11. The heraldic image of a maiden seated in a flowering garden protected by a fence occurs for the first time in the mid-fourteenth century, on the seal of Count William V. The word *tuin* meant a fence, and by extension a fenced-in area, a garden; cf. the German *Zaun* = "fence," and the Celtic/Latin *-dun* or *-dunum*, meaning "town" in the English sense of the word.
12. Bor, *Oorsprong*, vol. I, book x, p. 753, list of ten sites whose fortifications were to be improved at a cost of 126,000 guilders; cf. RSH 20 February 1577.
13. Bor, *Oorsprong*, vol. I, book xi, pp. 906-08: the Lords States are resolved to gain possession of Amsterdam one way or another, "om haeren thuyn dicht te houden" ("to close their garden tight").
14. Bor, *Oorsprong*, vol. II, book xiii, p. 17: the Prince of Orange sees Gelderland as Holland's "bulwark" (*propugnacule*), because of the four streams flowing through Gelderland into Holland.
15. *Resolutiën van de Staten-Generaal*, hereafter abbreviated as RSG, 10 May, 28 June 1578, vol. II, pp. 320-325, 337-338.
16. RSH 28 July 1579.
17. F. J. G. ten Raa and F. de Bas, *Het Staatsche leger*, 1568-1795 (11 vols., The Hague, 1911-1950), vol. I, pp. 54, 162-163; according to a war budget of 1579-1580, Holland was responsible for forty-six infantry companies of which twenty-two seem to have been stationed within its borders.
18. RSH 31 January 1587, Holland agrees to maintain 80 companies.
19. RSH 7 July 1579 (80,000), RSH 2 June 1581 (83,000), RSG 10 September 1583 (Holland now owes 93,000 per month), and RSG 12 October 1585 (Holland owes 128,500).
20. RSH 31 January 1587; cf. Rijksarchief van Zuid-Holland (hereafter abbreviated as RAZH), 3.01.14, no. 205.
21. RSH 23 January 1582.
22. Gemeentearchief Amsterdam, nr. 5029, 29: *Prothocolle van alle de reysen ... bij mij, Andries Jacopsz., gedaen*, 21 May 1537. Cf. Idem, 8 May 1537, a member of Mary's Council of State accuses Hollanders of paying no heed to attacks from "the French, the English, or anyone else" unless they themselves are "pricked."
23. RSH 12/13 October 1538.
24. Gemeentearchief Amsterdam, nr. 5029, 32: Adriaen Sandelijn, "Memoriaelboek" 29 December 1549
25. H. G. Koenigsberger, *Monarchies, Estates Generals and parliaments* (Cambridge, 2001), p. 182: in 1556, a propos of a government tax proposal, "the Venetian ambassador reported that the prince of Orange had publicly remarked that His Majesty [King Philip II] should hang those who spoke against his important affairs."
26. Koenigsberger, *Monarchies*, pp. 107-109.
27. E.g., RSH 12 April 1536, RSH 23 October 1536, RSH 7 March 1551.
28. RSH 31 August 1545.
29. This was called *ruggespraak* ("backspeak"), a source of endless delay.
30. Koenigsberger, *Monarchies*, pp. 185-186. There was ample precedent for having the provincial States manage collection and disbursement of the subsi-

dies to which they had consented.

31. K. J. W. Verhofstad, S. J., *De Regering der Nederlanden in de jaren 1555-1559* (Nijmegen, 1937), pp. 81-107.
32. Koenigsberger, *Monarchies*, 187; cf. p. 180, "The general public seems to have been unaware of the royal decree" [1557] by which Philip II suspended payment on his bankers' loans.
33. The latest study, Henry Kamen, *The Duke of Alba* (New Haven, Connecticut, 2004), emphasizes the degree to which Alba's harsh rule "lost the support of Spaniards in the Netherlands", p. 117.
34. *Biographie Nationale de Belgique*, 'Anthoine van Stralen', vol. 24, pp. 131-143; 'Jacques van Wesenbeke' vol. 27, p. 206-211.
35. Discourse of John Junius de Jonghe (Knuttel, no. 224), in E. H. Kossmann and A. F. Mellink, eds., *Texts concerning the Revolt of the Netherlands* (Cambridge, 1974), pp. 122-123.
36. Kossmann and Mellink, *Texts concerning the Revolt*, "Remonstrance made to the deputies of the States General at Antwerp, by the prince of Orange" (Knuttel, no. 524), p. 201. The text as translated here has the word "not" after "useful," but this is surely an error.
37. E.g., RSH 20 January 1582: the member provinces have agreed to monthly contributions totaling 138,000, including 83,000 from Holland.
38. RSH 5 June 1581: the agreed-on monthly contributions of provinces then associated with the Union of Utrecht were: Holland 83,000, Friesland 20,000, Zeeland 17,000, Utrecht 10,000, and Overijssel 6,000. Gelderland had an assigned quota of 20,000 but, because of the war raging there, paid very little in practice.
39. RSH 26-27 July, 24 August 1585 (Antwerp surrendered on 17 August 1585).
40. Léon van der Essen, *Alexandre Farnese, Prince de Parme, Gouverneur-General des Pays-Bas (1545-1592)* (5 vols., Brussels, 1933-1938), vols. III, IV.
41. Kossmann and Mellink, *Texts concerning the Revolt*, "About the present condition of the government of the Netherlands" (Knuttel, no. 652), p. 257.
42. RAZH, 3.01.14, nos. 202-229, "Payments to the States General, 1583-1618."
43. RSG 9 August 1584, IV, pp. 634-635: the monthly contributions for all provinces represented in the States General amounted to 300,000 guilders, of which Holland, Zeeland and Utrecht were jointly responsible for 200,000, including 133,000 from Holland.
44. RSG 18 March 1583 (IV, 181-182), 7 November 1583 (IV, 204), 8 February 1584 (IV, 589).
45. RSH 1583, pp. 482-486, a memorandum to this effect from His Excellency.
46. RSH 10, 18 January, 13 April 1584.
47. RSH 8 March 1585.
48. RAZH, 3.01.14, no. 99C, "Staat van Repartitiegelden, 1580-1586": Holland was responsible for 36,000 of a 150,000 extraordinary assessment in 1583, 150,000 of a 350,000 assessment in 1584, 217,000 of a total of 367,000 in assessments in 1585, and 321,000 of 500,000 in 1586.
49. RSH 11 Feb 1587.
50. Alexandre Henne and Alphonse Wouters, *Histoire de la ville de Bruxelles* (3 vols., reprint Brussels 1968), vol. I, pp. 445-447; RSH 28 July 1579.
51. RSH 26 June, 30 July 1585.
52. F. G. Osterhoff, *Leicester and the Netherlands, 1586-1587* (Utrecht, 1988).
53. E.g., *Calendar of state papers, foreign series, of the reign of Elizabeth I*, vol. 19, p. 791: [7 June 1585?], "Mr. [Jacob] Valke's answers to questions concerning the state of the Low Countries."
54. RSH 6 February 1586, agreement to remit Holland's monthly contribution to Leicester and his Council of State.
55. RAZH 3.01.14, no. 99C, "Staat van Repartitiegelden, 1580-1586."
56. E.g., Bor, *Oorsprong*, vol. II, book xxi, pp. 708-713: Leicester and his forces failed to reach the strategic town of Grave in time to forestall its capitulation.
57. RSH 8 October 1586.
58. Martin Van Gelderen, *The political thought of the Dutch Revolt* (Combridge 1992), pp. 202-203.
59. Before 1572, six towns had voting rights in the States of Holland, with the college of nobles having a seventh vote; after 1572 the number of towns with voting rights was increased to eighteen.
60. Van Gelderen, *Political thought*, pp. 204-206 (*Corte verthoninge*, Knuttel 790).
61. Van Gelderen, *Political thought*, p. 206; Koenigsberger, *Monarchies*, p. 310. On Vranck's claim that Holland had enjoyed 1,500 years of freedom, tracing back to the Batavians, Ivo Schöffer, "The Batavian Myth during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries," *Britain and the Netherlands*, V (1975), pp. 78-101.
62. Koenigsberger, *Monarchies*, p. 310; cf. Van Gelderen, *Political thought*, p. 204.

63. Van Gelderen, *Political thought*, p. 207.
64. Under Maurice of Nassau (1618/1619), William II (1650), and William III (from 1672); see the relevant sections of J. C. H. Blom and E. Lamberts, eds., *History of the Low Countries*, transl. James C. Kennedy (New York, 1999).
65. G. W. Kernkamp, *Van menschen en tijden* (Haarlem, 1931), pp. 2-3, speaking of Wagenaar's *Vaderlandsche historie* (10 vols., Amsterdam, 1749-1759).
66. See the relevant sections of Blom and Lambert, *History of the Low Countries*; for the quote, p. 395.
67. W. Otterspeer, "De Leidsche School. De leerstoel vaderlandsche geschiedenis, 1860-1925," in W. Otterspeer, ed., *Een universiteit herleeft. Wetenschapsbeoefening aan de Leidse Universiteit vanaf de tweede helft van de 19e eeuw* (Leiden, 1984), p. 41. Kluit contended that the counts of Holland, not the States of Holland, had held sovereignty in the province prior to 1572.
68. Otterspeer, "De Leidsche School," pp. 42-44.
69. Jacobus Wilhelmus Smit, *Fruin en de partijen tijdens de Republiek* (Groningen, 1958), pp. 44-47, 97-98, 109, 168-169, 206. Cf. p. 49: "De herinneringen aan de verdeeldheid van de Republiek, de moeite die het had gekost om hier een centrale regering te vestigen, maakten het merendeel van de liberalen afkerig van het partikularistisch denken. Voorop ging wat dat betreft Thorbecke."
70. Otterspeer, "De Leidsche School," pp. 49-50.
71. Anton van der Lem, *Het eeuwige verbeeld in een afgehaald bed. Huizinga en de Nederlandse beschaving* (Amsterdam, 1997), pp. 138, 151, 188-189, 235.
72. Pieter Geyl, *The Revolt of the Netherlands* (1555-1609) (New York, 1932), p. 213; cf. pp. 204, 209, 211. Geyl differed from his peers also in his view of the historic unity of the Netherlandish people, including Dutch-speaking Belgians.
73. To an American, a unitary state seems less "natural" than a federal state in which power is shared between the central government and regional governments.
74. See the relevant entries in *The Oxford English Dictionary, Trésor de la Langue Française, Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal,* and *Grande Dizionario della Lingua Italiana*.
Van Gelderen, *Political thought*, p. 53 (cf. p. 52);
75. Parker, *Dutch Revolt*, p. 201; Kossmann and Mellink, *Texts concerning the Revolt*, "Remonstrance made to the deputies of the States General at Antwerp, by the prince of Orange, 9 January 1580," pp. 201-202: "... We are always compelled to stay on the defensive without daring to attack because each time it is difficult for us to use more than the army of a single province [...] The result of your particularism is that if some provinces are attacked, they ask us for help (though often in vain)."
76. Cf. Koenigsberger, *Monarchies*, p. 186: "People did not speak of it as a state, as a realm. For a long time the provinces had considered themselves bound together only by having the same prince. Only very gradually had they come to consider themselves as a political community and they were very suspicious of the word union."
77. Hugo de Schepper, *Belgium Nostrum. Over de integratie en desintegratie van het Nederland* (Antwerp, 1987).
78. I am at work on a book on "The founding of a Dutch Republic: war, finance, and polity in the province of Holland, 1572-1588." Chapter 10, "Holland's Pyramid of Credit," discusses the crucial importance of the fact that Holland's burghers were willing to continue lending, even though their loans were seldom repaid on time.
79. James D. Tracy, *A financial revolution in the Habsburg Netherlands: renten en renteniers in the county of Holland, 1515-1556* (Berkeley, 1985), Chapter 3, "The Guelders Wars."
80. Han Verschure, *Overleven buiten de Hollandse Tuin. Raamsdonk, Waspik,'s Gravenmoer, Capelle, Sprang en Besoijen tijdens de Tachtigjarige Oorlog* (Waspik and Tilburg, 2004).
81. Oscar Gelderblom, *Zuid-Nederlandse kooplieden en de opkomst van de Amsterdamse stapelmarkt (1578-1630)* (Hilversum, 2000).
82. Jan de Vries, Ad van der Woude, *The first modern economy. Success, failure and perserverance of the Dutch economy*, 1500-1815 (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 272, 367.
83. De Vries and Van der Woude, *First modern economy*, p. 365.
84. Marjolein C. 't Hart, *The making of a bourgeois state. War, politics and finance during the Dutch Revolt* (Manchester, 1993).
85. Clé Lesger, *Handel in Amsterdam ten tijde van de Opstand: kooplieden, commerciële expansie en verandering in de ruimtelijke economie van de Nederlanden, ca. 1550-ca. 1630* (Hilversum, 2001).



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