

## **Propaganda from the pulpit?**

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### **Introduction**

On 12 July 1708, Hendrik van Nassau-Ouwerkerk, Field Marshal of the Dutch army, reported to Anthonie Heinsius, Grand Pensionary of Holland, about the battle that had taken place that same day at Oudenaarde, a village situated on the banks of the river Scheldt in Flanders. He described how the allied army had crossed the river, having marched all night, and had taken the French army by surprise. Ouwerkerk had himself led the left flank, while Prince Eugene of Savoy and the Duke of Marlborough had led the right flank. The battle ended in victory because, in Ouwerkerk's words, God, Our Lord, blessed the weapons of the allied forces so that we were able to defeat our enemies. Three days later, Heinsius in turn congratulated Willem Buys, the Pensionary of Amsterdam. He wrote him a letter stating: God Almighty is clearly on our side and I have no doubt that we will soon obtain the peace that is necessary to secure our country's freedom, religion and prosperity. Buys replied to the Grand Pensionary in similar terms and wrote that he was impressed with God's compelling help and support, expressing the hope that, by God's hand, both the Dutch Republic and its allies would be given peace and their descendants granted safety.<sup>1</sup>

Statements like these, that attributed the changing fortunes of war and peace to God, can be found throughout the correspondence of the Dutch Republic's political and military leaders, including Stadholder William III, Grand Pensionary Heinsius and Field Marshal Van Nassau-Ouwerkerk. However, this was not limited to the sphere of personal remarks. Six months after the battle at Oudenaarde, after the campaign of 1708 had been successfully concluded and the army had retired to their winter quarters, the highest Dutch ruling body, the States General, decided to declare a national prayer day to thank God for His support and to pray that He would continue to give His protection to what had come to be called 'our dear Fatherland'. One of the preachers that day was Hero Sibersma from Amsterdam. He gave a detailed account in his sermon of everything that had taken place on the battlefield that year.<sup>2</sup> He stressed that the Dutch and their allies had waged a just war and this was why God had taken their side. However, at the same time, he urged his congregation to repent their sins for it was only then, and when all worldly

injustices had been driven out, that God would be able to bestow a lasting peace upon the nation.

During the Nine Years' War and the War of the Spanish Succession it was standard practice for the state to instruct the church to thank God, celebrate military triumphs or explain the country's politics. French kings called upon archbishops and bishops to give praise to God for His favours with a *Te Deum* in special thanksgiving services held in cathedrals and parish churches. The idea behind this was for the splendour of these events to add to the king's glory. During the War of the Spanish Succession, Louis XIV went through a very difficult time due to his small number of successes and many defeats and this is why the *Te Deum* was only used very selectively.<sup>3</sup> According to one recent author, prayer days were one of the most important instruments used in England by King William to sanction his right to the monarchy that he had acquired in 1688-1689 as well as his rule. The mastermind behind William III's propaganda in England, Gilbert Burnet, whom William had appointed Bishop of Salisbury, presented his king as the guardian of the 'godly reformation' who would morally cleanse the kingdom, liberating it from papistry and misgovernment. In order to reach as wide an audience as possible, Burnet used the sermon as his medium. The celebration of fast days and thanksgiving days in particular increased in importance between 1689 and 1702. These days were superbly organized and this is why it has been said 'that the fasts and thanksgivings were the element of William's propaganda which made most impact amongst ordinary Englishmen.'<sup>4</sup>

The relationship between the State and the Church in the Dutch Republic differed from that of the surrounding countries. State and religion were not as united here as they were elsewhere. Freedom of conscience was one of the Republic's most important features. Yet at the same time the reformed church was both the privileged and the public church. It enjoyed a privileged status because the government took care of all its material requirements and, in addition to this, membership of the church was a precondition to holding public office. It was also public in the sense that the state required church services to be open to everyone and the government insisted upon the church carrying out certain activities, such as proclaiming national prayer days. However, the religious service itself fell within the province of the reformed church. Consequently, preachers, if they were so inclined, felt free to expound political points of view from the pulpit. Nevertheless, they were sometimes silenced by the government. The reverse was also true in that the authorities, in turn, tried to exert their influence upon the preachers. William III in particular could count on finding enthusiastic defenders of his policy among the preachers, as would appear on various occasions, and he was not averse to generating propaganda during such moments.<sup>5</sup> However,

less is known about just how far the authorities had the preachers in their pockets. Therefore, this article will discuss the extent to which the pulpit was used to spread propaganda during the national prayer day celebrations between the war years 1688-1713.

### **The States General and the sermons on thanksgiving days, fast days and prayer days**

As we have already seen in the example of the *Te Deum* mentioned above, prayer days<sup>6</sup> were not an exclusively Protestant phenomenon. However, during the first decades of the Reformation and the Dutch Revolt they did take on a new format in the Netherlands. The nineteenth-century study by Kist is very useful here. This consists of a study into the prayer day phenomenon itself and a list of prayer days proclaimed by the States General and other official bodies.<sup>7</sup> We will confine ourselves to the national prayer days issued by the States General. Moreover, the prayer day also recently captivated the attention of a number of scholars.<sup>8</sup> Before we allow the preachers to tell their own story, we will give a brief outline of the prayer days' objective and examine how they were organized.

The prayer day's objective was to use a public service in the Reformed Church to beg God for His blessings and support, and either to ask forgiveness for any sins that had been committed or to offer thanks for blessings received. Consecutive church orders shaped the prayer days until the final stamp of approval could be given at the synod of Dordrecht in 1618-1619. Prayer days were not only proclaimed during troublesome times, such as wars, epidemics and religious persecution, but on joyous occasions too, such as a victory or the conclusion of a peace treaty. To underline the solemnity of the prayer day it was decreed that the community should abstain from consuming food and liquor that day, from visiting inns and from carrying out any business transactions. This call for restraint was also made during the years 1688-1713.<sup>9</sup> The special significance of the day is also illustrated by the fact that the prayer day was not generally held on a Sunday, but rather on a normal weekday, namely a Wednesday. Due to the fact that church attendance figures were especially high on these days, not just one, but sometimes two or three prayer day services had to be held.

The government had the exclusive right to proclaim a prayer day and the procedure followed by the States General was straightforward. One of the provinces would submit a proposal and, based on this, the States General would then decide to decree a prayer day. Once this had been implemented they would then inform the provincial states in writing. The states publicized the pending prayer day by occasionally print-

ing an announcement and, in every case, notifying the town and rural authorities. In turn, they informed the preachers about the time and theme of the prayer day. Generally speaking, it only took a fortnight between the decision being made by the States General and the prayer day being celebrated throughout the entire United Provinces. Outside the Republic's borders, the prayer day also applied to garrison towns that had been occupied by the Dutch. Embassy posts in foreign countries expressed their delight on the occasion of, at any rate, the most appealing prayer days. As far as the overseas territories were concerned, obstacles that stood in the way of celebrating any prayer days that had been proclaimed in the Republic included the distance and the lengthy lines of communication resulting from this, as well as perhaps their peripheral involvement. Nevertheless, the Governor General in the Dutch Indies adopted the prayer day of June 1706 so that the spectacular victory against the French at Ramillies could be celebrated in the territories of the Dutch East India Company as well.<sup>10</sup>

The number of prayer days proclaimed by the States General during the Nine Years' War and the War of the Spanish Succession can be easily worked out: 46 in total, an average of just over two a year during the years 1688-1713. This is lower than the preceding century when a few times a year a prayer day was proclaimed during the years of war against the Spaniards. However, after 1713, when longer periods of peace were declared, the number decreased significantly. Between 1714 and 1795 no more than eighty prayer days took place. Moreover, after 1713 the whole nature of the prayer day changed in that from then on, as a rule, it had to be held at a fixed time during the year, usually in March. This change spoiled the special feel of the prayer day, which had always been inspired by exceptional circumstances. The prayer days were thus proclaimed quite frequently between 1688-1713 and they were felt to be special because they had been inspired by events during the war. The 46 prayer days were fairly evenly distributed throughout the war years 1688-1697, the years of peace 1697-1702 and the years of recurrent mutual fighting between 1702 and 1713: 18, 3 and 25. Strikingly, it was the victories that created an added incentive to proclaim a prayer day. A top year, for example, was 1706 with three prayer days. That year was indeed a 'miraculous year' with Marlborough's great victory at Ramillies in the Southern Netherlands and gains for the allied forces in Italy and Spain. Seldom did the States General declare a prayer day in the middle of the war season, during which the final outcome of the campaign was still uncertain, but Ramillies, where the United Provinces saw its main war objective realized, namely the expulsion of the French from the Southern Netherlands, deserved to be celebrated.

It is important here to distinguish between three different types of

prayer days: days of fasting, thanksgiving and prayers; days when just fasting and praying took place; and, days given over to saying prayers and giving thanks. There were ten occasions between 1688-1713 when fasting and praying were emphasized. They were held primarily at the beginning of the military season, thus on the evening before an encounter with the enemy, with the objective of supplicating God's help. One exception to this is the day of fasting and prayer day that took place in November 1712 as a result of the long, drawn-out peace negotiations and unexpected defeat at Denain during which the Dutch commander Koppel-Albemarle was captured by the French. Special demonstrations of thanksgiving took place eleven times when danger was averted, such as after the French retreat along the Maas river in 1702, the great victories of the allied forces at Hochstädt, Ramillies, Oudenaarde and Malplaquet, and the peace treaties of Rijswijk and Utrecht. The missing pieces of the jigsaw here are the defeats that were endured, such as those that took place during the Nine Years' War at Fleurus and Neerwinden and at sea at Beachy Head. This naval battle in 1690 ended in a painful and almost catastrophic defeat, whereby the shoddy cooperation between the Dutch and English naval units triggered an immediate threat of a French naval invasion of either England or the Republic. There was even a moment of panic.<sup>11</sup> The unfortunate conclusion of the battle at Ekeren, just north of Antwerp, in 1703 did not in fact bring the allied forces into any immediate danger, however the Dutch army commander's ineffective organization and leadership had been stirring up a mood of discontent for some time.<sup>12</sup> The States General did not let these defeats pass by unnoticed. This is how the prayer day of 26 July 1690 came about to mark the painful defeats at Fleurus and Beachy Head and the States General had even adjusted the imminent prayer day to fit the circumstances at the eleventh hour before issuing the proclamation. However, there was a prevailing sense of gratitude that the defeats had not had more serious repercussions and this feeling provided a ray of hope that prompted the States General to proclaim a fast day, a thanksgiving day and a prayer day.

Based on the 46 prayer days, can we estimate how many prayer day sermons were given between 1688 and 1713? This is difficult because no records are available to indicate whether every preacher delivered a prayer day sermon or stating how many preachers gave more than one prayer day sermon on any one prayer day. Therefore we shall just have to hazard a guess. At this time there were more than 1500 preachers in the Dutch Republic.<sup>13</sup> Dozens of Walloon and English preachers who were also present should be added to this figure. They received specific letters from the government about the prayer day celebrations. We can also deduce from the prayer day sermons that were published that Remonstrants, Mennonites and Lutherans held prayer day services too.<sup>14</sup> The

Catholics, who represented about 35% of the Republic's two million inhabitants, were the largest religious minority of the population and were excluded from participation in the prayer day. We have no idea how the 500 or so Catholic priests addressed their congregation concerning the war: the prayer day was after all only intended for the Protestant segment of the nation. If we carry out a quick calculation now using a total of 1600 preachers and assume that each preacher gave at least one sermon on the prayer day then, on the 46 prayer days between 1688 and 1713, prayer day sermons could have been delivered more than 70,000 times in total.

Only a fraction of the tens of thousands of prayer day sermons that were given have ever been published, perhaps no more than a few dozen.<sup>15</sup> This is not very many, but the calculation that Bosma made in his exhaustive research into sermons from the second half of the eighteenth century points us in the same direction.<sup>16</sup> The 25 published sermons that were studied for this article were selected so that they would be evenly distributed over the Nine Years' War and the War of the Spanish Succession. Military victories in particular seem to have provided the spark necessary to stimulate a sermon. The Amsterdam preacher Hero Sibersma proved himself to be a real champion in this area: the triumphs at Höchstädt, Ramillies, Turin and Oudenaarde were all celebrated by him. The overwhelming majority of the sermons that were published, were originally held in the towns and villages of the province of Holland. This was where the largest segment of the population lived and, in addition to this, the percentage of literate people was higher here than in the eastern provinces. Why would a preacher actually wish to publish his prayer day sermon? Many claimed that they decided to publish their prayer day sermons because they were asked to do so by their local church communities. However, the act of publishing a prayer day sermon was certainly not this spontaneous. First of all, the church had to give its approval, which was often mentioned in the text of the published sermon, so in this sense we can speak of church authorization. Occasionally, a sermon contained a dedication to those in charge of the towns or countryside. Dedications such as these were doubtless intended to strengthen the relationship between the church and the state.<sup>17</sup>

Sermons were long, drawn-out affairs, and the prayer day sermons in particular had a notorious reputation for this. It was not unusual for a service to last for three whole hours. The length of a published sermon varied, but it usually contained dozens, and sometimes even hundreds, of pages. Many of them had probably been revised and expanded. Johannes d'Outrein, for example, reported that he had simply incorporated his Amsterdam sermon from the day before the prayer day on 16 January 1709 into the prayer day sermon itself.<sup>18</sup> The majority of the ser-

mons that were published appeared as one-off publications some time after the prayer day. In view of the fact that the prayer days sometimes took place months after a notable incident had taken place, this must have had a negative impact upon the newsworthy aspect of the prayer day sermons and the subsequent written version, and probably reduced it in this respect to little more than a repetitive or belated account. Other information sources, for example, pamphlets and periodicals such as the *Europische Mercurius*, had already spread the news much earlier.<sup>19</sup> Preachers too were able to beat them to the post by instantly reacting to events as they occurred. Four days after the victory at Oudenaarde, a minister from Rotterdam called Jacobus Fruytier gave a fitting sermon, a good six months before the national thanksgiving day took place.<sup>20</sup> By the time the prayer day arrived the novelty had long worn off and so at this point it was more important to simply commemorate it. It was not so much the information but the potent meaning of the prayer day sermon that was meant to capture the attention.

### **The prayer day sermons: the message**

Preachers spent a lot of time during their sermons talking about the Republic's conduct during the war and its war objectives. The preachers abhorred the violence that was instigated by war and, during a sermon in 1713 in Haarlem, clergyman Van Diepenbroek described war as a debasement of human nature and a corruption of reason. War led to towns and the countryside being laid to waste, to murder and rape, to the disruption of trade and business and to poverty in general. There was no holding the preachers back. It was not just the battles of the Dutch Republic and in the Southern Netherlands, in other words the area where the United Provinces were most directly threatened, that were mentioned in their account, but also Germany, Italy, Spain and the Mediterranean. Some clergymen went into great detail when delivering their sermons. They reported the number of people killed and the casualties, and went on to describe how many enemy flags and standards had been seized giving additional details, such as all the canons, horses and bread wagons that had been left behind by the other side or how the French army's treasury could have been seized. These facts helped to further embellish the great victories of the allied powers. These were given a higher profile and this is how the impression that everything was going well with the war could be strengthened even further.<sup>21</sup> In stark contrast to the miseries of war there were the blessings of future peace. This was on a par with the peace and tranquility necessary for a nation to prosper. Shipping, trade and agriculture would flourish once again, finances would balance out,



everybody would be able to live in safety again and families would be able to live in peace. This was the natural order of things, as preached by the clergy who backed up their sermons with references to the Bible.<sup>22</sup>

According to the preachers, Louis XIV was personally responsible for all the horrors of war. He was driven by an obsessive craving for monarchical power and had a predilection for Machiavellian statesmanship. His ultimate goal was to establish a 'universal monarchy' in Europe and even the entire world. However, he had singled out the Netherlands in particular because he was envious of how the Republic had blossomed. He was an enemy of the Protestant religion and was making every effort to ruin the United Provinces' trade and shipping industry. Louis showed his true colours in 1667, the year that he took a handful of towns in the Southern Netherlands, and in 1685, when he revoked the Edict of Nantes. The violence of the war is all Louis's fault, preached the clergymen to the congregation. Just like Attila the Hun, he plunders and murders, burns villages to the ground, turns towns into graveyards and farmlands to fields of gallows. To satisfy his bloodthirsty cravings he invaded the Republic in 1672 and 1702. The peace treaties of Nijmegen and Rijswijk were only intended to send the Republic to sleep so that he could amass his forces to attack the Republic once again. With his accomplice, James II, Louis was plotting to destroy the Dutch Republic. He would split the country and make it Roman Catholic. Several preachers even told their congregations that Louis would not shrink from forming an alliance with the Sultan of Turkey in order to achieve his goal. This was just a hair's breadth away from calling the Most Christian King a servant of the Antichrist and with that the judgement would be clear.<sup>23</sup>

Just as war is the antithesis of peace, so were the French the very antipode of the Dutch. The latter were the injured party, however the preachers did not just limit themselves to talking about self-defense in their sermons, but went on to explain which common values were worth defending. In 1691, Johannes Molinaeus, a Remonstrant clergyman from Rotterdam, talked about the survival of freedom, which had come with such a high price tag, and the maintenance and preservation of the true Protestant religion.<sup>24</sup> The time has come, so the sermon went, to reveal how many god-fearing patriots can be counted in our dear fatherland. Freedom and religion were the key words used by all the preachers to justify continuing with the war and the fact that it had dragged on for so long. These were not the only reasons. In slightly more subdued tones, the clergymen also spoke about the nation's prosperity, and about redeeming those who were being oppressed by the Church, by this they meant the Protestants in France and Northern Italy, or about preserving the fatherland in general. Because these goals were just, God naturally supported the Republic in her struggle. The preachers took great pains to

both explain and justify William III's passage to England. This was the main theme of the prayer days of 1688 and 1689. On the prayer day of 27 October 1688, after the contrary wind had pushed William III's fleet back to Hellevoetsluis, Abraham Hellenbroek, for example, described how large the fleet was, the size of the crews and the number of arms she was carrying, and how capable she was of entering into combat with the Antichrist powers who were conspiring against the Protestant religion and the fatherland. Elsewhere, a minister explained in great detail how William III certainly did not intend to remove his uncle and father-in-law from the English throne and that, far from pursuing his own interests, he was in fact placing himself at risk on the request of the nobility in England in order to defend traditional freedoms and the Protestant religion and to reinstate a free and lawful Parliament. In whatever context, whether it had to do with the Dutch Republic or England, freedom and religion lay at the heart of many of the prayer day sermons.<sup>25</sup>

A brief comment should be made here about the message that was being sent out from the public churches throughout the entire Republic. Firstly, when we compare them to proclamations issued by the States General it is easy to assert that the preachers faithfully carried out the instructions passed on to them by the highest authorities within the Republic. Far from hiding this, the preachers were actually very open about it. Many of them spoke with great deference about how the States General were wise to proclaim a prayer day and quotes were frequently made from the letter issuing the proclamation.<sup>26</sup> There we find the origin of the argument for the legal defense against the King of France who had instigated his wars without any rhyme or reason. The reasoning behind the tremendous efforts made by the United Provinces was passed on to the clergy by the States General in the same words used by the Grand Pensionary Heinsius after the triumph at Oudenaarde: 'Freedom, Religion and Fatherland.' The second comment concerns where the preachers' knowledge came from. What was the source of their sometimes very detailed information and arguments? During his sermon on Marlborough's victory at Höchstädt, Sibersma made a reference to a letter that had been published which was addressed to the States General and which was written by Baron von Hompesch, a lieutenant-general in the Dutch army.<sup>27</sup> There was an abundance of this type of quickly dashed off information and many preachers must have drafted their sermons at their desks with a pamphlet within arm's reach. The prayer day sermons of 1688 and 1689 explicitly referred to the published valediction by William III of 26 October 1688 for the States of Holland and to his celebrated *Declaration* which had appeared in English, Dutch, German and French and in which he gave his reasons for taking up arms on English soil.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, what the congregation heard on the prayer day was to a

certain extent a three-tiered argument: first of all from the States General, secondly from the pamphlets, and thirdly from the preacher.

The war sermons contain some clues to help us understand what was meant with the slogan 'Freedom, Religion and the Fatherland.' Reverend Brandt used his sermon to bring up the Eighty Years' War against Spain, referring to Prince William I as the founding father of freedom.<sup>29</sup> All the same, the comparison with the Dutch Revolt does not, of course, hold water. The Revolt also stemmed from the quest to preserve the ancient liberties belonging to the towns and the citizens from a centralizing government. At the time of the Nine Years' War and the War of the Spanish Succession, freedom stood primarily for defending the nation's independence. The slogan 'Religion' had little to do with escaping the problems at the end of the sixteenth century when a solution had to be found for the strong religious divide within the Netherlands. Here too, the main priority was to conserve what had once been acquired. The sermons illustrate that the preachers linked several other concepts with their key words of freedom and religion, such as prosperity, piety, justice, a calm and peaceful life, and brave and honest combat as opposed to the 'French way' of waging war which was considered brutal.<sup>30</sup> Terms such as these more or less banded together to create the third key concept, Fatherland, although the nation's image of itself was never either explicitly or thematically worked out. It was only much later on in the eighteenth century that this became an issue.<sup>31</sup> In this way, 'Freedom, Religion and Fatherland', were indeed slogans from the past which still had the power to appeal in the present. Judging from the sermons during the years 1688-1713, they had the strength to evoke the imagination and to express the common goals throughout the lengthy war years.

### **Rhetoric**

Preachers were accustomed to using rhetorical devices. We will discuss three examples below from the war sermons of 1688 up to and including 1713 in which elements such as exaggeration, bias and stirring up emotions can be recognized. The first example takes place around the only major victory that William III had in the Southern Netherlands, namely the capture of Namur in 1695. The Stadholder-King sorely needed this triumph. While on the one hand it is true that his successful passage to England had been a sensation, that he and Mary Stuart had been crowned king and queen, and his campaign in Ireland had strengthened his position in his newly acquired kingdom, nevertheless, things had not gone so well in the Southern Netherlands. Consequently, in 1695 William III was in need of a victory. He placed his hopes on recapturing Namur which

had been taken by the French in 1692 and won. After a siege lasting for almost two months, the castle finally capitulated at the beginning of September in 1695 once the town had surrendered.<sup>32</sup> Seldom has a military victory in the Netherlands been celebrated as much. In his sermon on the thanksgiving day of 28<sup>th</sup> September in Woudenberg, Reverend Theodorus van Toll reminded his congregation of earlier wars and escapes.<sup>33</sup> These had been frightening times, such as in 1672 when the Republic was in great peril. However, with God's help a solution had always been found. All God-fearing Dutch people, so preached Van Toll, had begged God through their prayers in the summer of 1695 to bless the arms of the allied forces. He praised William III's wisdom, bravery, heroism and the personal risks he had taken. The French had fortified Namur, so he said, just before the siege so that it was practically an impregnable stronghold and the experienced and brave Marshal Boufflers was in command. In this respect it is not important to find out how hard it was to conquer Namur or how significant the strategic implications of this triumph were. What is important is that the States General proclaimed a national prayer day immediately after the conquest of Namur and that in his sermon Van Toll, and he was probably not alone in this, exaggerated the might of the enemy in order to highlight the bravery of the allied forces and the magnitude of the triumph even more. Van Toll gave a huge boost to William III and the States General.

The second example concerns the failed peace talks of 1709. In 1706, the Dutch Republic had already achieved its most important war objectives: the French had vacated the Southern Netherlands and appeared ready to meet the demands of the United Provinces concerning the Barrier and a favourable customs and tariff policy. The harsh winter of 1708-1709, which led to high prices and starvation in France, forced Louis XIV to take the initiative. He sent Colbert de Torcy, his Foreign Affairs Minister, to The Hague in May 1709 with sweeping powers to negotiate. Indeed, it seems that Torcy and Heinsius were able to reach an agreement. However, at the beginning of June, Louis XIV rejected the provisional agreement because of a section that was too hard for him to countenance: he would not only have to leave the Spanish throne to the Habsburgers, but he would also have to be willing to declare that he would remove his grandson, Philip V, from the Spanish throne using military force if necessary. Louis decided to continue with the hostilities.<sup>34</sup> The failure of these peace talks was a blow to the Dutch Republic. The States General proclaimed 26 June 1709 to be a day of fasting. One of the ministers that day was Leonard Beels from Gouda. He began his sermon by remarking that the psalm text that he had selected as his opening was extraordinarily apt on this occasion because it was all about treachery and deceit and therefore wholly appropriate with regard to the enemy's

behaviour.<sup>35</sup> Having first pontificated at great length about Louis XIV's lust for power, the violence that he resorted to and the peace talks that he had broken, Beels eventually came to the part about the peace talks in 1709. Louis had suddenly shown an interest in peace because of the major defeats he had suffered, but all his smooth talk was just a sham. Beels had absolutely no faith in the French king's sincerity. In the meantime, he went on to explain, Louis had sent his slyest and most cunning courtier, the Marquis de Torcy, to The Hague. The discussions were simply doomed to fail. The essence of this sermon was the deep-rooted mistrust of France with which the minister effectively bombarded the congregation. Beels was not alone in this. Even in 1713, on the day of thanksgiving that had been proclaimed to mark the peace treaty, Bernardus Smytegelt used his prayer day sermon in Middelburg to call the peace a trick by Louis to lead England and the Republic up the garden path. His true objective was to help place James II's son on the throne of England.<sup>36</sup> Looking back now, we can ask ourselves whether this extreme mistrust of the French was not in fact counter-productive. Naturally, this image of a common enemy tended to bring people closer together. However, didn't this also impinge upon their grasp of reality at the same time, as seemed to occur during the years 1710-1713? Could the sermons from the pulpit have contributed to a blinkered outlook?

The final example once again contains elements of exaggeration and of cultivating an image of the enemy, but in this case it has been stirred up by manipulating the emotions of the congregation. To help us understand the preachers' rhetoric, let us transport ourselves for a moment to the final days of December 1672. As we know, at this point the French had already occupied about half the Republic and were threatening Holland. However, the flooded farmlands thwarted any possibility of an attack. When the frost came it seemed to make an attack on ice feasible towards Leiden and The Hague, but the thaw started to set in and this forced the French to retreat. On their retreat they plundered the villages of Zwammerdam and Bodegraven and massacred part of the population. William III's biographer, Japikse, writes that it was Gaspar Fagel, the Grand Pensionary of Holland, who exploited the French atrocities in Zwammerdam and Bodegraven in both pamphlets and engravings.<sup>38</sup> Indeed, shortly after the looting took place, a few pamphlets and engravings did appear which briefly, but effectively, described the savagery of the French: houses were set alight, men were murdered, women were raped and children and infants were burnt alive. Lootings and massacres were commonplace in wars like this, but Dutch contemporaries were already pointing to the exaggerated tone of the Zwammerdam and Bodegraven account.<sup>39</sup> The author of one of the pamphlets was Govert Bidloo and the engraver was Romein de Hooghe, both of whom were supporters

of William III and later placed on his pay roll. The pamphlet depicting Romein de Hooghe's engraving carried the title 'A Mirror of France's Tyranny' and, from 1674-1781, a popular school book of the same title would appear. Zwammerdam and Bodegraven soon became synonymous with French cruelty. Of course, it can also be said that the Dutch army was quite capable of going on the rampage too. For example, when the Dutch Major General Sirtema van Grovestins, carried out a raid in 1712 in the Champagne region of France during which he torched villages and castles, killed several peasants and then returned with many spoils.<sup>40</sup> Yet the preachers do not utter a word about this, preferring to avail themselves of the *horror story* of Zwammerdam and Bodegraven instead.<sup>41</sup> Sometimes this was simply implied: the mere mention of French bloodlust and the lootings of 1672 would be understood by many to be a reference to Zwammerdam and Bodegraven. Occasionally the preacher would explicitly call the story of the two villages to mind. They provided proof of the impiety of Louis XIV as the true son of the Roman Antichrist, on the one hand, and the heroism of William III and Marlborough as saviours of the nation and Protestantism on the other. In 1713 a minister described it as an act of justice that the peace agreement should take place in Utrecht, close to the ravaged villages of Zwammerdam and Bodegraven. This is how the preachers played upon the congregation's emotions regarding the Zwammerdam-Bodegraven case: by remembering the dead, reducing the enemy to mere stereotypes and by closing ranks.

### The unique style of the prayer day sermons

Much of what the preachers proclaimed from the pulpit concerning the Nine Years' War and the War of the Spanish Succession could be read by the audience in the pamphlets too. The tone of the pamphlets was often one of loathing for Louis XIV and later, when the war took a downward turn for the French king, one of scorn.<sup>42</sup> Against this backdrop, did the prayer day sermons have a style of their own?

By its very nature, the prayer day sermon was religious and extremely moralising. Every prayer day sermon expressed the conviction that it was God who determined the outcome of events. The policy of the gentlemen of the States General may have been wise, the actions of the generals and soldiers brave, or the enemy all-powerful, but it was God who would ultimately decide and who would let His supremacy be felt. This is how Abraham Hellenbroek interpreted the headwind in October 1688 that hindered William III's fleet from setting sail, explaining it as a sign to demonstrate that the key to success or failure lay in God's hands.<sup>43</sup> All

victories are a result of God's intervention. In Van Toll's opinion, the capture of Namur could not be explained in any other way: the fortress had been virtually impregnable.<sup>44</sup> God presented himself as an ally of the United Provinces and an enemy of its foes. He had the interests of the Netherlands at heart and in this respect the preachers used the image of the Netherlands as a second Israel: as a parallel or metaphor in the sense of the Netherlands as God's chosen people. This image could be corroborated through the Bible. William III for example was compared to the Persian King, Ahasverus, who was a good and worthy king and who exuded 'exceptional Christian virtues', he was also an avid campaigner for the Church, heroic in battle and could rely upon God's special protection. The preachers found proof of this in a foiled murder attempt on this biblical figure. In 1696, after the botched assassination attempt upon William III in England, this reference did not need to be spelled out to the congregation.<sup>45</sup>

The preachers were indeed firmly convinced that they had God's support, but this could not always be guaranteed and there were conditions attached. The fact that the Republic was embroiled in a protracted and dangerous war was explained in no uncertain terms by the preachers to their congregations as God's wrath for the nation's many and persistent sins. God is patient with His sinners, but shows His disapproval through explicit events.<sup>46</sup> The States General, and in their wake the preachers, explained defeats and setbacks, such as those that took place during the very difficult year of 1690, and in 1710 when the Geertruidenberg peace talks broke down, and from 1710-1712 when the fortunes of war turned signifying God's displeasure for the nation's sins. Johannes d'Outrein recognized a specific pattern to victory and misfortune. The years 1702, 1704, 1706 and 1708 were hugely successful and humility and a lot of praying lay at the root of this. The years in between could be described as years of religious complacency and, in the eyes of this particular preacher, conspicuously lower church attendance. God had made his response to this known. This was why, the preachers went on to explain, the States General issued prayer days to thank God for His undeserved blessings, to be humble in the face of His power, to confess sins that had been committed, and to repent and beseech God to continue granting His mercy.

This is how the preachers, in a religious and moralistic sense, whipped the populace up into a positive attitude for the sake of the nation's interests. Through their sermons they contributed to a great degree of unity. In 1689, in other words at the beginning of the Nine Years' War, Florentius Costerus of Hoorn insisted that everyone should contribute whatever they could, depending upon their status and wealth, in order to defend the 'Free Netherlands'. Four issues, in his view, need-

ed to be in harmony with one another: governance, battle, funds and prayer. But even more than the call for unity, the absence of discord stands out in the prayer day sermons. There were plenty of issues that the preachers could have brought up for discussion, not only along religious and domestic lines but also with regard to, for example, the allies. William III worried on numerous occasions about the effect that disunity within the Dutch Republic would have upon his foreign relations. A clash of interests existed between William III and Amsterdam that occasionally manifested itself, as was the case at the beginning of 1690 regarding the right to appoint Amsterdam's aldermen and the Stadholder's role in this.<sup>47</sup> The preachers did not mention this type of quarrel in their prayer day sermons. They also ignored the English pamphlets that were sometimes aimed, in real outbursts of hatred, towards their King William and the Dutch in general.<sup>48</sup> Perhaps the States General would not have tolerated the preachers meddling in these matters in any way. On the other hand, the preachers could have given themselves a little more leeway as far as attacks on Louis XIV were concerned. They vehemently condemned the politics of the French king and the actions of his soldiers. Nevertheless, they did not go so far as to insult Louis XIV personally or to ridicule him. The well-known joke in which the Sun King is compared to Phaeton is as far as a preacher was prepared to go at Louis XIV's expense.<sup>49</sup>

One exception to this display of unity can be found in the prayer day sermons that took place on 14 June 1713 to celebrate the Peace of Utrecht. It is possible that at this point the tension had vanished and with it the need to sing the same tune. Whatever the reason might have been, many different sermons were given about the peace. There were of course those preachers who applauded the peace and faithfully towed the line as it was laid down in the States General's letter of proclamation. However, the sounds of dissent in particular are what stand out. Abraham Hellenbroek openly stated that the Republic had not only wished for and expected a better peace, but would have probably secured it too had she not been betrayed by her ally, meaning England. The peace, he claimed, was imposed upon us instead of us seeking it out for ourselves. Another actually commended England for managing to achieve a breakthrough during the negotiations with France; he could have gone on to say that the Republic initially opposed this. Smytegelt made it clear that he was disappointed about the peace. He believed that the Republic had failed to achieve an important objective of the war on a religious level, namely by not managing to liberate the French protestants who were still being incarcerated in the galleys.<sup>50</sup> These outbursts from the preachers helped to fuel the general feeling of disappointment about how the war had ended. It had spanned an entire generation and had required huge sacri-



fices in the form of expenses and human life. While it is true that the war had bestowed peace and security upon the Republic, it had still ended in military misfortunes, estrangement from England as the closest ally and concessions to the most hated enemy, France. The war had brought less than people had long been hoping for.

The unique feature of the prayer day sermon lay in the religious and moral terms used to impart the message. The polemics of the pamphlets, which could have distracted attention away from the essence, was therefore absent. The preachers set themselves the goal of spurring their congregations on, and with this the Dutch as a whole, during the difficult war and to stir them to follow the right path.

### **Putting the prayer days into context**

The nineteenth century church historian, Kist, attached the 'politics' tag to the prayer day.<sup>51</sup> Indeed, the authorities always determined the conditions under which the prayer days were celebrated. Regents in the Republic understood that they could not afford to ignore public opinion completely. As recently as 1672 they had witnessed how a combination of a national disaster, rising Orangism and a disaffected middle class could bring about political upheaval. It was important for the regents to have their war politics supported. The years of war against France, moreover, were not free from unrest among the people. The heavy increase in the tax burden during these decades lay at the root of the anti-tax protests and riots that were especially aimed at the hated tax-collectors. The prayer day gave the authorities a tool with which to diffuse political and social unrest. In 1674, the city government of Amsterdam passed an injunction against harassing tax collectors and similar injunctions were repeated in 1685, 1688, 1694, 1702 and 1707.<sup>52</sup> In 1709, the Amsterdam authorities made the link between the unrest in the city and the high cost of living and depletion of the city's financial resources as a result of the protracted war.<sup>53</sup> It is hard to show just how much of this was a result of deliberate policy, but the authorities, with the States General at the helm, certainly benefited from the prayer day sermon which, by explaining the war objectives and invoking understanding for the major efforts and sacrifices, could have a moderating influence on political and social unrest. In this way the prayer days served to stimulate social cohesion within society.<sup>54</sup> The fact that the States General appreciated preachers who delivered soul-stirring prayer day sermons is illustrated by their decision in 1707 to award Hero Sibersma a gold medal in response to his sermon on the great military successes in 1706.<sup>55</sup> All in all, the prayer days were a key element for the authorities in the political culture of the Dutch

Republic. In the first place, the prayer days had a structural function that has been used for a period of more than two hundred years. Furthermore, the authorities had the monopoly on issuing and even specifying the details of the prayer day. They also dictated the political rhetoric by laying out the ideas that had to appear in the sermon in the letter of proclamation. To return to the subject of our sermons: it was the government that dictated the key concepts of freedom, religion and fatherland to the preachers.

One of the regents' trump cards was the fact that the prayer day and the prayer day sermon were embedded in the religious experience of that era. This brings us face-to-face with the second pillar, namely religious belief, which propped up the prayer day as well as the political objectives of the time.<sup>56</sup> According to Van Eijnatten, the prayer day was 'a primary medium through which both the magistrate and the preacher affirmed and reaffirmed communal standards, aims and values.' An essential element in the prayer day sermon was a belief in Providence. This did not only apply to individuals, but to nations too. God could bestow privileges upon some nations, but He could withdraw His favour too. The preachers left no shadow of a doubt that, in their opinion, God looked favourably upon the Dutch nation. But God's grace was by no means unconditional. He was quite capable of withdrawing His favour and the preachers were continuously issuing warnings about this danger, pointing out the many sins of which, in their opinion, the Dutch were guilty. According to Van Eijnatten, during the course of the eighteenth century the belief in God's direct intervention in events taking place in the world dwindled. However, during the years 1688-1713 the preachers certainly expounded this belief. We can no longer know how many of those listening to the sermons were convinced, as their preachers were, of God's direct influence over the outcome of battles. Nor can we count how many people genuinely believed that William III was God's instrument to save Europe from the evil of the Servant of the Antichrist, Louis the Great. Should this type of terminology be looked upon as a metaphor or as a firm and sincere expression of belief? Yet still it can be safely assumed that many people did believe in Providence. The prayer day, characterized by the conviction that the fate of the Netherlands lay in God's hands, originated from this belief and will have satisfied the need to openly express it. The fact that church services were well attended on prayer days, according to contemporaries from that period, more so than during the usual Sunday services, could be seen as evidence of this.<sup>57</sup> This brings us to a totally different dimension of the prayer day, aside from the religious one, and that is its social function.

On thanksgiving days in particular there was a lot more going on than simply a church service and a sermon. Speeches were made and all

kinds of poetry recitals were performed which were later published.<sup>58</sup> Commemorative medals were struck. There were even military parades. The *Haegse Mercurius* described in its 5 November 1709 edition exactly what took place during the thanksgiving day festivities of that same day. The elite corps of the Dutch army triumphantly carried the enemy flags and standards that they had captured through the streets. The *Haegse Mercurius* also gives a lavish description of the celebrations that took place in The Hague to mark the conclusion of the Rijswijk Peace Treaty on the thanksgiving day of 6 November 1697. The writer described the allegorical performances and the fireworks with great relish. There was feasting everywhere and the influx of people was so great that at night they all had to sleep squashed up alongside each other.<sup>59</sup> On certain thanksgiving days – and not just the ‘major’ ones such as those used to celebrate peace treaties – the States General added to the spirit by organizing public displays and festivities such as ringing the church bells, firing canons from the ramparts and lighting bonfires. Some preachers urged their congregations to exercise restraint when participating in the festivities. From their comments about reveling deep into the night and warnings not to succumb to debauchery and drunkenness, one can surmise that the thanksgiving day events in particular were wildly excessive.<sup>60</sup> These social aspects of the prayer days should be researched in more detail. It is quite clear, however, that the prayer day did not only have a political relevance, nor did it simply give expression to a religious experience: It represented a major social event too.

### **Propaganda from the pulpit?**

Now that we have reached the end of this contribution, what is our conclusion? How should we answer the question posed in the title of this article? The States General had the set-up, the timing, the theme, the reasoning and even the rhetoric of the prayer day sermons largely under control. Given that the reformed church had recognized the government’s right to proclaim prayer days, it was out of the question for preachers to stray from the instructions set out for them by the government. And indeed they did not. It is true, however, that the church sometimes approached the government with critical questions and remarks about, for example, the text in the letter of proclamation or with regard to people violating the prayer day, although it was up to the government whether or not they reacted to these types of requests and complaints.<sup>61</sup> The occasion and timing of the prayer days were carefully selected. The entire organization of a prayer day from the moment it was proclaimed by the States General up to and including the prayer day sermon proper

went smoothly. The prayer day sermons that have been published clearly show that the preachers faithfully delivered the message of the States General and with this made ample use of their rhetorical skills. Consequently, during the Nine Years' War and the War of the Spanish Succession, Louis XIV was periodically described as an aggressor who indiscriminately waged war, was not to be trusted and was out to destroy the Dutch Republic's freedom as well as Protestantism. The preachers resorted to methods such as exaggeration, bias and emotional manipulation in order to convince their congregation. This can be called propaganda.

Definitions of propaganda usually share one thing in common in that they talk about a deliberate application of communication media, whatever form these might take, to influence beliefs, values and behaviour. A one-way channel is opened up from the propagandist to the public. A group of people in power attempts to dictate the opinion of those who are powerless.<sup>62</sup> However, besides propaganda other terms are used by those studying propaganda such as conviction and communication. Indeed, propaganda has the greatest impact when the message either agrees with or fits in with existing ideas, convictions or beliefs and, in order to achieve this, some sort of interaction between the messenger and the person on the receiving end is required rather than just a one-way communication channel. This interaction is geared towards conviction and communication.<sup>63</sup> For example, scholars in the field of court culture use the term 'representation'.<sup>64</sup> Peter Burke, in his splendid book entitled *The Fabrication of Louis XIV* which studies the way in which the Sun King attempted to place himself and his monarchy in the limelight, prefers to use the term communication rather than propaganda. Louis XIV's message about his glory, splendour and good kingship, represented an attempt to fulfill a psychological need of that time and was therefore especially focussed on the interactive process between a king and his subjects.<sup>65</sup>

Can we also talk about communication in this sense with regard to the prayer days and prayer day sermons? The church did not just simply carry out what the States General had instructed it to do, nor did it dash off a sermon at the drop of a hat. It is true that when the slogan 'freedom, religion and fatherland' was used people tended to fall back on the rhetoric of the Dutch Revolt and the war against Spain, but at the same time it also expressed the fundamental and common values of the United Provinces. In addition, the message, which was delivered in the presence of the largest audience imaginable in the Dutch Republic, namely the people who had gathered in the public churches, was firmly entrenched in the crucial religious belief in Providence and made it clear how much the nation's destiny lay in the hands of God and how the Dutch nation had to do everything in its power to keep in favour with God. The prayer

day was not just a religious experience, the festivities had a social function too. Prayer days and prayer day sermons were integrated into society on a political, religious and social level. The States General and the preachers attempted in this context to convey what everyone had in common. The prayer days, with their combined political message, religious conviction and social manifestation, provide us, as it were, with the key to what really spurred the Dutch people on during the years of war 1688-1713.

### Notes

A.J. Veenendaal, jr., ed., *De briefwisseling van Anthonie Heinsius 1702-1720*, (19 vols., RGP, 's-Gravenhage, 1976-2001) here VII, 380-381, 385-386, 387.

H. Sibersma, *De heerlijkheid Gods by Oudenaarde*. See the appendix for a title description of the prayer day sermons mentioned in the notes.

Joseph Klaitz, *Printed propaganda under Louis XIV. Absolute monarchy and public opinion* (Princeton, 1976) 15-20; Michele Fagel, *Les ceremonies de l'information dans la France du XVIe au milieu de XVIIIe siecle* (Paris, 1989) 189-245.

Tony Claydon, *William III and the godly reformation* (Cambridge, 1996) ch. 1-3.

N. Japikse, *Prins Willem III. De stadhouder-koning* (Amsterdam, 1930-1933) 2 vols. I, 287-288, II, 250; G.H. Kurtz, *Willem III en Amsterdam 1683-1685* (Utrecht, 1928) 26 n., 188; Jonathan Israel, *The Dutch Republic. Its rise, greatness and fall 1477-1806* (London, 1995) 819.

For brevity's sake we will refer to prayer days where fast days and thanksgiving days are also meant, unless otherwise stated. The differences are outlined below.

N.C. Kist, *Neerland's bededagen en biddagsbrieven*, 2 vols. (Leiden, 1848-1849).

Peter van Rooden, 'Dissenters en bededagen: Civil religion ten tijde van de Republiek', in: *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, 107 (1992) 703-712; Leo Noordegraaf, 'Of bidden helpt? Bededagen als reactie op rampen in de Republiek', in: Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra and Florique Egmond, eds., *Of bidden helpt? Tegenslag en cultuur in West-Europa, circa 1500-2000* (Amsterdam, 1997) 29-42.

A.R.A., Staten van Holland, access number 3.01.04.01, inventory number 1890, letter from the States General to the States of Holland dated 11-4-1708.

C.W.T. van Boetzelaer van Asperen en Dubbeldam, *De protestantse kerk in Nederlandsch-Indie. Haar ontwikkeling van 1620-1939* (The Hague, 1947) 174-175.

- <sup>11</sup> To find out more about what happened during this defeat and its aftermath, see G. van Alphen, *De stemming van de Engelschen tegen de Hollanders in Engeland tijdens de regeering van den koning-stadhouder Willem III 1688-1702* (Assen, 1938) 131-156.

Olaf van Nimwegen, *De subsistentie van het leger. Logistiek en strategie van het Geallieerde en met name het Staatse leger tijdens de Spaanse successieoorlog in de Nederlanden en het Heilige Roomse Rijk (1701-1712)* (Amsterdam, 1995) 125-127. Peter van Rooden, 'Van geestelijke stand naar beroepsgroep. De profession-

alisering van de Nederlandse predikant, 1625-1874', in: *Tijdschrift voor sociale geschiedenis*, 17 (1991) 361-393.

Molinaeus, *De nodige pligt der dankbaerheit en gebeden*, Remonstrant preacher in Rotterdam; Schyn, *Salomons Tempel-bouw*, Baptist teacher in Amsterdam; Brandt, *Dank- en biddag-predikaatsie*, Remonstrant preacher in Amsterdam; Collerus, *Dank-predicatie*, Lutheran preacher in The Hague. I would also like to mention the Jewish *Gebedt, gedaen op Woensdag, sijnde den 27 October 1688, door de Portugese Joden in hare Kerck, ofte Sinagoge, binnen Amsterdam*.

See the appendix for the applied search method and an overview of the 25 prayer day sermons consulted.

Jelle Bosma, *Woorden van een gezond verstand. De invloed van de Verlichting op de in het Nederlands uitgegeven preken van 1750 tot 1800. Monografie en bibliografie* (Nieuwkoop, 1997).

See for example: Velingius, *Nederlands dank- en vier-dagstaal*, dedicated to the governing authorities in Rotterdam; Van Toll, *Neerlands Dankaltaar*, dedicated to the States of Utrecht; Le Roy, *De vervloekte konings-moord*, dedicated to the authorities in Nijmegen; Beels, *'s Vyants trouwloze en bedriegelyke handel*, dedicated to the authorities in Gouda.

<sup>18</sup> d'Outrein, *Nederlands Dank-altaar*.

<sup>19</sup> Vgl. Bosma, *Woorden van een gezond verstand*, 171, which however emphasizes the 'war report'.

Jacobus Fruytier, *Dank-predicatie tot roem van de goedertierendheit van den Alderhoogsten Godt* (Rotterdam, 1708).

Molinaeus, *De nodige pligt der dankbaerheit*; Schyn, *Salomons Tempel-bouw*; Brandt, *Dank- en biddag-predikaatsie*; Sibersma, *De heerlykheid Gods te Ramellys in Braband*; Sibersma, *De heerlykheid Gods in Piemond*; Van Diepenbroek, *Redenvoering op de dankdag over de vrede*; Fabricius, *De Nederlandse vrede met Frankryk*.

Schyn, *Salomons Tempel-bouw*; Fabricius, *De Nederlandse Vrede*; d'Outrein, *Altaar des vredes*.

Velingius, *Nederlands dank- en vier-dagstaal*; Brandt, *Dank- en biddag-predikaatsie*; Costerus, *Nederlants verlossingh uytgestelt; 't Gilde, Nederlands blydschap en vertrouwen*; Collerus, *Dank-predicatie*; Beels, *'s Vyands trouwloze en bedriegelyke handel*; Sibersma, *De heerlykheid Gods te Ramellys*; Sibersma, *De heerlykheid Gods aan den Donauw*.

Molinaeus, *De nodige pligt en dankbaerheit*. Hero Sibersma often referred to the objectives of war in his sermons, describing them as being to ensure freedom, to spread the Protestant religion, and to bring calm to Europe.

Hellenbroek, *Bybelsche Keurstoffen* (prayer day 27-10-1688); Costerus, *Prins Willem III. na Engeland*; Velingius, *Nederlands dank- en vier-dagstaal*.

For example: Hellenbroek, *Bybelsche Keurstoffen* (prayer day 27-10-1688); Molinaeus, *De nodige pligt*.

Sibersma, *De heerlykheid Gods aan de Donauw*; *Missive aen Haer. Hoogh. Mog. door ... Baron von Hompesch, geschreven te Hooghtet den dertienden Augusti 1704* ('s-Gravenhage, 1704) (Knuttel 15153). See also the reference to 'the published letters of the provincial magistrates of the government and the High Commanders as well as common gossip', d'Outrein, *Nederlands dank-altaar*.

Costerus, *Prins Willem III., na Engelandt*; Velingius, *Nederlands dank- en vier-*

- dagstaal; *The Declaration of... William Henry, ...Prince of Orange ..., etc. Of the reasons inducing him to appear in Armes in the Kingdome of England, for Preserving of the Protestant Religion, and for Restoring the Lawes and Liberties of England, Scotland and Ireland* (Knuttel 12773-12774); *Redenen van afscheyt van... den... Prince van Orange, gedaen ter vergaderinge van de ... Staten van Hollandt ... Op dingsdagh den 26 October 1688* (Knuttel 12783).
- <sup>29</sup> Brandt, *Dank- en biddag*.
- <sup>30</sup> See for example: Van Toll, *Neerlands Dankaltaar*.
- <sup>31</sup> Concerning the concepts freedom and fatherland: E.O.G. Haitzma Mulier and W.R.E. Velema (eds), *Vrijheid. Een geschiedenis van de vijftiende tot de twintigste eeuw* (Amsterdam, 1999); N.C.F. van Sas (ed), *Vaderland. Een geschiedenis van de vijftiende eeuw tot 1940* (Amsterdam, 1999). Concerning the 'ordinary' Dutchman's idea of national identity at the end of the seventeenth century: Donald Haks, 'Nederlanders over Engelsen. Een natiebeeld in de aantekeningen van Lodewijck van der Saan 1695-1699', in: *De zeventiende eeuw*, 15 (1999) 222-238.
- <sup>32</sup> Stephen B. Baxter, *William III* (London, 1966) 322-330.
- <sup>33</sup> Van Toll, *Neerlands dankaltaar*.
- <sup>34</sup> See J.G. Stork-Penning, *Het grote werk. Vredesonderhandelingen gedurende de Spaanse successie-oorlog 1705-1710* (Groningen, 1958), ch. IV-V. John C. Rule shows that the French were serious about peace in 'Louis XIV, Roi-Bureaucrate', in idem ed. *Louis XIV and the craft of kingship* (Ohio, 1969) 85-89 and idem, 'France and the preliminaries to the Gertruydenberg Conference, September 1709 to March 1710', in Ragnhild Hatton and M.S. Anderson eds., *Studies in diplomatic history. Essays in memory of David Bayne Horne* (London, 1970) 97-115.
- <sup>35</sup> Beels, 's Vyants trouwloze en bedriegelyke handel.
- <sup>36</sup> Bernardus Smytegelt, *Een en dertigste predikatie*.
- <sup>38</sup> Japikse, *Prins Willem III. De stadhouder-koning*, I, 288-289.
- <sup>39</sup> J. den Tex, *Onder vreemde heren. De Republiek der Nederlanden 1672-1674* (Zutphen, 1982) 30, 77-91, 135. The pamphlets in question can be found in Knuttel, nos. 10706-10710.  
J.W. Wijn, *Het Staatsche leger, VIII (1702-1713)* ('s-Gravenhage, 1956-1964) 3 bdn., III, 145-155.
- <sup>41</sup> Van Toll, *Neerlands Dankaltaar*; Sibersma, *Heerlykheid Gods te Ramelley*; Beels, 's Vyants trouwloze en bedriegelyke handel'; Van Diepenbroek, *Reden-voering op de dankdag*.
- <sup>42</sup> P.J.W. van Malssen, *Louis XIV d'après les pamphlets répandus en Hollande* (Amsterdam, 1936).
- <sup>43</sup> Hellenbroek, *Bybelsche Keurstoffen* (prayer day 27-1-1688).
- <sup>44</sup> Van Toll, *Neerlands Dankaltaar*.
- <sup>45</sup> Le Roy, *De verloekte konings-moord*.
- <sup>46</sup> For example: Molinaeus, *De nodige pligt der dankbaarheid*; Costerus, *Nederlants verlossingh uytgesteld*; Sibersma, *De heerlykheid Gods aan den Donauw*; d'Outrein, *Nederlands Dank-altaar gestigt ter gedagtenisse en dank-zegginge*.
- <sup>47</sup> Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 845-856; Japikse, *Willem III*, II, 294-298.
- <sup>48</sup> Van Alphen, *De stemming van de Engelschen tegen de Hollanders*, see ch. VI in particular.

To get an idea of the tone of the pamphlets, see Van Malssen, *Louis XIV d'après les pamphlets répandus en Hollande*. For the comparison between Louis XIV and Phaeton see Sibersma, *De heerlijkheid Gods in Piëmond*, with reference to the relief of Turin that Sibersma interpreted as being Louis XIV's punishment for his arrogance.

Sibersma, *Palm-boom des vredes*; Hellenbroek, *Bybelsche keurstoffen* (prayer day 14-06-1713); Van Diepenbroek, *Reden-voering*; Smytegelt, *Een en dertigste predikatie*.

- <sup>51</sup> Kist, *Neerland's bedendagen*, I, 181-183.
- <sup>52</sup> Rudolf Dekker, *Holland in beroering. Oproeren in de 17de en 18de eeuw* (Baarn, 1982) 28-38.
- <sup>53</sup> Stork-Penning, *Het grote werk*, 336.
- <sup>54</sup> Noordegraaf, 'Of bidden helpt', 42.
- <sup>55</sup> R. Bisschop, *Sions vorst en volk. Het tweede-Israëlied als theocratisch concept in de Gereformeerde kerk van de Republiek tussen ca. 1650 en ca. 1750* (Veenendaal, 1993) 147-148.
- <sup>56</sup> For the following, see Joris van Eijnatten, *God, Nederland en Oranje. Dutch Calvinism and the search for the social centre* (Amsterdam, 1993) ch. 1 and 2.
- <sup>57</sup> R.B. Evenhuis, *Ook dat was Amsterdam* (2 vols., Amsterdam, 1966-1967) II, 34-35, describes the seriousness with which a possibly early-17th century prayer day was experienced; Van Eijnatten, *God Nederland en Oranje*, 38-40, quotes T.H. van den Honert who, in 1748, stated that the prayer day services were well attended.
- <sup>58</sup> See for example: *Vreugde-Reden, uytgegalmd door Francois van Bergen, gezegd Montanus, R.G. over de Algemeene Vrede... gevierd door een vuer en vierdag, op den 6 slag-maand 1697* (Middelburg, 1697; prayer day 6-11-1697); *Jerusalem en Sion tot vreugdegalmen opgespoort door de liefelyke harptoonen van Koning David ... Proclaimed on 27 October O.S. in the Church at Kudelsteert by Laurentius Steverslooth* (Knuttel 14347; prayer day 6-11-1697); *Vreugde-galmen ter gedagtenis van de Algemeyne Vrede der Christenheyd ... Uytgesprooken in de St. Lievens Monster Kerke, op den 6 November 1697 ... door Johan Snep, Organist der zelve Kerke* (Middelburg, 1697; prayer day 6-11-1697).
- <sup>59</sup> *De Haegse Mercurius*, issue 29 dated 13-11-1697 and issue 92 dated 15-11-1709.
- <sup>60</sup> Van Toll, *Neerlands dankaltaar*; Brandt, *Dank- en biddag; d'Outrein, Altaar des vredes*; Fabricius, *Nederlandse vrede*.  
See for example. F.A. van Lieburg, *De Nadere Reformatie in Utrecht ten tijde van Voetius. Sporen in de gereformeerde kerkeraadsacta* (Rotterdam, 1989) 53-56.  
Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O'Donell, *Propaganda and persuasion* (London, 1999, third ed.) ch. 1; Oliver Thomson, *Mass persuasion in history. An historical analysis of the development of propaganda techniques* (Edinburgh, 1977) 5-7.
- <sup>63</sup> Jowett, O'Donnel, *Propaganda and persuasion*, ch. 4.
- <sup>64</sup> Karl Vocella, *Die politische propaganda Kaiser Rudolfs II (1576-1612)* (Vienna, 1981); Olaf Mörke, 'Stadholder' oder 'Staetholder'? *Die Funktion des Hauses Oranien uns seines Hofes in der politischen Kultur der Republik der Vereinigten Niederlande im 17. Jahrhundert* (Munster, 1997).  
Peter Burke, *The fabrication of Louis XIV* (New Haven/London, 1992) 4-5.



## Appendix

### Sermons on Warfare held on Thanksgiving, Prayer, and Fast Days 1688-1713

Based on literature, pamphlet catalogues and the electronic Netherlands Central Catalogue NCC, 25 published sermons have been selected. They are arranged here in a chronological order. On each sermon the following information is given: author, short title description, library of the consulted copy and date of the prayer day concerned.

Florentius Costerus, *Prins Willem de III na Engelandt, ...*, in: idem, *Nederlands vloek en zegen ...*, Hoorn 1693, p. 267-373; UB Amsterdam; 27-10-1688

Abraham Hellenbroek, *Bybelsche keurstoffen, zynde een verzameling van verscheide texten ...*, Amsterdam 1744-1758, 2 dl., II, p. 830-843; KB Den Haag; 27-10-1688

*Gebedt, gedaan op Woensdag, sijnde den 27 October 1688, door de Portugiese Joden in hare Kerck, ofte Sinagoge binnen Amsterdam ...*; KB Den Haag, Knuttel 12784a; 27-10-1688

Willem Velingius, *Nederlands dank- en vier-dags-taal. Wegens de verheffinge tot en inhuldiging in de Koninglyke waardigheid over Engeland, Schotland, Vrankryk en Yrland*, Rotterdam 1691; KB Den Haag, Knuttel 13605; 30-3-1689

Johannes Molinaeus, *De nodige pligt der dankbaerheit en gebeden van 's Lands ingezetenen, voor den gelukkigen uytslag der ondernemingen van zijne Majesteit, de Konink van Groot-Brittaniën*, Rotterdam 1691; KB Den Haag, Knuttel 13645; 21-2-1691

Florentius Costerus, *Nederlants verlossingh uytgesteld. Vertoont in een predicatie ...*, in: idem, *Nederlands vloek en zegen*, Hoorn 1693, p. 429-502; UB Amsterdam; 3-12-1692

Theodorus van Toll, *Neerlands dankaltaar ... Gepast op de overwinning van de stad en het kasteel van Namen ...*, Utrecht 1695; UB Amsterdam; 28-9-1695

Daniel le Roy, *De vervloekte konings-moord, listelyk voorgenomen, wonderlyk ontdekt, gelukkiglyk verydelt, rechtveerdiglyk gestraft, en billijklyk aangeitekend ...*, Amsterdam 1696; UB Amsterdam; 11-4-1696

Hermannus Schyn, *Salomons tempel-bouw, oft regt gebruik des vredes*, Amsterdam 1697; KB Den Haag, Knuttel 14351; 6-11-1697

Abraham 't Gilde, *Nederlands blydschap en vertrouwen, dat is: dank-segginge van Nederlands Kerke tot den Heere ...wegens ... sijnen zegen ... over 's*

- lands wapenen tegen hare vyanden, Dordrecht 1703; KB Den Haag, Knuttel 14937; 13-12-1702*
- Johannes Brandt, *Dank- en biddag- predikaatsie, ter gelegenheit van de heerlyke overwinning, door de goddelijke genade, by de Hooge Bontgenoten aan den Donau behaalt*, Amsterdam 1704; KB Den Haag; 10-9-1704
- Hero Sibersma, *De heerlykheid Gods aan den Donauw, of syn regterhand verhoogd in het vernederen der Fransche en Beyersche heyrkragten ... in: idem, De heerlykheid Gods met een grote glans opgegaan aan den Donauw*, Amsterdam 1707, p. 7-38; KB Den Haag, Knuttel 15581; 10-9-1704
- Jacobus Streso, *Predicatie, gedaan ... op een dank en bededag in de Kleyne Kapel ...*, Amsterdam 1708; UB Amsterdam; 9-12-1705
- Hero Sibersma, *De heerlykheid Gods te Ramelys in Braband, doorlugtig ontdekt in 't verslaan en verjagen van 't magtig en moedig heyr der Franse en Spaanse Kronen ... in: idem, De heerlykheid Gods met een grote glans opgegaan aan den Donauw*, Amsterdam 1707, p. 41-76; KB Den Haag, Knuttel 15581; 23-6-1706
- Hero Sibersma, *De heerlykheid Gods in Piemont, uitgeblonken in 't ontset van Turin, mitsgaders het verbreken en 't verstroyen van het talrijk en sterk verschanst leger des gemenen vyands in: idem, De heerlykheid Gods met een grote glans opgegaan aan den Donauw*, Amsterdam 1707, p. 79-116; KB Den Haag, Knuttel 15581; 24-11-1706
- J. Collerus, *Dank- predicatie, ... over de heerlyke en groote overwinninge van dese Campagne, ... behaalt onder het wijs beleyd van de Heere en Princen den Hartogh van Marlborough, en van den Heer van Ouwerkerk*, KB Den Haag, Knuttel 15514; 24-11-1706
- Hero Sibersma, *De heerlykheid Gods by Oudenaarde in Flaanderen, kennelyk geopenbaart in de grote victorie behaald op de Franse en Spaanse heyrlegers ...*, Amsterdam 1709; Provinciale Bibliotheek Friesland; 16-1-1709
- Johannes d'Outrein, *Nederlands dank-altaar gestigt ter gedagtenisse en dankzegginge, over de zegenryke overwinningen, door de geallieerde wapenen bevochten ...*, Amsterdam 1709; KB Den Haag; 16-1-1709
- Leonardus Beels, *'s Vyants trouwloze en bedrieglyke handel ...*, Gouda 1709; UB Amsterdam; 26-6-1709
- Isbrandus Fabricius, *De Nederlandse Vrede met Vrankryk, verkondigt tot lof van den levendigen Godt ...*, Kampen 1713; UB Vrije Universiteit; 14-6-1713
- Hero Sibersma, *Palm-boom des vredes, opwassende voor Sion, onder veele verdrukkingen, tot een blyde vrugt in 't laatste der dagen ...*, Amsterdam 1713; Provinciale Bibliotheek Friesland; 14-6-1713
- C. van Diepenbroek, *Reden-voering ... over de vrede, van den Staat met den Koning van Vrankryk ...*, Haarlem 1713; Provinciale Bibliotheek Friesland; 14-6-1713

- Abraham Hellenbroek, *Bybelsche keurstoffen, zynde een verzameling van verscheide texten ...*, Amsterdam 1744-1758, 2 dl., I, p. 708-720; KB Den Haag; 14-6-1713
- Johannes d'Outrein, *Altaar des vredes. Opgericht ... over den geslotene vrede tusschen onsen Staat ende den Koning van Vrankryk ...*, in: idem, *De stemme Gods roepende Nederlands volk tot boete en bekeeringe*, Amsterdam 1713; KB Den Haag; 14-6-1713
- Bernardus Smytegelt, *Een en dertigste predikatie ... over den vrede ...*, in: idem, *Twee en dertig uitmuntende predikatiën. Volgens een onlangs gevonden handschrift, loopende van den jare 1698-1713* (Nijkerk 1862) p. 292-302; Provinciale Bibliotheek Friesland; 14-6-1713