Dryden and Holland

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V

Aan mijn gezin.
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Abbreviations

Cal. of S.P. Col. = *Calendar of State Papers Colonial*.
Cal. of S.P. Dom. = *Calendar of State Papers Domestic*.
Periodicals: The abbreviations used in the bibliographies.

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Introduction

‘Heaven be my witness that I, at any rate, and of all men, don't want
Johnnie Dryden dug up again’.

These lines, written by Ezra Pound, clearly suggest that there is not much pleasure
to be expected for the modern reader who is going to occupy himself with Dryden,
‘that outstanding aridity’.

‘Glorious John’ seems to have sadly dwindled into Johnnie Dryden, at least for
Ezra Pound. He tells us that even the first syllable of Dryden's name brought about
an ‘association of ideas’ which prevented him from reading his poetry and that Mr.
Eliot's endeavours to defend that poet had served only to strengthen his resolve
‘never, never again, to open either John Dryden, his works or any comment upon
them’.

We might take the last passage as a hint and try to find out if these ‘endeavours’
will give some justification for spending time and labour on Dryden's works.

Mr. Eliot does not agree with those who think that the material which Dryden used
is not fit for poetry. According to him, it was precisely one of Dryden's merits that
he often turned ‘the prosaic into the poetic’, that he made trivial things magnificent.
He praises Dryden's preciseness and his full round statements, but also indicates an
almost complete lack of ‘suggestiveness’. This leads him to the question if verse can
be poetry without this quality. His answer is as modest as it is guarded: ‘What is man
to decide what poetry is’.

However this may be, Mr. Eliot is convinced that it will be dangerous to ignore
the standards which Dryden set for English verse.

Apparently there is - and probably there will always be - much difference of opinion
as to the artistic value of Dryden's work, even between critics so like-minded in other
matters of literary art as Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot. Nevertheless few will disagree
that there are some positive qualities in Dryden's writing that will for ever save him
from oblivion. Apart from his skill in satire and the lively style of his

2 ibidem.
3 Sir Walter Scott referred several times to Dryden as ‘Glorious John’ in his novel The Pirate
   a.o. in the chapters 36 and 37.
prose, he is esteemed for his capacity to mould his thoughts into easy and significant words; for his complete statements; in short, for his technical dexterity. His importance for literary criticism should not be underrated; it is all very well for modern readers to admire Chaucer, Shakespeare and Milton, but we should remember that Dryden was one of the first to point the way. Though nowadays nobody will assign to him ‘the third place’ in English literature, he is by no means a forgotten poet. Reprints of his poetry at regular intervals and occasional comment from critics and scholars in England and America indicate that he is still read. It may be too early to speak of ‘Dryden redivivus’, but it would be strange indeed, if an age that shows remarkable appreciation of Pope, would not in course of time bestow some share of the praise on his predecessor to whom he owed so much.

To enumerate Dryden's alleged or real shortcomings, both in his work and in his character, is not difficult either. It has long been a commonplace to assert that he does not excel in profundity of thought; that he was often more interested in the rhetorical than in the philosophical value of his words. It would seem that these notions need reconsideration after Bredvold's careful study. The latter proved convincingly that Dryden was deeply involved in seventeenth century philosophical problems and never hesitated to inform his readers about his ideas. It cannot be denied, however, that his poetry lacks certain qualities that are vaguely felt as poetic; ‘wonder and brooding reverie were not of his world; the divine illusion was not for him’.

Indeed, this rather narrow view of poetry has prevented many a reader from appreciating Dryden. Moreover, he was sometimes a hack-writer, driving himself in his anxiety to supply the market, and his abject adulation of superiors and patrons, though partly due to the custom of the time, can hardly find favour in the eyes of modern readers. It may also be regretted that the licentiousness of ‘good King Charles's golden days’ finds so much illustration in Dryden's comedies. And last but not least, he was often

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1 As Sir Walter Scott did in his ‘Advertisment’ of the complete edition of Dryden's works: ‘...who may claim at least the third place in that honoured list, and who has given proofs of greater versatility of talent than either Shakespeare or Milton, though justly placed inferior to them in their peculiar provinces’. Scott-Saintsbury I, p. XI.


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inconsistent, especially in his criticism, but also in his religion and - to a lesser degree - in politics.

It would require a separate chapter to discuss the passages where Dryden contradicts himself or rejects opinions and theories he had once vigorously defended. One or two well-known and striking examples must suffice here. In the preface to *The Rival Ladies* (1664) he prescribes rhymed verse as the fit vehicle for heroic plays. He did the same in his *Essay of Dramatick Poesie* and even more vigorously in the *Defence of an Essay of Dramatique Poesie* against an attack from Sir Rob. Howard (1668). Just ten years later he dropped it in *All for Love* (1678). Being a Puritan by descent, he became a champion of the Church of England, but changed his tenets again for those of the Roman Catholic Church under James II. The author of the *Heroic Stanzas to the memory of Cromwell* became in little more than a year the panegyrist of Charles II (*Astraea Redux*).

Yet he should not be too hastily dismissed as insincere. Many inconsistencies in Dryden, which seem to be due to mere weakness of character, may have been caused by his thoroughgoing scepticism. He fell in with the spirit of the time, which was highly sceptical. There is abundant proof that the tendency appealed to him. In his own words he was ‘naturally inclined to scepticism in philosophy’¹, a self-revelation more or less anticipated in *A Defence of an Essay of Dramatique Poesie*:

‘... my whole discourse was sceptical...which is imitated by the modest inquisitions of the Royal Society’².

In his old age he gave a characteristic of the sceptic Lucian; it seems an excellent picture of Dryden himself, at least of his mental make-up before his conversion to Roman Catholicism. He says:

‘I think...that he (Lucian) doubted of everything; weighed all opinions, and adhered to none of them; only used them as they served his occasion for the present dialogue, and perhaps rejected them in the next’³.

Though scepticism sometimes leads to free-thinking and even revolutionary tendencies, it may also result in conservatism. Many a sceptic is inclined to conform to the laws and conventions he finds about him;

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¹ Preface to *Religio Laici*.
² Ker II, p. 124.
³ *Life of Lucian*, Scott-Saintsbury XVIII, p. 69.
as reason is insufficient to prove philosophical assertions, it is not worth while to oppose generally accepted principles and change them for others equally contestible. Such was the case with Dryden, the conservative sceptic; if he changed his opinions, he changed with the nation, until his conversion to Roman Catholicism made further trimming impossible.

No wonder that sceptical doctrines, as taught by Pyrrho and Sextus Empiricus in antiquity, often find an echo in Dryden’s works:

‘Stiffness of opinion is the effect of pride ...
True philosophy is certainly of a more pliant nature ...’¹.

It should be added that Dryden did not approve of the more extreme form of philosophical scepticism. Speaking about the Pyrrhonians, he calls them ‘the grosser sort of Sceptics, who bring all certainty in question, and startle even at the notions of common sense ....’².

It is possible that Dryden may have read Sextus Empiricus; at least he refers to him³. But there were also many contemporary sources from which he may have derived his notions about scepticism; in the seventeenth century it was a widespread tendency, rather than a philosophical system. An account of Dryden’s indebtedness to such writers as Montaigne and Sir Thomas Browne⁴ for his sceptical philosophy falls outside the scope of this study. This much is certain, that scepticism suited his temperament and will account for much that is otherwise baffling and mysterious in his character and in his zigzag course through life.

Dryden’s religion is not to be separated from his philosophical ideas. He also doubted the competence of reason in fundamental religious questions, which can easily be proved from the opening lines of Religio Laici:

‘Dim as the borrowed beams of moon and stars
To lonely, weary, wandering travellers
Is reason to the soul ....’.

The scepticism underlying these lines may at least partly explain Dryden’s conversion to Roman Catholicism. A soul left to doubts and

¹ Dedication of Don Sebastian, Scott-Saintsbury VII.
² Life of Plutarch, Scott-Saintsbury XVII, p. 31.
³ ibidem, p. 42.
⁴ A reference to Montaigne’s depreciation of human reason is to be found in the dedication of Aureng Zebe. For influence of Browne compare the two suggestive titles Religio Medici and Religio Laici, and Dryden’s note to line 101 of the second satire of Persius, which contains a quotation from Religio Medici.
uncertainties, distrusting reason to decide what is truth in a flood of controversial books and pamphlets, is apt to look for certainty and security in an ‘infallible’ church. Moreover Roman Catholic propaganda in England deliberately aimed at weakening man's trust in reason, to lead him in the end to the one seat of authority, the Papal Throne¹. This current in Roman Catholic apologetics was a kind of fideism, which laid stress on personal religious experience at the expense of the value of reason and of the all-sufficiency of Scripture. It is certainly not the recognized theology of the Roman Catholic Church, but it was a very effective means of persuading the like of Dryden in search of security and authority.

The Church of England had more rational tendencies², as well she might, being attacked on one side by those non-conformists who relied on the ‘private spirit’, and on the other by the fideistic arguments of English Roman Catholics. Though Dryden may have preferred the Church of England for political reasons, his sceptical temperament inclined him towards fideism. Even Religio Laici, which was obviously written in defence of the Church by law established, is already tainted with fideistic arguments, as is apparent from the opening lines (distrust of reason) and the passage on Father Simon’s Critical History of the Old Testament (lines 234-251). It implies a sceptical attitude towards Scripture and a subsequent search for an ultimate authority to settle religious questions. Though Dryden's criticism of the Roman Catholic Church is still very severe in this poem, the Anglican Church does not seem to satisfy him either:

‘Where can we hope for an unerring guide?’ (line 277)
‘An omniscient church we wish indeed.
'T were worth both Testaments ....’ (lines 282, 283)

Four years later he had found his omniscient, infallible Church. That he chose the time for his conversion when it was likely to bring him benefits from James II, does not seem very courageous. But nobody has

¹ Cf. for Roman Catholic propaganda of Dryden's time, L.I. Bredvold, The Intellectual Milieu of John Dryden.
² Cf. Sprat's defence of the Church of England, ‘The grounds on which it (the doctrine of the Ch. of E.) proceeds...are no other but... Scripture expounded by Reason. From whence may be concluded, that we cannot make war against Reason, without undermining our own strength, seeing it is the constant weapon we ought to employ’. History of the Royal Society, p. 370.

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ever asserted that the writer of so many heroic plays was himself a hero. Yet in the
light of his mental development, his subsequent behaviour as a Roman Catholic and
his private letters to his sons and other relations\(^1\), there is not much reason to doubt
his sincerity.

If *distrust of reason* was one tendency that influenced Dryden's outlook on life,
*distrust of the masses* was certainly another. He shared this feeling of insecurity and
fear with many contemporaries, who had lived through the turbulent times of the
Civil War. Thomas Hobbes, the philosopher, was one of these, and Dryden fell in
with some of his doctrines, as John Aubrey indicates in *Brief Lives*:

> ‘Mr. John Dreyden, Poet Laureat, is his (Hobbes's) great admirer, and
> oftentimes makes use of his doctrines in his plays - from Mr. Dreyden
> himselfe’.

To a certain extent Hobbes's ideas about government appealed to Dryden. In
shaping these ideas, Hobbes was not so much actuated by a desire to lay the
philosophical foundations of an ideal state, as concerned about the question: What
is the worst that can befall a nation?
The unhesitating answer of both Hobbes and Dryden to this question would have
been: Civil war. For Hobbes obedience to an absolute ruler was the only way to
prevent it.

> ‘And though of so unlimited a Power, men may fancy many evill
> consequences, yet the consequences of the want of it, which is perpetuall
> warre of every man against his neighbour, are much worse’\(^2\).

According to Hobbes the State was based on a social contract,

> ‘.... a covenant...in such a manner, as if every man should say to every
> man: I authorize and give up my right of governing myself to this man
> ...’\(^3\).

This covenant between the sovereign and his subjects was irrevocable\(^4\), unless the
ruler should prove an inefficient autocrat and fail to preserve peace. Then the time
would be ripe for an even more autocratic leader to emerge. From Hobbes's point of
view Dryden was justified in extolling Cromwell, who had been an effective ruler,
and to hail Charles II, who

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1 Especially in the letter to Mrs. Steward, Nov. 7th 1699.
3 ibidem, p. 118.
4 Cf. Dryden's echo in *Absalom and Achitophel*, lines 791-94.
might be expected to become one. Hobbes's doctrine of sovereignty can be used to justify any *de facto* absolute government. The obligation of the people to obey their sovereign lasted ‘as long as, and no longer, than the power lasteth, by which he is able to protect them’ (his subjects).\(^1\)

Up to Dryden's conversion to Roman Catholicism, Hobbes's views concerning religion also suited him very well. Hobbes feared any religion which gave the individual an authority which was not derived from the sovereign. The Puritan was as much a danger as the Roman Catholic who appealed to the Pope. This was also Dryden's view:

> ‘.... our schismatics....make their princes only their trustees; so that, whether they or the Pope were uppermost in England, the royal authority were equally depressed: the prison of our kings would be the same, the gaolers only would be altered’\(^2\).

It is certain from his own works and the testimony of contemporaries that Dryden had occupied himself seriously with Hobbes's philosophy, though the influence should not be over-emphasized. He did not share Hobbes's more extreme views of an absolute monarchy, which is clear from his dedication to *All for Love*.\(^3\) His grandfather, who suffered imprisonment for refusing to pay illegal taxes to Charles I, is proudly referred to in one of his poems.\(^4\) In his later life Dryden sometimes criticizes the prophet of Malmesbury even to the point of doubting his sincerity. Speaking about Lucrece in his preface to *Sylva* he says:

> ‘I believe, he (Lucretius) differs from our Hobbes, who could not but be convinced...of some eternal truths, which he opposed’.

Nor was Hobbes the first to awaken Dryden's instincts for security and loyalty. At Westminster School, where the boys ‘to Learning and to Loyalty were bred’,\(^5\) under the tutelage of the staunch royalist Dr. Busby, he may have learnt to give up such puritanical tendencies as he had inherited. There is at least one indication to this effect in his first poem, which was written when he was a pupil of Westminster School. It shows that he had adopted an attitude to the Civil War very different from the Puritans:

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1 *Leviathan*, p. 156.
2 *The Life of Plutarch*, Scott-Saintsbury XVII, dedication p. 11.
3 ‘Neither the arbitrary power of One, in a monarchy, nor of Many, in a commonwealth, could make us greater than we are’.
4 *To my Honour'd Kinsman, John Driden*, lines 188-194.
5 *Absalom and Achitophel*, line 871.
The atmosphere in which Dryden spent his youth at Westminster School under the famous head-master Busby, may be felt from the latter's short biography². His school was untaintedly loyal and his pupils were still called ‘King's scholars’. Dryden was a pupil in 1649 and no doubt present, when the King was publicly prayed for on ‘that black and eternally infamous day’ when he was beheaded. Dr. Busby's position was difficult and his school was suspect. Yet he managed to remain head-master, though at times there must have been a certain prevarication in his conduct. Busby's name occurs in the ‘Order of Procession to the Funeral of Oliver Cromwell’. But at the coronation of Charles II he carried the ampulla of the new regalia. Knowing this of the master Busby, whose loyalty was above suspicion, we are perhaps less surprised that later on the pupil Dryden could write a panegyricon on Cromwell and a few months afterwards hail the new King in *Astraea Redux*.

Indeed, Dryden's philosophy of life and experiences in his youth may explain many of his vagaries. He was a sceptic, often conforming to the customs about him up to the point of time-serving³, occasionally eager to change his front as soon as he felt a change in the political atmosphere. In one respect, however, he was never inconsistent, he disliked Holland all his life. This attitude, which was typical of the majority of the English people in the seventeenth century⁴, had at least an undertone of envy⁵, and this was scarcely surprising. How must a nation of the power of Great-Britain have felt, being surpassed in commerce and in other fields of activity by a country ‘no bigger in all than a shire in Engeland’?⁶ Dryden's dislike of the Dutch originated

¹ Upon the Death of Lord Hastings 1649.
³ Thus in the case of the licentious comedies. He frankly admitted that his ‘genius’ was not fit for comedy, but as a poet he had to conform to the taste of the Restoration audience.
⁵ Of course many Englishmen were aware that jealousy was the real cause of Anglo-Dutch antagonism. John Evelyn wrote that war was waged ‘for no provocation but that the Hollanders exceeded us in commerce and industrie, and all things but envy’. *Diary* June 2nd 1672.
⁶ Beamont's words in *Amboyna*, act II, scene 1.
in his youth. In the first Anglo-Dutch war he was a student at Cambridge and the events of the day did not pass unnoticed there. He persisted in this sentiment, even in his old age, when a more lenient attitude towards Dutch William's government might have served him well.

The fact that Dryden, in spite of occasional coarseness, was a gentleman by birth, fond of polite conversation and intercourse with the great, may to some extent account for his aversion to the Dutch. In his eyes all Hollanders were boorish, rude in manners and clumsy in conversation. Even the learned Isaäc Vossius, one of the very few Dutchmen with whom Dryden may have been personally acquainted, and whom he respected⁴, did not give him occasion to change his judgement⁵. This almost innate aversion to everything Dutch was reinforced by other circumstances. For one thing, it accorded with the views of the King, whom he had to serve as Poet Laureate. Though a great part of Charles's exile was spent in the Low Countries, he could hardly sympathize with the form of government of the United Provinces. The Dutch Republic was to a certain extent a danger to his throne, for he knew that many people in his kingdom still believed that ‘there needed no more to grow rich, than to change, as they (the Dutch) had done, the forme of their government’⁶.

Equally distasteful to Dryden was the predominant religion in Holland. He seems to have studied Calvinistic doctrine, even as it was taught in the Netherlands⁴, but obviously it did not make him change his opinions. We may be sure he thought no better of Dutch Calvinists than of French Huguenots, that ‘pestilent race of people, that could not, by their principles, be good subjects’⁵, or ‘Geneva Protestants, that propagated religion by rebellion’⁶.

1 Preface to Albion and Albanius, Ker I, p. 280.
2 Des Maizeaux in Vie de Mr. Saint Evremond, Amsterdam 1739, says: ‘In (Vossius) connoissoit à fond le génie et les coutumes des Anciens, il ignoroit les manieres de son siecle. Son impolitesse se répandoit jusques sur ses expressions’.
3 Leviathan, p. 236.
5 Postscript of the History of the League, Scott-Saintsbury XVII. In the preface to The Medall Dryden says: ‘I can prove from the doctrine of Calvin... that they set the people above the magistrate’.
6 Vindication of the Duke of Guise, Scott-Saintsbury VII.
As Dryden took a keen interest in politics, his feelings of aversion to the Dutch could not fail to find expression in his work. Moreover he was inclined to please the public by voicing their animosity towards a rival nation and to serve King and government by rousing these hostile feelings when war was on. Foreign politics constitute only a small part of Dryden's writings; yet there is enough of interest for a Dutch reader. If Dryden's poetry should fail to stir the deeper emotions in him, he will partly find compensation in the domain of history; Dryden's works sometimes throw interesting light on Anglo-Dutch relations.

The object of this thesis will be to investigate what Dryden, as a spokesman of the Restoration government, had to say of the Dutch, and the response that his works evoked in Holland. Recent publications have shown that Dryden's influence was not inconsiderable in France and Germany, and there seems to be every reason to try and find out if there is any influence to be discovered in the Netherlands, which of all continental countries have been best informed about seventeenth and eighteenth century England. Such studies in comparative literature as Milton in Holland (Scherpbier) and English Influences in Dutch Literature and Justus van Effen as Intermediary (Pienaar) do not cover the Restoration period; this thesis should try to fill that gap, at least partially.

The subject - Dryden and Anglo-Dutch relations - requires first and foremost an examination of what Dryden wrote about Holland, combined with so much of the historical background as may elucidate his text. It is obvious that a good understanding of Dryden's motives and ideas sometimes involved the inclusion of material that bears little or no relation to Dutch history in the strict sense of the word.

An attempt can then be made to ascertain whether traces of Dryden's works are to be found in the literary production of the Netherlands.

Finally there is the question of Dryden's indebtedness to the United Provinces. Was he in any way influenced by our thriving culture, which had culminated in a ‘Golden Age’, when towards 1660 Dryden commenced his literary activities?

1 F. Baldensperger in Voltaire Anglophile avant l'Angleterre (Revue de Littérature Comparée 1929, p. 28) speaks about... ces choses d'Angleterre dont les Pays-Bas étaient, de tous les pays continentaux, les plus familièrement informés.
Chapter I
Dutch affairs in Dryden's writings

From the Restoration to the second Anglo-Dutch war.

At Charles II's jubilant Restoration Holland hoped for some improvement in her relations with England, the chief rival in maritime power and the field of commerce. The Dutch oligarchy had done its utmost to make sure of the new sovereign's goodwill. Since the King had embarked on ‘Schevelines barren shore’\(^1\) to return to his father's throne, after a tour of endless festivities in the United Provinces among a population that had always sympathised with the exiled monarch, some co-operation or at least mutual forbearance seemed possible. Indeed, Charles and his chancellor were inclined to maintain peace. But among the British people, and especially the merchants, old sores and envy were not so soon forgotten. Dryden, in his poetical imagination, might represent the King as a prize taken from Holland, ‘by which Batavia made so rich amends for our impoverish'd trade’\(^2\), but this was only hyperbole, while the ‘impoverish'd trade’, caused by the supremacy of the Dutch in commerce, remained as real as ever. Conflicts abroad, in the Indies and on the coast of Guinea, were the order of the day, followed by endless and in the main fruitless negotiations between the governments at home\(^3\). The result was an ever growing tension, which was occasionally reflected in coarse language and invective in Dryden's earlier comedies. In *The Wild Gallant* (1663) a personage, supposed to be Satan himself, is advised to step across the sea to borrow money from the devil's own bank at Amsterdam\(^4\). In the same comedy, act V, scene 1, Loveby says to Satan:

> ‘In the meantime, prythee, stay thy stomach with some Dutchman; an Hollander, with butter, will fry rarely in hell’.

Evidently Dryden's audience liked to hear him rail against the Dutch, and he was only too willing to please the public.

At last open hostilities became inevitable. The King, more or less

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2. *ibidem*, line 218.
reluctantly, gave way to the pressure of his bellicose brother and Parliament, and declared war. After the struggle had raged for some time, Dryden found occasion for dealing with the Dutch in a more extensive way. He wrote *Annum Mirabilis*, two thirds of which were devoted to the second Anglo-Dutch war.

*Annum Mirabilis.*

a. The hidden purpose.

Dryden himself characterizes the poem as ‘historical’. Judging from the dedication one is inclined to think that it was meant as a panegyric on the metropolis:

‘To you (London), therefore, this Year of Wonders is justly dedicated, because you have made it so’.

History and panegyric, this seems the simple truth about *Annum Mirabilis*, and up to recent times commentators were satisfied to see it as such. If, however, we restrict ourselves to the qualifications ‘historical’ and ‘panegyric’, certain questions arise that are difficult to answer. Why, for instance, is the plague almost ignored in the poem, though in the dedication Dryden speaks of ‘an expensive, though necessary War, a consuming Pestilence’, and a more consuming Fire’.

The plague, it is true, raged chiefly in 1665 and had considerably abated in 1666, but Dryden did not confine himself too strictly to one year. Thus the Duke of York's victory at Lowestoft (1665) fills five stanzas in the poem. Why then only six lines in over three hundred stanzas given to the Plague?

Secondly, the poem is a compliment. Yes certainly, but to whom? In the introductory letter to his brother-in-law, Sir Robert Howard, Dryden says:

‘I have taken upon me to describe...the care, management, and prudence of our King; the conduct and valour of a Royal Admiral... the invincible courage of our Captains and Seamen... the Piety and Fatherly Affection of our Monarch to his suffering Subjects;

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1 Thus Mark van Doren: ‘It is not a tale but a chronicle... Dryden's most ambitious compliment’. *The Poetry of John Dryden*, Cambridge 1931, p. 218.
2 Italics mine.
3 Stanzas 267 and part of 268.
and in the second place, the Courage, Loyalty, and Magnanimity of the City’.

Praise for London has indeed ‘the second place’. During the Great Fire, the King's prayer stops the flames, but what about the people of the metropolis? The rich offer great sums to the poor to save their property, and the poor haggle for more; ‘so void of pity is th’ ignoble Croud’. (stanza 250). This looks more contemptuous than complimentary. Panegyric on the metropolis is comparatively insignificant in the poem.

It is the very title, Annus Mirabilis, that may throw light on Dryden's real motives in writing this work. He was not the first to use ‘Annus Mirabilis’ as an appellation for a year of extraordinary events in English history. A short time after the Restoration, tracts had begun to appear under the same title. As there is an unmistakable relation between those Mirabilis Annus tracts and Dryden's poem, it will be necessary to trace the history of these pamphlets. The British Museum possesses no fewer than fourteen copies, which may point to a wide circulation. In 1661 appeared a pamphlet called Mirabilis Annus, the Year of Prodigies. The next year brought a similar title, Mirabilis Annus Secundus, followed by a third with the rather involved heading Mirabilis Annus Secundus or the Second Part of the Second Year's Prodigies. These tracts are accounts of omens ‘in the Heavens, on the Earth and in the Sea’, pious exhortations followed by marvellous occurrences, silly stories full of superstition and not so innocent as they seemed to be. They were no doubt tokens of political unrest which existed in spite of the general rejoicing at Charles's Restoration. There was still a good deal of discontent left in England. Pious Puritans were shocked at the behaviour of the merry King and his court. Dissidents who had hoped for worship without oppression, did not see their expectations fulfilled. Such malcontents wrote and printed the Mirabilis Annus Pamphlets, instilling a feeling of uneasiness in the population, a vague idea that the omens and prodigies were tokens of God's displeasure, especially against the King and the Anglican Church. A few specimens of the tales will suffice to show the general trend. Mirabilis Annus II contains the story of a heavy gale that blew down the fane of Whitehall, and destroyed triumphal arches in honour of the King. The same pamphlet relates other happenings in Whitehall,

1 E.N. Hooker explained the relationship between the Annus Mirabilis tracts and Dryden's poem in an article in The Huntington Library Quarterly of 1946.
when a famous preacher delivered a sermon before the King. Just as he would assert that the era of the Rebellion had been an unhappy one, he was seized with a qualm and had to leave the pulpit.

Such tokens suggested God's displeasure with Charles's Restoration. On the 5th of November 1660 two hogs came into Canterbury Cathedral and went into the choir when the Prebends were in the midst of their devotions. The inhabitants of the city remembered that a little before the downfall of the hierarchy in the year 1641 the same thing happened in the same place. ‘Malum Omen’. (From Mirabilis Annus I).

On the sixth of April 1662, when the Dean and Prebends of the Cathedral of Norwich were officiating, they were disturbed by an owl.

‘Her noat was so high, that she many times drowned those who were performing the service’. (From Mirabilis Annus II).

Evidently Providence wanted to turn the Church of England into an object of ridicule. When His Majesty was proclaimed at Worcester, Mr. Townsend's daughter most violently railed and bitterly cursed the fanatics.

‘It pleased the Lord that the same night her speech was suddenly taken from her, and her tongue very much swelled in her mouth, and within four days she died’. (From Mirabilis Annus I).

Railing against the ‘fanatics’ - dissenters of various denominations - clearly incurred God's wrath. The writer of these tracts, while careful to preserve his anonymity, declares that his design was not to stir up sedition but repentance and subjection to Jesus Christ. The government, however, took another view. No doubt they were convinced of the seditious character of the Mirabilis Annus pamphlets. The printers were detected and sent to prison. Besides measures from the government there were warnings by sober-minded men against these tracts.

1 Anthony à Wood says that the preacher was Robert South, Dryden's fellow pupil at Westminster School. 'Mr. Robert South of Xt Ch. was to preach before the king at Westminster on this text (Eccles. 7:10) Say not that these dayes were better than the former: but after he had named his text he fell downe in a souwne. Wherfore the king commanded that he should preach the sermon the next Sunday following’. From The Life and Times of Anthony Wood, by A. Clark, Oxford 1891-1900.

2 Cal. of S.P. Dom. 1661-62, p. 106. ‘Elephant Smith, Brewster, Chapman, and Calvert went to gaol for a forgery of false and feigned prodigies, prognosticating mischievous events to the King and instilling into the hearts of subjects a superstitious belief thereof and hatred of his Majesty's person and government, and preparing them to effect a damnable design for his destruction and a change of government’.

J.A. van der Welle, Dryden and Holland
Thomas Sprat, in his *History of the Royal Society*, a book which appeared in the same year as Dryden's *Annum Mirabilis*, was one of them. In spite of punishment and warnings, however, superstition increased, especially since omens and prodigies seemed to corroborate some widely known prophecies concerning the year 1666. These prognostications were based on *Revelations* 13:18:

‘Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred three score and six’.

By a strange exegesis this text was explained as referring to the year 1666. Eventually it proved to be a year of great disasters and the heaviest blows fell on London, the seat of the government and the symbol of England's power. These manifestations of God's judgements were interpreted as an unmistakable sign of His displeasure. In government circles fears of a rising increased, and rebellion would have been especially dangerous then on account of the war with Holland. At this juncture Dryden wrote his poem, ‘as a due expiation’ for not serving his King and Country at sea. He borrowed the very title of the seditious Mirabilis Annus tracts; but he emphasizes in his dedication that the disasters are not so much judgements as trials, afflictions sent down to test and strengthen the population, interruptions on the way to greater wealth and power. In the poem he clearly indicates that the divine displeasure is at any rate not directed against the King, the government or the

1 Thomas Sprat, *History of the Royal Society*, London 1667, p. 358: ‘The experimental philosophers are very scrupulous... in marking out the Paths of God's Judgments amongst his Creatures. They cannot suddenly conclude all extraordinary Events to be the immediate Finger of God... to hearken to every Prodigy, that Men frame against their Enemies, or for themselves, is not to reverence the Power of God, but to make that serve the Passions and Interests, and Revenge of Men’.

2 Prognostications for 1666 were also known on the continent. For Holland see Knuttel nos 8693, 9229, 9230. No. 9229 is a Flemish and Roman Catholic tract, which prophecies the ruin of the Seven Provinces, because 1666 will be the centenary of the iconoclasm in Holland. 1666 is called Annus Jesu Christi Admirabilis; *Revelations* 13:18 is quoted and the comets are mentioned. No. 9230 is a Dutch and Protestant tract, a refutation of the former. It is called: *Den Oprechten Hollantse Waersegger ofte Prognosticatie op het grote Wonder Iaer 1666*...

3 Cf. Pepys's *Diary* 25 Febr. 1666, ‘He (admiral Sandwich) dreads the issue of this year, and fears there will be some very great revolutions before his coming back again’.

4 Cf. *An Account of the Ensuing Poem*. 

J.A. van der Welle, *Dryden and Holland*
Church of England. Heaven is on their side. The appearance of a comet at the King's birth was a happy omen (stanza 18), his brother won the first victory (st. 19). Even the Dutch acknowledge that Heaven was present (st. 22). Fate has pledged the victory to the King (st. 81). The fire did not touch the King's palace or the naval magazines (sts. 283 and 271). It is true that St. Paul's was destroyed. Was it a sign of God's displeasure directed against the Church of England? Not at all; the cathedral was burnt down, but only 'since it was profan'd by Civil War'. ‘Heaven thought it fit to have it purged by fire’ (st. 276).

It is clear that Dryden considered the war and the fire as occasions for the manifestation of civil virtues; these disasters should heighten the people's loyalty to their Sovereign, which was especially desirable on account of the war against Holland. But the plague did not fit very well in his line of reasoning. It gave little cause for praising the King. At the outbreak he had fled with his court, leaving the care of the population to such as dared to stay, but these were the kind of people who did not answer Dryden's purpose. So he dispenses with the episode in six lines; and this he could conveniently do, because in 1666 the disease was abating considerably.

In the second Anglo-Dutch war the press was already playing an important part in moulding public opinion. *Annus Mirabilis* may also be considered as political propaganda in war-time, as a piece of inspired journalism. The stirring events of 1666 furnished Dryden with suitable material to write a poem in which he could imitate the art of his beloved Virgil, even if he realized that the 'broken action' prevented him from writing a true epic. But it is evident that he did not write *Annus Mirabilis* from purely aesthetic motives; there is too much in it that smacks of propaganda. Though he follows the events in chronological order, the political bias is obvious. Before entering upon a systematic analysis, it will be worth considering the poem from the point of view of propaganda in war-time.

Dryden argues that the war against Holland was inevitable if Britain was to procure its rightful share in world-trade. France, too, must be considered as a threat to England; Louis XIV's 'secret soul preys on Flanders'. Yet it should be remembered that the King had not been hasty to open hostilities; his subjects had been more bellicose than he (sts. 1-12). After careful consideration the King at last declared war.
Fortunately he proved to be a genius in naval affairs. Here and elsewhere his dexterity is clearly stressed, probably to silence such people as criticized the management of the navy. As to the comets seen before and after the declaration of the war - always dire omens in the tracts that bore the title Mirabilis Annus - Dryden hesitates between a scientific explanation and an attempt to suggest favourable influence (sts. 13-18). Indeed, Heaven seemed to support the cause of Charles II, whose brother gained the first victory, while even the Dutch had to confess that ‘Heaven was present’ (sts. 19-23).

The next battle, the attempt at Bergen in Norway, was hardly a success, but could at least serve as an illustration of the riches to be gained from the Indies, when Holland was ultimately defeated (sts. 24-38). Now France entered the war, an opportunity for the poet to contrast Charles's mercy with the French King's harshness (sts. 39-45).

The double danger from France and Holland caused Charles to appoint two admirals, Prince Rupert and the Duke of Albemarle. According to Dryden it was a happy choice; both admirals were equal to their task and above all ‘neither was envious of the other's praise’ (sts. 46-53). The King's skill in choosing such commanders must have been very gratifying to the nation, since people knew about the situation in the Dutch navy. English spies in Holland had made much of the rivalry and lack of cooperation between De Ruyter and Tromp.

In the first encounter under the command of the newly appointed admirals, the Four days' battle, the English leaders and common sailors showed greater courage than their Dutch rivals. The action was not completely successful, but it should be understood that only the King could judge about the ultimate result. So he ought to be obeyed without question (sts. 54-141).

Under the King's supervision and encouragement the damaged fleet was repaired in a very short time (sts. 142-154). A digression concerning shipping leads to a panegyric on the Royal Society, which was so actively at work for the improvement of navigation. To reap the fruit of their investigations, the English must be masters of the sea. ‘War makes the valiant of his right secure’ (sts. 155-167). The next battle was beyond doubt a great victory. Now it became possible to deal a heavy blow to the Dutch merchant fleet in the Vlie (sts. 168-208). Alas, by their victory the English had evoked the envy of Fate; so the Great Fire broke
out and destroyed London. Evidently Dryden preferred a pagan notion to the Puritan's view that the Fire was a judgement of God. But whatever people thought about the disaster, there was ample opportunity to praise the King's efforts and bounty (sts. 209-287). As to the City, it remained loyal, and did not clamour for peace or ‘beg pity of a vanquished foe’, no doubt to the immense relief of the government. Dryden ends the poem with a prophecy of London's future greatness and words of encouragement (sts. 288-304). He had begun by emphasizing that war was necessary and inevitable. He ends by putting heart into the population, by telling them that the struggle is half won; only the less dangerous part is left. Such is generally the tenor of war-propaganda reduced to its simplest form. In Dryden's case it gives a certain unity to a poem that otherwise would have been a mere enumeration of historical events.

There is a conspicuous inconsistency in Dryden's reasoning, for Fate, which at one moment seemed to govern the world, is replaced the next by the hand of God. Occasionally he refers to omens and judgements, but he manages to twist his interpretation in such a way that the omens favour the King whilst the judgements are directed against his subjects. Government circles, however, could not but be satisfied with this new Mirabilis Annus in verse. Sir Robert Howard, secretary to the commissioners of the treasury, had suggested the subject-matter of the poem to Dryden' and was afterwards requested to read and correct the manuscript. Pepys, on whom the administration of the navy chiefly depended, perused the poem with great pleasure; we may venture to suppose that his admiration was not merely due to the artistic qualities of the work. The King, too, seems to have realized Dryden's importance as a spokesman for the government. He was appointed Poet Laureate and two years later Historiographer to his Majesty.

b. Historical implications and some side-light on the poem.

‘In thriving arts long time had Holland grown’.

Does the opening line of the poem refer to the marvellous artistic pro-

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1 Dryden says in his letter to Sir Robert Howard: ‘... if there be anything tolerable in this Poem, they (the readers) owe the Argument to your choice...’.
2 ‘I am very well pleased this night with reading a poem I brought home with me last night from Westminster Hall of Dryden's upon the present war, a very good poem’. Diary, 2 Febr. 1667.
duction of seventeenth century Holland? Dutch readers, always inclined to consider this period as the zenith of their ancestors' achievement in poetry and painting, may be inclined to think so. Dryden, however, did not appreciate the fine arts of the United Provinces at all. Their poets were always 'dull'\(^1\). Their poetry had less of music than the ordinary speech of the Italians\(^2\). Most of the Dutch painters had drawn 'the worst likeness'\(^3\), instead of striving after the ideal in beauty.

So Dryden's reference to the arts should not be interpreted as implying fine art. In view of the remainder of the line, 'Crouching at home and cruel when abroad', which refers to prevarication and cunning, there is good reason for explaining 'thiving arts' as 'successful but mean tricks'\(^4\). The courting of the King and awing of the merchants (line 4) may have been one of these tricks. Just before his Restoration the States General had received Charles with great pomp and florid speeches; two years before, they had banished him from their territory under pressure of the Commonwealth-government. Now that his return to his father's throne was certain, it became necessary to try and help him to forget the insult. The States spent more than a million guilders, an enormous sum in those days, on festivities and presents. Charles, by now an experienced man of the world, did not show irritation. Whatever the attitude of the Dutch government towards the exiled King had been in Cromwell's days, the Dutch population had always honoured Charles. After all he was the uncle of the young William of Orange. Dryden himself was convinced of esteem and even affection for the King in Holland:

> ‘Afflicted Holland to his farewell bring  
> True sorrow, Holland to regret a King’\(^5\).

The poet speaks of the 'crouching' attitude of the Dutch at home,

\(^1\) Cf. \textit{Life of Lucian}, Scott-Saintsbury XVIII p. 73, ‘...the wretched author of the \textit{Lucien en Belle Humeur}, who being himself as insipid as a Dutch poet...’. \textit{Dedication of Examen Poeticum} Ker II, p. 10: ‘...Dutch commentators...heavy gross-witted fellows, fit only to gloss on their own dull poets’.

\(^2\) Preface to \textit{Albion and Albanius} Ker I, p. 274.

\(^3\) \textit{A Parallel of Poetry and Painting} Ker II p. 119, ‘and Bamboccio, and most of the Dutch painters, have drawn the worst likeness’. Bamboccio, ‘the beggar-painter’, was Pieter van Laer (1584-1644), a Dutch painter who achieved some fame in Italy.

\(^4\) In \textit{Absalom and Achitophel}, for instance, ‘arts’ occurs seven times in the meaning of ‘tricks’.

\(^5\) \textit{Astraea Redux} lines 221 and 222.
to be compared with their cruelty abroad. Drawing attention to atrocities perpetrated by the enemy is of course a time-honoured device to incite popular feeling in war-time. Dryden does not enter into details; every Englishman knew what was uppermost in his mind: the ‘Amboyna massacre’, which by this time had become almost proverbial. In the third Anglo-Dutch war Dryden was to revive the Amboyna-affair in a drama. Of course the Dutch in turn did not fail to publish atrocities - real or invented - perpetrated by the English. Jan de Witt, the statepensionary, had a tale called: ‘Dutchmen fried at Guinea’, which he ordered to be posted on all ships of the navy. In the course of the war the English ambassador Downing, who remained in residence at the Hague, was hard up for some ‘cruelties’. He wrote to Arlington, asking for inhumanities exercised by De Ruyter or any of his people to be turned into French and Dutch and to be printed in Holland. Evidently English war-propaganda could be published and spread in the United Provinces without too much risk to the ambassador.

After the preliminary remarks about Dutch duplicity and cruelty in the first stanza, Dryden at once turns to the root of the matter, the commercial rivalry between the two nations. Trade, like blood, should circularly flow; a simile derived from the science of the day. Only a few decades earlier Harvey had discovered the circulation of the blood, to which Dryden had previously referred in his complimentary address To Dr. Charleton. It is an apposite simile for free trade, but from a historical point of view one cannot help wondering at Dryden's statement. Had he never heard of the Acts of Navigation, immediately renewed after the Restoration? They were clearly intended to stop Dutch trade in English channels. Historically neither country could claim to be the

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1 An English prisoner of war, complaining of conditions in the Amsterdam ‘doleful, dreadful and deathly prison at the Prince's Hof’ asked for release from ‘a Turkish Amboyna imprisonment’ Cal. of S.P. Dom. 1665-66, p. 77.
2 Colenbrander I p. 165.
3 Not everyone could be inflamed to fury. Lord Lauderdale, for instance, wrote to the Commissioner of the fleet that the reported barbarities of De Ruyter at Guinea were lies, and that the liars ought to be hanged or sent to Holland. Cal. of S.P. Dom. 1664-65, p. 232.
4 Colenbrander I p. 269.
5 ‘The circling streams, once thought but pools of blood
    (Whether life's fewel or the bodie's food)
    From dark oblivion Harvey's name shall save’ (lines 29-31).
champion of free trade; England took protectionist measures for its territory in Europe; Holland tried to maintain its monopolistic position in the Indies.

Besides the circulation of the blood, *Annus Mirabilis* contains other similes and metaphors derived from contemporary science; they can best be considered later, in conjunction with the ‘apostrophe to the Royal Society’ (sts. 165 and 166), of which body the poet was an early member. It was only natural in an age which bears the epithet ‘neo-classic’, that a comparison with the Punic wars should crop up (st. 5). Carthage (Holland), mighty in her ships and riches, yet stooped to Rome (England). The metaphor held the fancy of writers and politicians for many years to come. Dryden himself returns to the Carthage-story in his epilogue to *Amboyna*:

‘Let Caesar live and Carthage be subdued’.

Shaftesbury, the Lord Chancellor, made use of it in his famous speech to Parliament in 1673. Seeking refuge in Holland in 1681, the same Shaftesbury was good-humouredly received in Amsterdam with the words:

‘Ab nostra Carthagine nondum deleta, salutam accipe’.

Dutch writers often turned the tables and with equal plausibility compared England to Carthage. Thus Vondel in his poems, *De Zeetriomf der Vrije Nederlanden* and *Zegevier der Vrije Nederlanden op den Theems*.


The welcome indicates that there was more ready wit in Dutchmen than Dryden allowed them. Is should be understood that the Carthage-speech was well known and much resented in Holland. Cf. Knuttel 10943 *Delendo Carthago* and 10944 *Op de woorden van de Oratij van den Cancelier van Engeland*. The speech kept rankling for many years. As late as 1705 Jean le Clerc promised his patron, the third Earl of Shaftesbury, to clear his grandfather’s reputation in Holland, ‘ou l’on est un peu prévenu contre lui, comme s’il avait conseillé de détruire la Hollande, en disant: Delenda est Carthago’. Jean le Clerc kept his promise in *Bibliothèque Choisi* 1705, pp. 342-412, the first biography of John Locke. Locke had been the first Earl of Shaftesbury’s secretary.

2 *De Zeetriomf*, line 6;

here England is called ‘nieuw Karthage’.

*Zegevier*, lines 7, 8:

‘Amsterdam en Brits Karthage
Worstlen onderling om strijd’.

lines 31, 32:

‘Nieuw Karthago, bang voor lasten,
Woelt hier tegens aan met kracht....’.

line 52:

‘Nieuw Karthago rijdt op stelen...’.

J.A. van der Welle, *Dryden and Holland*
A comparison with the Punic wars was significant. It emphasized the inevitability of the struggle between two maritime nations both trying to supersede the other. The odds were in England's favour because she was stronger, but Dryden could not deny that the Dutch were more diligent, whatever less agreeable characteristics he could attribute to them. It was always Dutch diligence that was emphasized in English books and pamphlets as an exhortation to greater effort for their own people.

Dryden, who had a shrewd insight into political affairs, goes on to describe the intricacies of the policy of Louis XIV. Though the latter laid claim to the Spanish Netherlands in his wife's right as an elder daughter of the late King of Spain, he made deceitful proposals to that country to prevent her entering the war on the side of England. The new Spanish King was very young when he inherited all his father's dominions in 1665; hence Dryden's reference to the cradle and the babe of Spain. Stress is laid on Charles's hesitation to begin the war against Holland. Indeed the King had not been eager to fight. The poet reminds the people of their own bellicosity; whatever course the war might take, there was no reason to blame a peaceful King for rashly and inadvertently entering upon it. But when at last Charles had declared war, he proved to be a genius in naval affairs:

‘Him aged sea-men might their master call’ (st. 14).

Dryden's flattering words in this line were probably not wholly undeserved. The *Admiralty Letters* confirm that the King transacted an immense amount of naval business, even to the smallest matters of detail, all the more remarkable, because he was not fond of exertion.

It is interesting to compare Vondel and Dryden. They had much in common; both were ardent patriots, dreaded satirists, famous in the field of drama and converts to Roman Catholicism in predominantly protestant countries. And yet how different in character and depth of feeling. They do not seem to have been aware of each other's existence.

1 A similar reference in Sprat's *History of the Royal Society*, which also appeared in 1667: ‘There is nothing whose promoting is so easy as Diligence... This I will demonstrate by an Instance ... and it is of the Hollanders: for we may fetch Examples of Virtue from our Countrymen, but of Industry from them’ (p. 422).


3 ‘If it had not pleased God to give us a King...that understood the Sea, this Nation had 'ere this been quite beaten out of it’, says Pepys in his *Naval Minutes*, which were written as memoranda for his private use and not for effect; of course he changed his opinion after the events at Chatham.

He was accustomed to visit dock-yards and to attend the launching of new ships. He was fond of sailing in his yacht, which the Dutch, anxious to please, had given him in 1660. His love of the sea and knowledge of shipping could not fail to endear him to the nation. At the same time these qualities might inspire confidence in the population as regards the leadership of the British navy. When, however, Dryden suggests that the English sailors were so eager to follow their Sovereign (st. 15), he certainly stretches the historical truth; he seems to act upon the wellknown precept that a poet is as much privileged to lie as an ambassador, for the honour and interest of his country. Actually both combatants had their difficulties to man their fleets and a certain amount of pressure could not be avoided. All the same the Dutch were in the better position; they could draw upon the crews of their fishing boats, fishery being far more important in Holland than in England.

In the latter country strict regulations were necessary to secure the required number of sailors. Any man having sea-experience might be pressed, and merchantmen at sea might be stopped and part of their crew taken for service. The State Papers of the time teem with instances of the abominable system of the press-gang. Someone asks Pepys what to do with 62 pressed men, in no way fit for the service, being made up of all sorts of country-trades... ‘pitiful pressed creatures, fit for nothing but to fill the ships full of vermin’. Another believes that a thousand of the best men have run away. The only remedy for it is to set up a gallows in every town between Portsmouth and London, and out of every ten men caught absconding, to hang one by lot. This was written a fortnight before the declaration of war. The trouble was that the English naval authorities issued so-called tickets to the sailors, to be exchanged for money later on. In this way sailors' wages got twenty to fifty months in arrear. Pepys had to complain: ‘Want of money in the navy puts everything out of order. Men grow mutinous’.

1 Pepys, Naval Minutes p. 267: ‘until that time we had not heard of such a name (the word yacht) in England’.
2 Later on quoted by Dryden in the dedication of the Aeneis, as a variation of Sir Henry Wotton's words, ‘An ambassador is an honest man sent to lie abroad for the good of his country’.
3 Cal. of S.P. Dom. 1664-65, p. 92 and p. 100.
4 ibidem.
5 ibidem, p. 192.
6 Diary, 31 Oct. 1665.
But the Dutch had their difficulties too. Part of the population only reluctantly submitted to the leadership of Jan de Witt, because they were supporters of the young Prince of Orange. When the drums were beating in Leyden for more sailors in the name of the States, the women took the drums and cut them into pieces, crying: ‘The devil take the States, beat for the Prince’¹. After the lost battle of Lowestoft there was less willingness in Holland to face the horrors of warfare at sea. English spies reported that they saw the authorities in Rotterdam ‘drive their marine-men into their boates like sheep’². But financially Holland was in a better position than her adversary. Good payment even seduced a number of English prisoners of war to join the Dutch fleet. Some of these seem to have taken part in the attempt at Chatham, where they shouted: ‘We did heretofore fight for tickets; now we fight for dollars’³.

But we are anticipating events. When Dryden wrote *Annus Mirabilis*, the disaster of Chatham had not yet occurred. So he could maintain throughout the poem an optimistic view as to the prospects of the war and the situation in the navy. The appearance of comets (sts. 16-18), very likely introduced by Dryden in imitation of the Mirabilis Annus tracts, where they always signified harmful influence, could not even shake the poet's optimism. Very unlike the obnoxious tracts, he makes an attempt at a scientific explanation, showing that the discussions about comets in the Royal Society were not wholly lost on him. If there was any influence on earthly affairs, it was a favourable one; ‘a round of greater years’ had begun (st. 18). Curiously enough the same comets crop up again in stanza 291. By a strange twist of meaning they are now explained as dire influences scourging town and population. Evidently it was not the King's policy, but his subjects' behaviour that had incurred God's displeasure.

The first action of importance in the second Anglo-Dutch war was the battle of Lowestoft (sts. 19-23). Other English poets⁴ had already

2 ibidem, p. 279.
3 Pepys, *Diary*, 14 June 1667.
4 Thus Edmond Waller in *Instructions to a Painter for the Drawing... of His M'ities Forces at Sea... together with the Battel and Victory over the Dutch June 3 1665*. Waller's lines,

‘What Wonders may not English Valour work
Led by th'Example of Victorious York’.

and,

‘A greater Force, then that which here we find
Ne're press'd the Ocean...’;

bear close resemblance to stanza 19 and stanza 177 of *Annus Mirabilis*. Waller's couplet,

‘Make Heav'n concerned, and an unusual Star
Declare th'Importance of th'approaching War’;

was probably in Dryden's mind, when he wrote line 36 of his dedication of A.M. (edition Sargeaunt). Waller's ‘Vast Floating Armies’ become ‘Vast floating Bodies’ in Dryden's *Essay of Dramatick Poesie*.
celebrated the victory in laudatory verse, but not to Dryden's satisfaction. He asserts that he had ‘never yet seen the description of any Naval Fight in the proper terms’. Though the battle was fought in 1665 and did not properly belong to the ‘Year of Wonders’, Dryden could not omit devoting a few stanzas to the victory, because it was gained under the command of the King's brother, a sure token that Heaven was on the side of the Stuarts. There was little inclination on the side of the Dutch to minimize their defeat. Their losses had been heavy, though the English withdrew too soon to reap the full harvest of their victory. It was not the Duke of York's fault. His secretary, Brouncker, probably thinking that James had done enough for the glory of the dynasty, pretended to have come from the Duke's cabin with an order to shorten sail and to desist from pursuing the enemy. Brouncker was said to have been instructed by the Duchess to restrain her impetuous husband. This rumour seems to have reached Dryden, for he writes in his Verses to Her Royal Highness the Duchess, published together with the Annus Mirabilis,

‘Thus Beauty ravish'd the rewards of Fame
And the Fair triumph'd when the Brave o'recame’.

Dryden refers again to this battle in the opening lines of An Essay of Dramatick Poesie, a passage that deserves quoting for its own sake as an example of his nervous prose:

‘It was that memorable day, in the first Summer of the late War, when our Navy ingag'd the Dutch: a day wherein the two most mighty and best appointed Fleets which any Age had ever seen, disputed the command of the greater half of the Globe, the commerce of Nations, and the riches of the Universe. While these vast floating

Samuel Johnson already complained that Dryden's initial stanzas of A.M. have rather too much resemblance to the first lines of another of Waller's poems, On the War with Spain and a Fight at Sea.

1 In An Account of the Ensuing Poem.
Bodies, on either side, moved against each other in parallel Lines, and our Countrymen, under the happy Conduct of his Royal Highness, went breaking, by little and little into the Line of the Enemies; the noise of the Cannon from both Navies reach'd our Ears about the City ...

After the victory the Duke did not return to sea, but was sent into Yorkshire, because there were fears of a rising, another proof that the government did not feel secure at home.

Following the events in chronological order, the poet describes the attempt at Bergen in Norway (sts. 24-31). Its harbour was a refuge for Dutch merchantmen from Smyrna and the East-Indies. Negotiations between England and the Danish King were afoot for permission to attack the Dutch in neutral waters. But the English admiral, impatient to capture the richly laden fleet, could not wait till the governor of Bergen had received instructions from his King and launched the attack. The enterprise was a failure and eventually brought the Danes in on the Dutch side. Dryden takes the opportunity to expatiate on the riches, especially the spices, with which the Dutch ships were loaded. It is difficult to overrate the significance of the spice-trade in the seventeenth century. The economic importance of cinnamon and pepper was clearly far greater than nowadays, indispensable as they were in the kitchen, in pharmacy and as fumigants. An English correspondent wrote: ‘The fleet has discovered the Dutch East-India ships; that would be a booty that would pay for the powder and shot of a twelvemonths’ war’. The spices, however, were soon to lose their universal importance, whereas coffee, sugar and tobacco became established articles.

Later on the merchantmen from Bergen were convoyed to Holland by the Dutch navy. They were scattered by a violent gale and Lord Sandwich succeeded in capturing eight men of war and at least five of the richly laden vessels. In his report he speaks of 3000 prisoners whom he had to guard. Their lot is lamented in the next part of the poem. The elegiac stanza was very suitable for these melancholy reflections, in which Dryden combines imagination with feeling. Too often his work

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3 Colenbrander I, p. 265.
is characterized by a certain coldness; here he is in a somewhat unusual mood, showing compassion even for the Dutch foe.

Of course Dryden adheres to the English popular view in calling the North Sea the British Ocean, an idea vigorously contested by the Dutch. Originally only the Channel was considered English property. Lord Salisbury wrote in 1609 about ‘.... his Majesty's narrow seas between England and France, where the whole appertayneth to him in right ...’. Soon, however, the North Sea was also included among the 'narrow seas’. The poem goes on to relate England's position in the first half of 1666. An allusion to the faithlessness of the bishop of Munster and the declaration of war by France and Denmark affords a good opportunity for comparing the hard-hearted Louis with the noble English King. The course of events now urges Dryden to give a detailed description of a great battle at sea (sts. 54-137). It was a hazardous undertaking for a city poet and he fully realized the difficulties.

‘For my own part, if I had little knowledge of the Sea, yet I have thought it no shame to learn’.

Naturally we are curious to know where he got his information. In the isolation of his father-in-law's estate he had 'not so much as the converse of any Sea-man’; but the absence of a sailor was no doubt compensated by The Sea-mans Grammar, ‘with the plain exposition of all such terms as are used in a Navie and Fight at Sea’. It was a kind of dictionary that later on served him well for his drama Amboyna, though it is also traceable in Annus Mirabilis. Moreover he must have used some written account of the fight.

There are many extant narratives of the battle, mostly by eyewitnesses who described the events from their own point of view, but could not give a coherent survey of four days' fighting. It is more reasonable to suppose that Dryden stuck to the government's interpretation of the events, as expressed in the newspapers. If so, his choice was limited, since The London Gazette and The Current Intelligence were the only

2 Cf. An Account of the Ensuing Poem.
3 ibidem.
4 There is also an account ‘published by command’, but its contents do not cover all Dryden's details.
5 In the Burney collection of newspapers in the British Museum.
official newspapers, sometimes referred to as the ‘Court Gazettes’. The latter appellation, of course, implies distrust in the veracity of their contents. *The London Gazette* contains most of the information out of which Dryden built his narrative, but in a confused order and spread over at least three copies (nos. 58, 59 and 60). *The Current Intelligence* was the more concise and trustworthy of the two.

Unfortunately the number that contains the account of the battle is lacking in the Burney collection, and unless there is a copy of this number in existence elsewhere, it will be impossible to ascertain if and to what extent Dryden was indebted to it. But whatever sources Dryden may have used for his narrative of the Four days' battle, he managed to mould his material into an intelligible story; from his poem even the landsman can get quite a clear idea about naval tactics in the seventeenth century. Evidently the object of both combatants was to get to the windward of the enemy; ‘both strive to intercept and guide the wind’ (st. 58). The fleet to windward had the initiative and could use fire-ships without danger to its own vessels. Before the actual fighting began, both fleets shortened sail. They ‘furl their sails and strip them for the fight’ (st. 56). The corresponding passage in *The Sea-mans Grammar* is striking for its similarity and explanation,

‘Thus they use to strip themselves into their short sailes, or fighting sailes ... because the rest should not be fired nor spoiled; besides they would be troublesome to handle, hinder our sights and the using our armes’ (p. 60).

Now each fleet filed past the other, firing into the enemy hulls and rigging, and taking care to keep the order of battle,

‘Borne each by other in a distant Line,
The Sea-built Forts in dreadful order move’ (st. 57).

The ships in the van, having fired their volleys, then sailed round to take up their position behind the rearmost ships so as to repeat the attack,

‘Now pass'd, on either side they nimbly tack;
The English were famous for keeping the order of battle and the precision with which the whole line executed the orders of the admirals. Among the latter were several that had seen service on land. Their tactics were determined by a combination of maritime and military strategy. The Dutch commanders were chiefly recruited from the merchant navy. Though perhaps the better sailors, they were less trained to common fleet action and were sometimes inclined to act too much on their own initiative. When at last the order of battle was broken, disabled ships could be boarded or burnt in the mêlée that followed; ‘the Combat only seemed a Civil War’ (st. 59). Boarding was difficult for the English, because Dutch ships were built higher than their own:

‘On high-raised Decks the haughty Belgians ride’ (st. 79).

The Dutch preferred these high, shallow-draught vessels because of the shoals along their coast, and to raise the level of the lower tier of guns. If the guns were not placed at a reasonable height, they could not be used when the ship listed and the port-holes were awash. To lure or force the English on a shoal was one of the stratagems of the Hollanders, described in stanzas 113 and 114, which tell us of the dangerous flats where the wily Dutch waited.

Keeping Dryden's purpose in mind, we are not surprised to find that the English leaders and common sailors showed greater courage than the Dutch, though contemporaries may have realized that at least in one stanza Dryden's heroics came very near the mock heroic, when he described the bravery of the English admiral,

‘All bare, like some old Oak which Tempests beat,
He stands, and sees below his scatter'd leaves’ (st. 61).

The narratives of the battle had informed the reading public that

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1 This was the case with Tromp in the battle of St. James's day.
2 Cf. Dryden in *The Maiden Queen*, acted 1667,

‘She! hang her, a Dutch built bottom:
She's so tall, there is no boarding her’ (act IV scene 1).

3 Cf. *Remarques sur la Marine d'Hollande* by Le Sieur Arnoul, ‘Les vaisseaux d'Hollande ont plus de plattes varangles ...leurs vaisseaux ne pourroient jamais entrer dans leurs ports, qui n'ont pas beaucoup de profonteur. Enfin ... par ce moyen il leur est aisé de tenir la première batterie dans une haute raisonable’. (Colenbrander II, p. 11).
Albemarle's breeches ‘were shot off to the skin’1. But mockery or not, there is no doubt that Dryden wanted to extol the English fighting qualities, even if the admiral of the fleet was less satisfied than the poet, for after the battle Albemarle wrote: ‘I assure you, I never fought with worse officers in my life, for not above twenty of them behaved like men ...’2. Against the poet's enthusiasm and the admiral's irritation may be set the sober judgement of the historian; ‘the battle of the Four Days was a marvel of physical endurance and courage in both fleets’3.

More or less in covert terms Dryden acknowledges that the fight was not a victory; the English felt too weak to pursue the enemy (st. 135). But he hastens to point out that it is not the population, but only the King who can judge the ultimate result of a battle. ‘Passive aptness’ should be enough for the subjects.

The damaged fleet returned to England and, under the King's supervision, was repaired in a very short time (stanzas 142-154). This part of the poem abounds in technical terms derived from ship-building. The French poet Ronsard is supposed to have been Dryden's preceptor4 for this attempt to work the vocabulary of the artisan into poetry. But there was also another and more powerful incentive nearer to home; literary minded members of the Royal Society tried to convince poets that technical terms should by no means be excluded from poetry. Sprat wrote: ‘The Wit that is founded on the Arts of Mens Hands is masculine and durable’5. Dryden endeavoured to bring the precept into practice. Of course the ‘proper terms’ of any trade could only be learnt from the professional. Again one wonders where Dryden, far from the navy dockyards in his retreat at Charlton, obtained the necessary information. As he unmistakably used John Smith's Sea-mans Grammar6 for his drama Amboyna a few years later, the inference seems warranted.

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1 Cf. The London Gazette 1666, no. 59.
2 Colenbrander I, p. 370.
4 Ker, Introduction p. XXXIII.
5 History of the Royal Society, p. 415.
6 The Sea-mans Grammar ... with the plain exposition of all such terms as are used in a Navie and Fight at Sea, London 1652, by captain John Smith, sometimes Governour of Virginia.

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that the same booklet served him for his ‘proper terms’ about repairing ships which are fully explained in it. In his later life Dryden reverted from technical jargon to the more normal use of the language. In the dedication of the Aeneis (1697) he says:

‘I writ not always in the proper terms of navigation, land-service, as in the cant of any profession.... Virgil has avoided those proprieties, because he writ not to mariners, soldiers etc.’

As concrete evidence of the nation's energy in repairing and reinforcing the fleet Dryden makes mention of a new man-of-war, the London (sts. 151-154). The building of this ship was a story in itself. At the very beginning of the war, in March 1665, an older vessel of the same name had exploded while sailing up the mouth of the Thames. This was certainly a very bad omen that could not fail to discourage superstitious people. All the greater must have been the King's satisfaction when the Mayor and aldermen of the metropolis immediately decided to build a new one. The King ordered the epithet Loyal to be added to her name. Of all the newly constructed ships, the Loyal London seemed to appeal most to the people's imagination. Her praises were sung in poems; one is extant in the British museum, which may have been known to Dryden, A Poem on the Loyal London by William Smith, licensed June 15th, 1666. Parallelism seems to be apparent when we compare the lines,

‘This mightier Phoenix now at length we have,
The greater birth of her great Mother's grave’.

with Dryden's,

‘The Phoenix daughter of the vanish'd old’ (st. 151).

With her 470 men and 96 guns she became one of the biggest second rates of the fleet. The launching of the ship had been planned for April 1666, but it was not until June before she left the stocks, when she was urgently needed after the heavy losses of the Four days' battle. The admirals complained of the slow progress in fitting out the ship.

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1 Prof. Verrall in his Lectures on Dryden doubts if Dryden's terms are indeed ‘proper’. He says: ‘Is, for instance, caulking-iron correct?’ (p. 97). But the Sea-mans Grammar explains the term: Caulking Iron = Iron Chissell. (p. 13).
2 Ker II, p. 236.
3 Cal. of S.P. Dom. 1664-65, pp. 249, 257.
4 The English rated ships in six classes according to their size and complement.
5 Cal. of S.P. Dom. 1665-66, pp. 221, 441.
in their *Narratives of the miscarriages of the late Dutch war*. They sent some of their best captains who in a few days brought the ship to the fleet, where they fitted her out themselves, to have her ready for the next encounter (St. James's battle). Her ‘Guns of mighty strength, whose low-laid Mouths each mounting Billow laves’ appealed to Dryden's imagination, though, as we have seen, the ‘low-laid Mouths’ were not always an advantage for the English gunners. Nevertheless the *Loyal London* became a dreaded enemy. As the flag-ship of the blue squadron she served in the next battle, which was disastrous for the Dutch. She was, however, not destined to live long. At Chatham the Dutch captain van der Hoeven sailed past Upnor Castle and set the ship on fire. The spectacle ‘made the heart of every true Englishman bleede’¹. We can understand Admiral van Gent's joy, when he reported to Holland that ‘the beast’ had at last been destroyed². If the King had himself added the epithet ‘Loyal’ to the ship's name, Dryden no less stresses London's loyalty more than once in the poem, sometimes with evident relief³. One suspects that the wish was father to the thought. Indeed, though the merchants of London were willing enough to fight the Dutch, the government was somewhat dubious about the population of the town, that ‘factious city, the receptacle of all rebellious brood’⁴. As early as 1665 there were those who urged the King to raise troops to be sent there, ‘for in case of a hurly-burly, London must be kept at any expense and hazard’⁵.

A mere catalogue of naval battles in the poem would have become monotonous, if the historical course of events had not at this point been interrupted for a digression concerning shipping, and a panegyricon on the Royal Society, which had done so much for the improvement of ships and navigation (sts. 155-167). There is good reason to believe that Dryden's early membership of the Society meant more to him than merely a mark of social position and general reputation⁶. It considerably

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¹ Colenbrander I, p. 580.
³ ‘They have not lost their Loyalty by Fire’ (stanza 289).
⁵ ibidem, p. 508.
⁶ As Christie would have us believe in his *Memoir* of the Globe ed. p. XXV.

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influenced his conception of language, diction and philosophy. This influence is particularly strong in *Annum Mirabilis*. Moreover it is likely that in the Society Dryden may have come into contact with Dutch scholars and scientists. Christiaan Huygens, Isaãc Vossius and Cornelius Vermuyden were fellow-members; Huygens and Vossius sometimes visited the meetings and frequently sent letters and books to be read and discussed. These considerations make it necessary to gather information about transactions and topics under discussion in the Society during Dryden's short membership; this is amply provided by Thomas Birch's *History of the Royal Society*. We learn that Dryden was proposed as a candidate by Dr. Charleton on 12 Nov. 1662, elected on the 19th and admitted on the 26th of the same month. It is sometimes assumed that he owed this honour to his complimentary verses to Dr. Charleton, which began by disparaging Aristotle, and show that Dryden was at least acquainted with the spirit of the new philosophy:

> The longest Tyranny that ever sway'd
> Was that wherein our Ancestors betray'd
> Their free-born Reason to the Stagirite,
> And made his Torch their universal Light'.

On March 30th 1664 we find Dryden in a committee of the Society ‘for collecting all the phaenomena of nature hitherto observed and all experiments made and recorded’. He is mentioned again on 7 Dec. 1664. ‘It was suggested that there were several persons of the Society whose genius was very proper and inclined to improve the English tongue’. They were to meet at Sir Peter Wyche's lodgings in Gray's Inn, once or twice a month. Here, certainly, was work after Dryden's heart, the foundation of an English academy in the style of l'Académie française. Among his fellow-members were Evelyn, Waller and Sprat. The latter had written before the committee set to work:

> The Truth is, it (the language) has been hitherto a little too carelessly

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1. On ideas about language and literature current in the Society see pp. 40 and 41.
2. Thomas Birch, *History of the Royal Society*, London 1756, 4vls. The first *History of the Royal Society* by Thomas Sprat, London 1667, though published in the same year as *Annum Mirabilis*, if of less importance for our purpose; it was intended as an apologia against the opponents of the Society, who thought that the study of the laws of nature might lead to atheism. It does not always give a systematic account of the actual proceedings. Neither do the *Philosophical Transactions* help us very much. They started publication only a year before Dryden's expulsion in 1666.

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handled; and, I think, has had less Labour spent about its polishing than it deserves ...; if some sober and judicious Men would set a Mark on the ill Words ..., and make some Emendations in the Accent and Grammar: I dare pronounce, that our Speech would quickly arrive at as much Plenty, as it is capable to receive 1.

We know something about the proceedings of this committee from a letter 2 written by Evelyn to its chairman (June 20th 1665). Evelyn himself could not come to the meeting because of an ‘employment of public concernment’ 3, but notwithstanding this occupation, he showed his zeal for the committee by sending a dozen suggestions for the improvement of the language, the ‘straw he had gathered towards the bricks’. Twenty-five years had to elapse before the ultimate fate of the committee was revealed in a letter from Evelyn to Pepys on 12 August 1689: ‘And indeed such (academy) was once design’d and in order to it three or four meetings were begun at Gray's Inn, by Mr. Cowley, Dr. Sprat, Mr. Waller, the Duke of Buckingham, Matth. Clifford, Mr. Dryden and some other promoters of it. But...the contagion, and other circumstances intervening, it crumbled away and came to nothing’ 4. When the Plague broke out in June 1665, the members of the R.S. scattered throughout the country. The next meeting of the Council was on Febr. 21st 1666, but Dryden remained safely at Charlton, his father-in-law's estate. The R.S. was evidently in want of money to carry on experiments and it was ordered ‘that the collector make haste to go about with the general list of arrears...he take particular notice of those who refuse or delay payment’ 5. Here was a threat to Dryden, who never contributed his weekly shilling. His fellow-poets Denham and Waller were no better than he, but if they were of the opinion that poets are above paying for their membership of a scientific society, they were mistaken. On October 29th 1666, it was ordered ‘that Sir John Denham, Mr. Dryden and Mr. Vermuyden’ be left out of the account of arrears’, which is tantamount

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1 Sprat, p. 41 ff. The first part of this book was printed before the Plague.
3 On June 3rd the battle of Lowestoft took place and Evelyn was charged with Dutch prisoners and wounded soldiers. This may have been his ‘employment of public concernment’.
5 Birch II, p. 65.
6 Famous for the draining of the Fens, member since 1661.
to being expelled from the Society. In Dryden's case the arrears amounted to £ 9.19.  
1 If his membership ran from Nov. 26th 1662 until Oct. 29th 1666, it is quite evident  
that he never paid one shilling to the Society. It is, however, noteworthy that Sir John  
Denham is accorded a long obituary notice on Nov. 30th 1669, and that Waller was  
dunned as late as Febr. 25th 1675, but there is no trace of Dryden after 1666. Was  
the Society glad to be rid of him? In the first years of its existence it was particularly  
concerned for its reputation. Thus Hobbes was never proposed as a member on  
account of his ‘free-thinking’ tendencies. Dryden, Hobbes's admirer, was at times  
also suspected of atheism2, though his address to the Royal Society (sts. 165, 166)  
was orthodox enough.  

An examination of the data of Dryden's short membership may lead us to the  
conclusion that the poet's interest in the science of his day was slight3; one shilling  
a week was, in his view, too much for the improvement of his knowledge. He was  
no scientist - indeed he remained a superstitious astrologist to the end of his days -  
yet the proceedings of the Society were not wholly lost upon him. Many eagerly  
discussed topics are re-echoed in Annus Mirabilis.  

In stanza 3: ‘In Eastern Quarries ripening precious Dew’ and Dryden's own note,  
‘Precious Stones at first are dew, condens'd and harden'd by the warmth of the Sun,  
or subterranean Fires’.  

This ‘vulgar error’4 about the origin of diamonds seemed to get confirmation from  
remarks in the Discours of Voyages of the Dutch traveller van Linschoten. He wrote  
about the East Indies:  

‘Diamonds are digged like gold out of Mynes, and where they digge  
one yeare the length of a man into the ground, within three or foure yeares  
after, there are Diamondes founde againe in the same place which grow  
there’5.  

Boyle quoted this passage with approval in The Sceptical Chymist

1 Treasurer's accounts, 11 Nov. 1667.  
2 Dryden was called an ‘atheistic scribbler’ in Whig pamphlets, Cf. Epistle to the Whigs (=  
the preface to The Medall).  
3 In spite of his statement that the ideal poet should have a knowledge of liberal arts and  
sciences, mathematics, geography and history. (Essay on Satire, Ker II, p. 36).  
4 Also quoted in Pseudodoxia Epidemica Book II, chapter i.  
5 John Huighen van Linschoten, Discours of Voyages into ye Easte & West Indies,  
London 1598, p. 133.
(1661), adding that in his opinion ‘not only plants, but animals and minerals too may be produced out of water’. Thus the subject came up for discussion in the Royal Society; it happened on the very day, Nov. 26th 1662, when Dryden was ‘admitted’, so that we may assume that he was personally present. During the meeting a list of questions was made up, intended to be sent to the English resident at Batavia. The first was: ‘Whether Diamonds and other precious Stones grow again, after three or four Years, in the same Places where they have been digged out’. Comparison with van Linschoten’s quoted passage reveals that the Society wanted to verify what ‘that sober relator of his voyages’ had written about the subject. The resident's answer was negative, but the question remained in abeyance. Not being primarily concerned with the progress of science, Dryden stuck to the old hypothesis; it seemed to have appealed to his fancy and it was suitable material to be worked into poetry.

In stanza 4: ‘Each waxing Moon supplied her watry store’, explained by Dryden’s note, ‘According to their opinion, who think that great heap of Waters under the Line is depressed into Tides by the Moon towards the Poles’.

These lines also bear relation to a controversy in the Royal Society, in which Isaäc Vossius played a part. He had given a fresh impetus to the discussion of currents and tides by publishing his book *De Motu Marium et Ventorum*, in which he asserts that the influence of the moon, as far as the tides are concerned, is negligible. Wallis, one of the most active members of the Society, answered with an essay called: *Hypothesis about the Flux and Reflux of the sea*, in which he criticizes Vossius and discusses other possibilities, such as the influence of the moon ‘with its Gravity and Pressure downwards upon the Terraqueous Globe, which should make the Water lowest, where the moon is vertical’, an idea that seemed to have appealed to Dryden, as becomes clear from his note to stanza 4. But the Society did more than theorizing; it

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2 The admittance of a new member was accompanied by a short ceremony, ‘a solemn Declaration made by the President of their Election’. Sprat p. 145.
3 ibidem, p. 158.
4 *De Motu Marium et Ventorum*, Hagae Comitis 1663, p. 79: ‘Luna igitur non movet maria, sed solum signat spatia & momenta motus ...’.
5 *Philosophical Transactions* August 1666.
collected observations about the tides from several parts of the world, which made Dryden express his hopes that it would finally solve the problem:

‘The Ebbes of Tides and their mysterious Flow
We, as Arts Elements shall understand’ (st. 162).

In stanza 14: ‘like vapours that from Limbecks rise’.

The alembic was of course often used for experiments in the Royal Society. Among the proceedings on 30 Dec. 1663 we read in Birch: ‘Mr. Boyle produced the head of an alembic ....’. In Dryden's mind this instrument was clearly associated with the Royal Society; in his address (stanza 166) the image occurs again: ‘And thence, like Limbecks, rich Idea's draw’.

In stanza 17, concerning comets: ‘Whether they unctuous Exhalations are, Fired by the Sun ...’. The Royal Society tried to give a scientific basis to the discussion about comets, gathering data about the appearance and course, and formulating hypotheses. *Philosophical Transactions* Nov. 6th, 1665 gives an account of Hevelius' book *Prodromus Cometicus*. He thinks ‘that the Planets do emit their Exhalations... That the Sun alone may cast out so much matter at any time in one Year ...’. Such words bear close relationship to the first lines of stanza 17.

In stanza 139: ‘As those who unripe veins in Mines explore’. A member of the Society had observed in 1663 that in Cheshire he had found many different kinds of veins underground; and that the deeper veins were nearer to ore and metal; the higher were earthy.1 In *Philosophical Transactions* of 19 Nov. 1666 Boyle returned to the subject with a series of questions: ‘Whether it be observed, that the Ore in Tract of time may be brought to afford any Silver or Gold, which it does not afford,...if it were not so ripe’.

In stanza 149: ‘The strength of big-corned Powder ...’. There had been many experiments with gun-powder in the Society. Sprat refers to the process of manufacture: ‘The upper Sieve is called the Separater, and serves to divide the great corns from the lesser; the great corns are put by themselves, and serve for Cannon Powder’2. As in modern warfare the science of the day had to play its part in the general effort of the nation.

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1 Birch I, p. 247.
2 Sprat, pp. 282, 283.
In stanza 163: ‘Instructed ships shall sail to quick Commerce’, explained by Dryden's note: ‘By a more exact measure of Longitude’.

Dryden's comment is strongly suggestive of Christiaan Huygens' contribution to the efforts of the Society, then actively engaged in finding means to facilitate navigation. Huygens, a member since 22 June 1663, had invented instruments called ‘pendulum watches’, which could be used at sea to ascertain longitude. The English captain Holmes first used them on his famous expedition to Guinea, and he gave an enthusiastic account of them to the Society. The calculations of the pilots sometimes differed 80 to 120 leagues, but his proved to be right. The inventor himself was not quite satisfied with the result. In a letter to the Society Huygens afterwards wrote: ‘I have reason to believe, that the Invention of Longitudes will come to its perfection’.

Sprat refers to it in the same year: ‘there is only wanting the Invention of Longitude, which cannot now be far off...seeing so many Rewards are ready to be heap'd on the Inventors’. The problem of longitude was evidently not quite solved when Dryden wrote *Annus Mirabilis*. It was Mr. Hooke, curator of the Society, who at last invented a better instrument, but he waited a long time before publishing his experiments, hoping that the ‘rewards ready to be heaped upon him’ would increase in the mean time.

Even more important to Dryden than scientific investigations and experiments were the ideas about language and literature current in the Society. In the earlier years of its existence the proceedings were not strictly limited to scientific work; many members were men of letters rather than scientists, who thought that literature could benefit from the proceedings of the Society. Works of nature and the creations of men's hands would become an inexhaustible treasure of fancy and invention. They also had explicit ideas about the language itself. The members had ‘a constant Resolution...to return back to the primitive Purity and Shortness, when Men deliver'd so many Things, almost in an equal Number of Words. They have exacted from all their Members,

1 Birch II, p. 4.
2 Printed in the first number of *Philosophical Transactions* March 1665.
3 Sprat, p. 382.
5 Sprat, pp. 413, 414.
a close, naked, natural way of Speaking; positive Expressions, clear Senses; a native Easiness\(^1\). Such notions could not fail to strengthen Dryden's own ideas about clarity, compactness, fluency and vitality, which he owed to the study of the classics and which made him one of the most famous representatives of the neo-classic period. He strove to introduce the precepts into *Annus Mirabilis*; stanzas 165 and 166, his address to the Royal Society, are proof in itself. While other members, such as Sprat and Boyle, laboured in their books to explain and defend the work of the Society, Dryden stated the case with masterly simplicity in eight lines; the Society had no other aim than the glory of God and the public weal:

> ‘This I fore-tel from your auspicious Care,  
> Who great in search of God and Nature grow;  
> Who best your wise Creator's Praise declare,  
> Since best to praise his works is best to know.

> O truly Royal! who behold the Law  
> And rule of Beings in your Makers mind,  
> And thence, like Limbecks, rich Idea's draw,  
> To fit the levell'd use of Human-kind’.

After this digression about shipping and the Royal Society the poem returns to the historical course of events, the battle on St. James's day followed by the burning of the Dutch merchantmen in the Vlie (stanzas 168-208). Fierce fighting on the 25th of July (St. James's day) was followed by De Ruyter's retreat to the Dutch coast. There was a report in *The London Gazette*\(^2\) that deputies of the States had been ordered to give thanks to De Ruyter ‘for his good conduct in the fight’. Information of this kind led Dryden to a comparison with the Roman general Varro, who received the praises of the senate after his retreat before the enemy. By a curious flight of imagination the defeat of the Dutch is explained as the revenge of St. James, the patron saint of Spain. Thus Dryden turns to a favourite topic of his, England's policy towards the United Provinces. From the days of Elizabeth to those of Cromwell this had been fundamentally wrong. Not only had Britain lent her aid to make Holland strong, but what was worse, she had supported rebels

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1 ibidem, p. 112.
2 No. 77 (August 9th 1666).
to fight their lawful sovereign1. The only excuse for the preceding generations of English statesmen was that they could not foresee what Fortune had in store for France and Holland. The ghosts of Henry IV and William, the first prince of Orange, remembering how much they owed to British friendship and succour, feel ashamed of later generations of countrymen in their behaviour towards their former benefactors (st. 201). The ‘Bourbon Foe’ is clearly Louis XIV, who gave some assistance to Holland in 1666 by declaring war on England.

After De Ruyter's defeat the English navy appeared off the Dutch coast. A squadron under Sir Robert Holmes went to the Vlie, where about 160 Dutch merchantmen were burnt, dealing a heavy blow to Dutch trade. The description of this episode gives Dryden an opportunity of touching upon another cause of friction between the rival nations, the smuggling of English wool to Dutch looms, where cheaper fabrics were produced than in England (st. 207). Shortly before the war a statement had appeared of the mischief done to the English cloth-workers, dyers, etc. by the export of ‘unwrought cloths’ which were bought up by the Dutch, dressed and dyed in Holland, and so stretched that, when reimported, they could be sold at the same price per ell, as was paid for them unwrought2.

In his transition from the Dutch war to the Fire of London Dryden introduces the pagan idea of Nemesis, the jealous fate that overtakes prosperity. This is apparently to be preferred to the notions of those fanatics who ‘mark out the Path of God's Judgements amongst his Creatures, concluding all extraordinary Events to be the immediate Finger of God’3. The description of the Fire itself also contains much innuendo referring to the political situation. It breaks out in the mean dwellings of the town, but does not touch the palace or the naval magazines. If the fire was a judgement of God, it was certainly a punishment for the sins of the common people and not directed against King or government. The origin of the fire in a mean house is compared with the humble birth of a ‘usurper’. Cromwell's name is not mentioned; probably Dryden would not remind his readers of ‘his old Acquaintance

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1 Dryden turns again to the subject in Amboyna.

2 Cal. of S.P. Dom. 1664-65, p. 182.

3 Sprat, p. 358.
Yet it seemed necessary to remind the people of ‘lawless sway and mighty
mischiefs’, since so many adherents of the Good old Cause began to talk of
Cromwell's happy days. Of course ‘the ghost of traitors’, whose heads were exhibited
on London Bridge, rejoice in the destruction. They were the progenitors of the
‘fanatics’ who hoped that this calamity would help them to carry out sinister designs.
In happy contrast stands the King's behaviour towards his subjects. Pious tears run
down his cheeks; he opens wide his stores for the destitute. His prayer for the people
is a beautiful echo of David's prayer in the last chapter of Samuel II, however strange
the words may sound in the mouth of the merry monarch. The last line of the prayer,
‘And let not Foreign foes oppress Thy Land’, shows what is foremost in the King's,
or rather Dryden's mind, that the calamities befalling England might interfere with
a happy termination of the war against Holland.

In the last part of the poem Dryden cleverly returns to ideas expressed in the
opening stanzas, thus giving some unity to a poem that is more of a chronicle than
an epic. Whereas supremacy in commerce was at stake when the war began, he now
prophesies the rise of a greater London, foreseeing a big increase in trade and
assuming that the war was already half won. The only problem left to the English
was to find the Dutch fleet and ‘to make them dare’ (st. 303). Of course he could not
know what would happen at Chatham a few months later. It was impossible for him
to escape the trap that awaits every propagandist in wartime, the rapidly changing
situation falsifying statements which seemed unassailable a short time before.

The nature of this treatise required first of all a discussion of the historical and
political implications of the poem. But in spite of its propagandist character, *Annus
Mirabilis* is a work of art, so that the most important question should be: how did
Dryden carry out his

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1 Langbaine, *An Account of the English Dramatick Poets*; it is an allusion to the stanzas on
the death of Oliver Cromwell.

2 There is only one reference to the event in Dryden's works; in the dedication of the *Conquest
of Granada* (published 1672), ‘Let our Enemies make their boast of a surprize; as the Samnites
did of a successful stratagem; but the Furcae Caudinae will never be forgiv'n till they are
reveng'd.’ Perhaps there is also a hint in *His Majesties Declaration Defended* (1681), where
Dryden reproaches Parliament for being so stingy that the King ‘shall be kept so bare of
Money that Twelve Holland ships shall block up the River’.
design from a literary point of view? For his stanza he chose the quatrain, because it is ‘of greater dignity than any other Verse in use amongst us’. This sounds rather vague; neither does Dryden's reference to Sir William Davenant's *Gondibert* help us very much. Davenant believes that it is ‘more pleasant’ to make a pause between every stanza than to run the reader out of breath with continued couplets. But we may well ask which is the more exhausting, to be run out of breath by couplets or to be interrupted again and again by a wise remark or a simile. But whatever his reason, after *Annus Mirabilis* Dryden gave up the quatrain for epic poetry. Probably he had discovered that the frequent pauses were unsuitable for narrative.

His language was current English, if we make allowance for a few latinisms that could hardly be called normal English usage. As always he had a ready explanation. ‘If a Roman Poet might have liberty to coin a word, supposing that it was derived from Greek...how much more justly may I challenge that priviledge to do it... from the best and most judicious of Latin Writers’.

On the whole the reader has the pleasant experience of understanding what he reads; Dryden is seldom obscure, though stanza 164 makes an exception,

> ‘Then we upon our Globes last verge shall go,  
> And view the Ocean leaning on the Sky:  
> From thence our rolling Neighbours we shall know,  
> An on the Lunar world securely pry’.

There is some confusion of astronomical conceptions here, but as he left the stanza unaltered in the reprint of 1688, it can hardly be due to a slip of the pen. Probably he wanted to predict that British enterprise would soon penetrate into the utmost regions of the world, places where, according to the older astronomy, the terrestrial and celestial spheres join, at the same time assuming that ‘our rolling Neighbours’, the planets and the moon, were easier to observe in those regions than from England.

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1 Dryden says so in *An Account of the Ensuing Poem*.
3 *An Account of the Ensuing Poem*. 

J.A. van der Welle, *Dryden and Holland*
In a few places Dryden's 'spaniel' runs wild. Settle was the first to laugh at the oddity of an animal called 'sea-wasp' in his description of a man of war (sts. 151 and 153). Samuel Johnson pointed to the absurdity of comparing the Dutch to castors, so that they could be hunted by their scent. Sometimes the wild sallies of Dryden's fancy are more apparent than real, as e.g. in stanza 66, where one's first reaction is that swans do not have crests. But the word 'crest' also had the meaning of 'a long neck'.

As might be expected, digressions and similes abound in the poem. As an imitator of Virgil's epic manner, Dryden liked to repeat and reiterate his thoughts in similes. They are often extraneous, so that the reader feels irritated by the delay of progress in the narrative, but they are mostly quite good in themselves, as e.g. the simile of the dog and the hare (st. 131 and 132) and the alliterative verse about the spider (st. 180).

There is no denying that Annus Mirabilis contains many passages which the modern reader could do without, but it is not fair to judge the whole solely on the less successful parts. There is enough to admire; we might refer to the stanzas about the prisoners of war and the 'vanity of human wishes' (32-36), where Dryden drops his cold detachment and blends feeling with imagination; or the separation of the two fleets and especially the nightmare of the Dutch (sts. 68-72); and last but not least the outbreak of the Fire (sts. 216-218) and the King's prayer.

From a poet of Dryden's competence one may expect that rhymes and metre will be almost flawless; his strength indeed was in his technical dexterity. Yet his boast that he did not make any part of a verse for the sake of rhyme is not fully justified. Thus he imparts an unusual sense to 'doom' in stanza 207, in order to get a suitable rhyme with 'loom'. In stanza 292 'succeed' stands for 'to make succeed'. There are also some false rhymes, but in a letter to a young poet Dryden expressed his opinion that these need not always be avoided. Sometimes one suspects the poet of using 'does' and 'did' in affirmative sentences to supply a

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1 ibidem. Here Dryden compares imagination to a nimble spaniel.
2 E. Kölbing found a passage in Byron's Giaour with crest for a long neck (Englische Studien XVI).
3 Stanza 199: industry-foresee; 200: destiny-shall be; 219: murderer-appear.
4 He wrote to Walsh in 1691, 'Then the Rhyme is not full of “pain” and “Man”. An half rhyme is not always a fault; but in the close of any paper of verses, tis to be avoided'.

J.A. van der Welle, Dryden and Holland
needed syllable. Yet, in spite of imperfections, the poem will be appreciated for its merits, as long as harmony of thought and form and complete statements in which ‘so many things are delivered almost in an equal number of words’ stand for beauty, be it a kind of ‘rational’ beauty which appeals more to the intellect than to the emotions.

The Inter-War Period (1667-1672).

Between the second and third Anglo-Dutch wars the King conferred two honours upon Dryden, who had proved to be an able supporter of the government's policy. He was appointed Poet Laureate (1668) and Historiographer to his Majesty (1670). This latter function, though somewhat neglected in his biographies, deserves a closer scrutiny for any light it may throw on our subject, Anglo-Dutch relations in Dryden's writings.

He entered upon these new duties with his customary good intentions, writing to the Duke of York: ‘I doubt not from both your actions, but to have abundant matter to fill the Annals of a glorious Reign: and to perform the part of a just Historian to my Royal Master, without intermixing with it anything of the Poet’.

Indeed, King Charles wanted a history of the recent war against Holland, no doubt to uphold his policy of the last few years and to prepare the nation for revenge on their traditional rivals. What would have been more natural than for him to turn to Dryden, who had already treated the subject to the King's satisfaction in *Annus Mirabilis*. But for unknown reasons the King passed him over and the task was eventually entrusted to John Evelyn. Was Charles convinced that a narrative of the sober and conscientious Evelyn would carry more weight than Dryden's too biassed interpretation of the events? However this may be, the new historiographer was not to write the history of the Anglo-Dutch wars.

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1 ‘both’ refers to the King and his brother James.
2 Dedication of *The Conquest of Granada*, Scott-Saintsbury IV, p. 15.
3 Evelyn's *Diary*, 13 Febr. 1669: ‘It was now that he (Arlington) began to tempt me about writing the Dutch war’. The King had to enjoin him to make the book ‘a little keene’, an adhortation that would certainly have been superfluous, if the task had been entrusted to Dryden. Evelyn did not get farther than the first volume, which he called *The History of Commerce*. It was printed in 1674, but the Dutch objected to the chapter ‘flags and fishery’ and the book had to be withdrawn. (*Diary*, 19 Aug. 1674).

J.A. van der Welle, *Dryden and Holland*
But what about the exploits of the King's brother, the greatest of which was described as ‘the most glorious victory... wherein, even by the confession of our enemies... your absolute triumph was acknowledged’. Did Dryden keep his promise to immortalize James Stuart in his prose? It was no less a person than Sir Winston Churchill who - more or less by accident - provided the answer to this question. Collecting material for his *Life of Marlborough*, he discovered in the Royal Library at Windsor Castle a letter from one Inesse, principal of the Scotch College in Paris (1740). Inesse wrote that in the library of the College was a narrative ‘transcribed... from the King's Original Memoires by M. Dryden the famous Poet, in the year 1686 ... these memoires ending...at the Restoration’.

This is convincing proof that in 1686 Dryden indeed wrote James II's history; but only the first part was ready, when the revolution of 1688 put an end to his labours; King James evidently took the M.S. to Paris.

If Dryden ever referred to Dutch history in his function as historiographer, it has not come down to us. Surely Dryden's activities in this field were not limited to writing history in the accepted sense of the word; the writings of a Historiographer Royal were very often tractarian in character. *His Majesty's Declaration Defended* (1681), *A Defence of the Papers written by the late King* (1686), such were typical titles. But these and other works of Dryden's only bear upon England's internal politics. Neither does his poetry in the inter-war period yield much that refers to the history of the United Provinces. We have to wait till the third Anglo-Dutch war, before Dryden found occasion to deal a new blow to the reputation of the Netherlands, when he wrote his drama *Amboyna*.

*Amboyna or, The Cruelties of the Dutch to the English Merchants.*

If Dryden's rooted aversion to the Dutch is manifest in his poem about

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1 Dedication of *The Conquest of Granada*. Dryden refers to the battle of Lowestoft.
2 Sir Winston Churchill, *The Life of Marlborough*, London 1933, vol. I, p. 362. It is curious that long before Churchill's discovery the names of Dryden and Inesse were already associated with James's memoirs. We read in *Jacques II, Mémoires*, Paris 1827, On n'a rien de certain sur l'auteur de ce travail; quelques uns l'attribuent à Louis Inès; et l'on a prétendu qu'il avait été revu par Dryden, probablement le fils du poète, poète lui-même, mais sans célébrité.
3 The typical function of a Historiographer Royal in the seventeenth century is discussed by B.G. Ham in R.E.S. XI, 1935, pp. 284-298.
the Year of Wonders, it is even more so in his tragedy *Amboyna*. It appeared during the third Anglo-Dutch war in 1673. In less than a year, however, the relations between England and the Dutch Republic changed for the better, since the majority of the British nation began to consider France as the chief danger to their country and the protestant religion. Consequently Charles II was obliged to make peace with Holland, after which the situation improved steadily, until in 1688 the two rival nations became close allies. That is why Dryden's later works contain only occasional sneers at the Netherlands and its 'boorish' inhabitants.

As *Amboyna* is a political play, our attention must turn to the situation to which it refers before we consider the tragedy itself.

**a. Historical background.**

The first Europeans that held some kind of sway over Amboyna, a spice island in the eastern part of Indonesia, were the Portuguese. In 1538 they built a fortress in the island; Franciscus Xaverius, the Jesuit missionary, landed about eight years later and began to christianize the natives with his customary zeal. But many remained Muslims and were hostile to the Roman Catholic Portuguese. Half a century later the Dutch and English were to avail themselves of this antagonism in order to expel their competitors.

In 1600 the Dutch admiral Steven Verhagen appeared on the scene. He also built a small fortress on the island and left a captain and some Dutch soldiers behind, promising to return within a few years. Very soon the small Dutch garrison abandoned their foothold which had brought them nothing but continual fear of the Portuguese. If the Dutchman Rumphius may be believed, the Muslim natives from now on

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1. A short survey of the contents and some notes on interesting passages are to be found in an appendix.
2. After his conversion to Roman Catholicism Dryden translated father Bouhours' *Life of Xaverius*. He must have fought down some inborn scepticism when he read of many strange events, as for instance the story about the crab-fish in Amboyna that brought back the saint's lost crucifix. (Scott-Saintsbury XVI, p. 166).
3. ‘Xavier... immediately baptized many infants, who died suddenly... as if, says he himself... the Divine Providence had only so far prolonged their lives, till the gate of heaven were opened to them’. (From Dryden's translation, Scott-Saintsbury XVI, p. 162).

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on ‘craned their necks’ for the arrival of the promised Dutch fleet. Growing impatient, they sent to Java, where their messengers ran up against some Englishmen under captain Middleton'. They were about to invite the English to come over, ‘thinking that they belonged to the same nation as the Dutch’. But they realized their mistake when, in the nick of time, the long-awaited Dutch fleet hove in sight. Under protection of the Hollanders they sailed back to their island and admiral Verhagen at once attacked the Portuguese fortress. The castle surrendered 23 Febr. 1605. All the Portuguese had to leave the island, ‘except those who were married’, and indeed forty-six Portuguese families remained. They accepted Dutch control; some years later, under governor van Speult, there was even a Portuguese captain in the service of the Dutch’.

The Ambonese seemed to be fairly satisfied with this state of affairs, though they complained that ‘almost every-one of the garrison had a concubine of their daughters, whom they left for very slight reasons, saying that they were not allowed to marry’. Dryden's picture of the prevailing moral laxity was probably not far from the truth.

Very soon Dutch authority in Amboyna was firmly established. The inhabitants became faithful subjects of the Netherlands and remained so for centuries. The tragic events after the second World War, when thousands of Ambonese preferred to be sent to Holland rather than live under the Indonesian government, testify to the unique position they held among the peoples of Indonesia as regards their relation to Holland.

Though the Dutch had absolute authority in the island after 1605, the English did not of course stop their trade to Amboyna. Here as everywhere in the archipelago the interests of the Dutch and English East-India companies were interrelated in a curious way, and their murderous competition led to constant friction. To prevent open hostilities, King James I and the States General made a fresh treaty in 1619, which was the result of laborious negotiations. Art. VIII of this treaty

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1 The same name occurs in act III, scene 3 of the drama.
2 He was one of the alleged conspirators. In Dryden's drama he is called a Spaniard.
3 Not only the soldiers of the garrison were to blame. Beaumont, Towerson's friend, when leaving the Indies, wrote a farewell letter to a friend in Amboyna, in which he commended himself to his ‘comadre with her child’. *Cal. of S.P. Col. 1622-24*, p. 214.
provided that the English were to enjoy one third of the spice trade in Amboyna¹.

In 1622 the English company sent one Gabriel Towerson to Amboyna to be their chief agent². Whatever Dryden saw fit to write about him in his play, Towerson was certainly no friend of the Dutch. This indeed could scarcely be expected of him, in view of the rivalry between the company he served and the Dutch merchants in the Indies. Some months before he left Batavia to take up his duties in Amboyna, he had shown his real feelings, when he wrote about some complaint of the Dutch:

‘Seeing the Netherlanders are so contentious, false and impudent in all their proceedings, not shaming to affirm or write anything that makes for their purposes, we have thought fit not to answer their protest fraught with untruths’³.

Besides Towerson there lived about twenty Englishmen in Amboyna, when in February 1623 a Japanese soldier in the service of the Dutch was apprehended by his superiors, because he showed more than an ordinary curiosity about some military affairs concerning the castle. After little torture - according to the Dutch version, though the English Relation speaks of hideous torments - he confessed before the Dutch governor van Speult that Gabriel Towerson intended to take the fortress by surprise with the help of his countrymen and some Japanese in the Dutch service. Nearly all the English subjects in the island were taken prisoner, some were tortured and most of them confessed their guilt. Ten Englishmen, ten Japanese, and one Portuguese, who was captain of the Dutch slaves, were condemned to death and beheaded. All declared themselves to be innocent before they were executed, if we may believe the testimony of the survivors of the ordeal. Six Englishmen were acquitted and two pardoned, viz. Beaumont and Collins. They were taken to Batavia by Welden, English factor of the Bandas, and thence were sent

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¹ Art. VIII of the treaty: Es Isles des Moluques, Banda et Amboina, le commerce sera par commun avis tellement reîglé, que la Compagnie d'Angleterre y jouira de la troisième partie de tout le Traffic tant pour l'apport et vante des Marchandises auxdits Isles que pour les fruitis et Marchandises qui y croissent et s'en transportent, et ceux des Provinces Unies auront les deux autres tries. *Corps Diplomatique*, Tome V, p. 334.

² *Cal. of S.P. Col. 1622-24*, p. 4.

³ *Cal. of S.P. Col. 1617-21*, index vide Towerson.
to England, where they gave evidence upon oath of the tragedy they had witnessed.

It is very difficult, if not impossible, to decide whether there had actually been a conspiracy or not. The evidence rests on confessions obtained by torture, the written account of which is very concise and inaccurate, so that it is impossible to reconstruct what had really happened. It was almost three years later that the judges, called to account at Batavia, added complimentary information. But then, is their evidence quite reliable, since from judges they had become the accused? On the other hand there are the declarations of the English people that had been spared in Amboyna, to which may be added a prayer-book that contains a few lines written by an English prisoner a short time before his execution.

There is no denying that the English East India Company marshalled some formidable arguments to prove their employees' innocence. They argued that there were about twenty Englishmen in Amboyna who, with the help of ten Japanese, and almost unarmed, were to have made the attempt on the castle. The Dutch had a garrison of 200 soldiers and as many burghers who could be summoned at a moment's warning. At the same time there were about eight Dutch ships riding at anchor. Under the circumstances it would have been sheer madness for the English to venture an attempt. There is no proof at all that Towerson could expect support from other parts of the Indies or that his superiors were privy to his alleged intentions. On the contrary, only a few weeks before, the English had proposed in the Council of Defence at Batavia to withdraw their merchants from Amboyna, because the cost of maintaining them was too high. At the same time they requested a passage for their servants on Dutch ships.

In addition to the survivors' declarations of innocence, the English company also procured documentary evidence, among which was Coulson's prayer-book. Coulson was one of the merchants executed in Amboyna; some days before his death he wrote a protestation of his

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3 To be found in the Public Record Office at the Hague. The full title runs: The Psalmes of David in Meeter, with the Prose. Whereunto is added Prayers commonly used in the Kirke, and private houses; with a perpetuall Kalendar and all the Changes of the Moone that shall happen for the space of XIX yeeres to come. Duelie calculated to the Meridian of Edinburgh. Edinburgh. Printed by Andro Hart 1611.
innocence on some blank pages of a prayer-book. Actually the book was not his; on the fly-leaf we find: ‘This boock bought my mr. Wetherall marchant on Cambello for 7 p. sent heather to G.T.¹ for the housses use’. Mr. Wetherall was another English merchant put to death in Amboyna. Evidently his fellow-prisoner Coulson, a pious man according to the *True Relation*, used the prayer-book and wrote on a blank page before the catechism:

‘I was borne in Newcastle upon Tyne where I desire this booke maye come that my friends maye knowe my innocensie. March the 5th stilo novo: being Sunday aboard the Roterdame lieing in Irons understand that I Samuell Coulson late factor of Hitto was apprehanded for suspiccion of conspiracy and for any thing I knowe must die for it, wharefor, having not beter means to make my inosensy knowne, have writt this in this booke, hoping some good Englishman will se it, I doe heare, upon my salvation, as I hope by his death and passion to have redemption for my sins that I am cleare of all such conspiracy neither doe I knowe any Englishman guiltie theareof nor other creature in the world as this is true god blesse me

Samuell Coulson

In another leafe you shall understand more which I have writt in this booke being in the beginning of the salmes’.

Seeing that his story was too long for one page, he went back to a blank page in front of the psalms and continued:

‘The Japones ware taken with some villanie and brought to examination, being most tiranoulsie tortured ware asked if the Englishe had any hand in thear plott which torture made them saye yea, then was mr Thomson mr Johnson mr Collins John Clarke brought to examination and ware burned under the armes, the armpitts the hands and soales of the feete, with an other most miserable torment to drinke water, some of them almost tortured to deathe and ware forced to confesse that which they never knewe by reason of the torment which flesh and blood is not able to indure, then ware the rest of the English men men (*sic!*) called one by one amongst which I was one being wished to confesse or else I must go to torment

¹ Towerson.
withall called mr Johnson who was before tormented to witnes against me or else he should be tormented againe which rather then he would indure he said what they wold have he wold speake then must I confesse that I never knewe or else goe to torment which rather then I wold suffer I did confesse that which as I shall be saved before God almightie is not true being forced for feare of torment, then did they make us witnes against Capt. Towrson and at last made Capt. Towrson confess all being for the feare of most cruell torment for which we must all die. As I meane and hope to have pardon for my sins I knowe not more then the childe unborne of this bussines written with my owne hand the 5th of March St. novo Samuell Coulson'

if this narrative is a forgery, we must admit that it is a clever one. The rambling style does not seem to be of a clerk calmly and deliberately concocting a feigned story on behalf of his company. The allusions to the redemption of sins and salvation rather point to a soul in fear of death. There is one folded page in the book at psalm 59. This may be mere coincidence, but the words sound strangely appropriate:

`For loe, they waite my soule to take,  
Strong men against me do conveene  
Not for the fault that I did make  
That they, O Lord, in me have seene`, etc.

The question remains how Coulson managed to smuggle the book out of his prison. According to the English version, some ‘good Englishe man sewed it up in his bed’ and afterwards delivered it to Welden, the English factor in the Bandas. This story need not be rejected as impossible. In Amboyna there were some Englishmen in the Dutch service¹. They no doubt deplored the sad fate of their countrymen and were inclined to help them as much as they dared. The English East India Company kept the prayer-book as proof of their employees' innocence and were not inclined to send it to Holland for examination. But King James insisted on doing so and the company gave in. The book was never returned; in course of time it disappeared in the ‘sekrete kas’ (secret cabinet) of the Dutch East India Company.

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1 One of those was Forbes, a steward, used by Van Speult as an interpreter. *Cal. of S.P. Col.* 1625-29, p. 417.

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Apart from the question whether there was a conspiracy or not, the English objected that their merchants had been tried and sentenced in Amboyna, instead of being brought before the so-called Council of Defence, a joint committee of four English and four Dutch members residing at Batavia. According to the treaty of 1619 disputes between the two companies were to be settled by this Council; that is why Towerson in Dryden's drama defends himself with the words:

‘I know you have no right to judge me:
For the last Treaty ’twixt our King and you
Exprsly said, that causes Criminal
Were first to be Examin'd, and then Judg'd,
not here, but by the Council of Defence;
To whom I make Appeal...’¹.

In the treaty, however, there is no mention of civil or criminal jurisdiction. We may compare Towerson's allegation with art. XXX:

‘Ce Traité sera pour le temps de vingt ans, et si pendant ce temps-là il arrive quelques Disputes qui ne puissent être terminées par ledit Conseil et ces quartiers là, ny par deça par les deux Compagnies, le différant en sera remis au Roy de la Grand'Bretagne et auxdits Seigneurs Estats Generaux...’².

From the onset the Dutch limited the interpretation of this article, maintaining that the Council of Defence had no competence beyond matters concerning the joint navy of defence and the charges for the provision of munition in the forts.

Though it would seem that the existence of a plot in Amboyna was not very likely in 1623, it is too much to say that the thought never entered English heads. Enclosed with the very letter in which the English President at Batavia reported the execution of the merchants in Amboyna to his employers in London, he sent drafts of the principal Dutch forts in the Moluccas, Amboyna, and Banda. As usual, the letter was full of complaints about the overbearing character of the Dutch and the comparative weakness of the English. Would it not be advisable ‘to remove the remainder of our people until further order; for who would

¹ *Amboyna*, act V scene 1.
live under such cannibals?’ But suddenly we are surprised by the rather arrogant note:

‘If the company intends to have forts, those of most importance are best worth the demanding and keeping, viz. the fort in Amboyna, the fort Neira upon Banda, and the fort at Malaya’.

Indeed, the Dutch had much reason to be suspicious. Governor-General Coen had repeatedly warned his subordinates about designs of the English. Van Speult, governor in Amboyna, answered him:

‘Wij hopen volgens U.E. bevel de saken soo te dirigeeren dat de soueverainiteit door hare indringinge in ’t minste vermindert ofte gequetst en worde en soo volcomen connen vernemen dat zy eenige conspiratien jegens den Heerbegaen, sullen in ’t welnemen van U.E. sonder uutstel recht doen naar behooren’.

Evidently Van Speult was thoroughly prepared for foul play on the part of the English. Of course one may doubt the honesty of the Dutch judges in Amboyna, but if they had been cold-blooded murderers, why did they pardon two and acquit six Englishmen, well knowing that these people would testify against them, especially if they had suffered innocently. The English Company made much of the evidence of these survivors, though there is reason to doubt their trustworthiness. According to their own superiors their characters were by no means blameless. The English president wrote of them from Batavia that Powle, Sherricke, Webber, and Ramsey had been employed as assistants in Amboyna; neither their sufficiency nor good conduct deserved commendation. Collins was also an assistant; he had squandered his living and defrauded several men of large sums of money. The company should give no further employment to such ‘untrusty unthrifts’. Yet the English True Relation, Dryden's chief source for his drama, is based on the accounts of these men.

In view of the scarcity of reliable documents, it is small wonder that historians should differ in their opinions. Dutch authorities (Colen-
brander, Stapel, Coolhaas\(^1\)) give credence to the existence of a plot; English historians are equally convinced of the contrary\(^2\). Some more attention should be paid to a third possibility, because neither an English conspiracy nor judicial murder on the part of the Dutch can be proved irrefutably. It seems likely that Van Speult, realizing that the first blow is half the battle, acted in something of panic, doing what seemed to him some rough and ready kind of justice.

The Amboyna tragedy has been called the divorce between the Dutch and English East India Companies. Drastic measures such as these helped to secure the Indies for the Netherlands, but at the same time went a long way towards making the relations between the two countries in Europe worse. One may admire the courage and enterprise of the Dutch in the seventeenth century and yet readily agree to a passage in a letter from the Dutch Council at Batavia to the directors in Holland, in which they wrote that Isaäc de Bruyne, who had prosecuted as ‘Advocate-fiscal’ (in Amboyna) and called himself a lawyer, should have shown better judgement in this affair\(^3\).

Prince Maurice gave vent to his irritation in much stronger terms, when he wished that Van Speult had been hung upon a gibbet, with his council about him, when he began to spell this tragedy\(^4\).

b. Sources and date of the play.

The English merchants were executed on the 9th of March 1623 New Style. It was not until May 1624 that ‘this heavy news’ reached England\(^5\). Pamphlets appeared which spread the news; in accordance with the custom of the time they bore very long titles. For brevity's sake they will be indicated here as follows:


The *True Relation* gives the English view of the case, the *True Declaration*
was written by a Dutchman and afterwards translated into English; *The Answer* was composed in England to refute the Dutch *True Declaration*. Many other pamphlets concerning the Amboyna affair appeared in the course of time, but we know beyond doubt that Dryden used the *True Relation* and probably read the *True Declaration* and *The Answer* as well, the three being often bound in one volume. For our purpose it will be sufficient to trace the history of these publications.

The *True Relation* was compiled by one Skinner at the request of the East India Company in London. Richard Welden, the company’s factor in the Bandas, together with the testimony of six Englishmen that had escaped execution, provided the necessary data. At first this *True Relation* existed only in manuscript; it was used to be read to the King and the Privy Council. Afterwards the M.S. was also sent to Holland in order to be read to the States General.

About the same time an anonymous pamphlet concerning the Amboyna affair was printed in Holland. As was to be expected, this Dutch *Declaration* differed widely from the English *Relation*. The existence of a plot was taken for granted; there had been little - if any - torture. Moreover the writer made bold to compare tortures in use among the Dutch with the cruel usage in England of ‘pressing prisoners to death’. It was especially this part of the pamphlet that made the English blood boil. Carleton, the English ambassador, at once made a formal protest. He thought that it was ‘a calumniation of the justice of our land, as if that which is ultimum supplicium, after a delinquent is convicted and condemned, were applied like their fire and water (Dutch tortures) to extort confessions whereby to convict and condemn a prisoner’. In other words: ‘Pressing prisoners to death’ existed in England, but it was scandalous to compare it with Dutch tortures, because it was only ‘ultimum supplicium’.

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2 ibidem, p. 337.  
3 ibidem, p. 353.  
4 It was thought to be the work of Boreel, a lawyer in the service of the Dutch East India Company and son of the burgomaster of Middelburg, one of the directors of the Company. The Dutch title is, *Waerachrich Verhael Van de Tijdinghen gecomen uit de Oost-Indien, met het Jacht ghenaemt de Haze in Junio 1624 in Texel aenghelandt. Aenugaende De Conspiratie ontdeckt in de Eylanden van Amboyna ende de straffe by Justitie daer op ghevolght.* (Knuttel 3546).  
The States General, eager to maintain good relations with King James, hastened to declare that the Dutch pamphlet was a scandalous libel and offered a reward of 400 guilders to discover the author or the printer, the placard to be published at every corner of the streets of Amsterdam. Yet secretly the States General must have been satisfied with the contents of the pamphlet; in broad outline it gave the Dutch view of the case for many years to come.

The placard published against this ‘libel’ was worse than useless; it only served to stimulate the sale. An English merchant at Amsterdam found ‘quantities’ of the pamphlet, which he feared would be sold in the streets. Another Englishman at Flushing took the trouble to translate the Dutch pamphlet and very soon the printed copies of the ‘scandalous libel’ also circulated in England. The English translator, afterwards called to account, declared naïvely ‘that he had done it in the integrity of his heart to be serviceable to his country’. Needless to say that his service was not everywhere appreciated in England.

The English East India Company now also had recourse to the printing press to counteract the influence of the Dutch pamphlet. They resolved at last to print their own Relation, together with the Dutch Declaration and, as a third part, their Answer to refute it. But printing in England was not such a simple affair as in the United Provinces. First the King's licence had to be obtained. He had no objection if the book contained no invective against the States General, whom, for political reasons, he was careful not to exasperate. These three pamphlets were frequently reprinted, the dates of new editions often coinciding with years of heightened tension between the two nations.

It was an edition of the True Relation that served Dryden as a source

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1 ibidem, p. 339. His ears seem to have been offended by the cry, ‘Wat wonder, wat news van de groote Verrade by den Engelse in Amboyna’ (something extraordinary, some news of the great treason of the English in Amboyna).

2 Cal. of S.P. Col. 1622-24, p. 404. Two thousand copies were to be printed in English and one thousand in Dutch ‘to be sent over’, with the arms of the E.I.C. to be set upon the front of each book as a token of authenticity. The principal nobility ought to be presented with a copy ‘of the fairest binding’. Knuttel, 4205a. and 3549.

3 It often occurred in pamphleteering that the narrative of the opponent was printed together with the refutation. The third edition appeared in 1651 (before the first Anglo-Dutch war); there was a reprint in 1672 (third Anglo-Dutch war); in 1688 Settle published a new version under the title Insignia Bataviae, since he objected to the invasion of William of Orange.
for his tragedy, one indication of which is his use of the name Ysabinda for Towerson's fictitious bride. It occurs in the pamphlet as the name of one of the Japanese that were executed. The sound of the word, itself not unsuitable for a woman, may have appealed to Dryden. But all doubt about the source of Dryden's *Amboyna* is dispelled when we compare act V of the play with the narrative in the *True Relation*. Towerson's defence and Perez' confession are no more than paraphrases of the pamphlet. Dryden follows the same line of reasoning, only changing the narrative into dialogue with greater economy of words.

**Towerson's defence:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><em>True Relation</em></th>
<th><em>Act V of the play</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In the next place, let it be considered how impossible it was for the English to achieve this pretended enterprise. The castle of Amboyna is of very great strength.</td>
<td>Consider, next, the strength of this your castle;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The garrison there is 200 or 300 men besides as many more of their free burghers in the town.</td>
<td>Its garrison above two hundred men, Besides as many of your city burghers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durst ten English, whereof not one a soldier, attempt anything upon such strength and vigilance? As for the assistance of the Japonezes, they were but ten neither, and all unarmed.</td>
<td>...; for ten English, and merchants they, not soldiers, ... the attempt had only been for fools or madmen ... with the aid of ten Japanners, all of them unarmed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>But let it be imagined that they were so desperate as to venture the exploit...</td>
<td>Grant then we had been desperate enough to hazard this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How should they be able... to keep possession when they had gotten it.</td>
<td>How to secure possession when we had it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There was neither ship nor pinnace of the English in the harbour.</td>
<td>We had no ship nor pinnace in the harbour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The nearest of the rest of the English... 40 leagues from Am-</td>
<td>The nearest to us forty leagues from hence,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

J.A. van der Welle, *Dryden and Holland*
boyna and those but nine persons. ....
besides the strength of the castle and town
of Amboyna, the Hollenders have three
other strong castles well furnished with
soldiers in the same island.
They had then also in the rode of
Amboyna eight ships.
And they but few in number....
...You, besides
This fort, have yet three castles in this
isle,
Amply provided for.
... and eight tall ships Riding at anchor
near.

Perez' confession.

True Relation.

(He) confessed God has justly brought
this punishment upon him, for that having
a wife in his own country he had by the
persuasion of the Dutch Governor taken
another in that country; this first being
yet living.
I'm justly punished...
For, being married in another country,
The governor's persuasions and my love
To that ill woman, made me leave the
first,
And make this fatal choice.

Act V of the play.

The Fiscal.

A Japon Soldier, under Captain Perez,
came to a Centinel upon the Guard, and,
in familiar Talk, did question him about
this Castle, of its Strength.

... authority was derived from the Lords
States General of the Netherlands under
whom he had lawful jurisdiction, both in
civil and criminal causes.

This court conceives that it has power to
judge you, derived from the most High
and Mighty States, who in this land are
supreme, and that as well in criminal as
civil causes.

With such obvious paralellism in the line of reasoning and the choice of words,
we may conclude that the poet must have had the pamphlet on his table when he
wrote his play.
A second source for Amboyna.

The True Relation was not sufficient for Dryden to build his plot on. Essential elements for Restoration Tragedy were lacking in it, for instance ‘heroic love’. In Dryden's lifetime it was Langbaine who drew attention to Giraldi Cinthio's Hecatommithi as the complimentary source for Amboyna. Probably he was right, for though the circumstances are rather different, there is some similarity between the rape of Ysabinda and the story of Giraldi's tenth novella of the fifth decade. Moreover it can be proved that Dryden occupied himself seriously with the Hecatommithi a short time before he wrote Amboyna. He says in the preface to An Evening's Love:

‘Most of Shakespeare's Plays, I mean the stories of them, are to be found in the Hecatommithi, or Hundred Novels of Cinthio. I have myself read in his Italian, that of Romeo and Juliet, The Moor of Venice, and many others of them’.

Giraldi (†1573) states that he wrote his book to combat vice and improve morals; yet his stories are sometimes not a little obscene, even if they were duly licenced by the Roman Catholic Inquisition. The author linked his concatenation of stories with the sack of Rome by Charles V's army in 1527. Some ladies and gentlemen set out from the ill-fated town for Marseilles and on their voyage they beguile the time by telling yarns. The name of the book suggests a number of one hundred, though actually there are one hundred and eighteen. The tenth novella of the fifth decade bears a likeness to Dryden's plot in Amboyna. Modesta, Principessa di Satalia, is raped by Riccio under circumstances of great violence. She entreats her ravisher to kill her rather than debauch her body. She dies and Riccio escapes to Scythia, where he becomes insane and meets his death. Indeed Dryden could not have wished a better

1 Langbaine's essay is to be found in Spingarn's Critical Essays of the 17th century III, Oxford 1908.
3 This is true at least of the edition of 1593, Venice. The inquisitor declares in an imprimatur, ‘Hecatommithos ... consonos esse Sanctae Rom. Ecclesiae et ab Apostolica fide non abhorrere’.
story to oppose extreme depravity to the purity of a virtuous heroine.

Sources for the songs in Amboyna.

There is a strange irony in Dryden's choice of Joannes Secundus' epithalamium as a source for the bridal-song in Amboyna, since Joannes was a Dutchman, and Dryden always upheld the notion that the Hollanders were incapable of cultivating or appreciating any higher values in life. Jan Everaerts, to give Secundus his Dutch name, was one of those Renaissance-poets who tried to breathe new life into Latin as a language for poetry. In the whole array of famous men in this particular field of literary activity, from Dante down to Milton, Everaerts holds an honourable place. Born at the Hague of a father who was a favourite of Charles V, he became secretary to the archbishop of Toledo and afterwards to the bishop of Utrecht. He died before he was 25 years old, leaving a mass of Latin prose and poetry', of which his Basia found imitators in almost every country of Europe. His epithalamium consists of eleven songs of unequal length (10-18 lines), voluptuous in tone, since Joannes' conception of love is erotic rather than platonic. Those who should find fault with Dryden's poem on the score of licentiousness will, on comparing it with the original, find that he copied with reserve. He left it unfinished, the last part of Secundus' epithalamium being unsuitable to recite on the stage, even though Restoration audiences were certainly anything but over-scrupulous. In order to show that there is more than an incidental similarity between the two epithalamia, the first four lines of Secundus' fifth song and the last lines of his sixth will be compared with Dryden's poem.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latin</th>
<th>English</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iam virgo thalamum subibit, unde Ne virgo redeat, marite, cura.</td>
<td>The Virgin now to Bed do's goe: Take care oh Youth, she rise not soe;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iam virgo niveis locata fulcris</td>
<td>She pants and trembles at her doom,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adventum cupiet tuum tremetque</td>
<td>And fears and wishes thou wou'dst come</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Et dicet ‘Satis est’ tremente voce  She softly sighing begs delay,
Arcebitque manu proterva labra  And with her hand puts his away,
Propelletque manu manum protervam.

**The Sea-Fight, the second song in Amboyna.**

Though John Smith's book *The Sea-mans Grammar*¹ has sometimes been suggested as one of the sources for Dryden's accurate knowledge of sailors' jargon, it was perhaps not realized how much he owed to it for his song called *The Sea-Fight*. By way of illustration John Smith had added a chapter to his ‘Grammar’ which he called *The Fight at Sea*.² Not only the choice of words but also the very spirit of this chapter is closely related to the ‘lusty bold Spright’ of Dryden's *Sea-Fight*. Both emphasize the eagerness and joy of the sailor to come to grips with the enemy. Both are dramatic monologues, the speaker being the captain of an English ship. In the ‘Grammar’ the captain cries before the fight:

‘Boy, fetch my cellar of bottels, a health to you all fore and aft, courage my hearts for a fresh charge’.

Then follow his orders to prepare for action:

‘.... so sound Drums and Trumpets, and Saint George for England

This compares readily with Dryden's:

‘Now each Man his Brindice, and then to the Fight. St. George, St. George, we cry’.

The Grammar's line:

‘Give him a volley of small shot’.

becomes Dryden's:

‘Plie it with Culverin, and with small shot’.

When the dead are shot into the sea, the captain commands:

‘Give them three Gunnes for their funerals’.

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¹ The book appeared in London in 1652. There is a copy in the British Museum.
² *The Sea-mans Grammar*, p. 59. Before John Smith began his account of a fight at sea, he wrote, ‘I have seen many books of the Art of Warre by land, and never any for the Sea, seeing all men so silent in this most difficult service...’.
Dryden writes:

‘Drums and Trumpets toll the Knell,
And Culverins the Passing Bell’.
It is also the ‘Grammar’ that explains Dryden's line:

‘Up with your Fights and your Nettings prepare’.

The Grammar has:

‘He makes ready his close fights\(^1\) fore and aft’.

‘Close fights’ consisted of netting or grating, set up from stem to stern to prevent the enemy from boarding\(^2\). Dryden's account of a fight at sea is short and yet complete in itself. In his description the preparations for the struggle are followed by a preliminary artillery duel; then the enemy boards the ship, but is driven off again. At last the English give the enemy ship a broadside and she is sunk. In *Annus Mirabilis* the poet describes the naval tactics of one fleet against the other; in *The Sea-Fight* he expatiates on the details of a clash between two ships. Together they give a fairly complete picture of naval warfare in the seventeenth century.

**Date of the play.**

*Amboyna* was entered in the *Stationers' Register* on June 26th, 1673. So we may be sure about the date of printing, but the date of the first performance is conjectural and presents difficulties. When the play was printed in June 1673, the war against Holland had been going on for more than a year and the whole English nation at last seemed united in their purpose. The Supply-bill, granting large sums of money to pursue the war, became law in March 1673, so it no longer seemed necessary to play upon national sentiment. Starting from the political situation in 1673, some Dryden scholars have come to rather strange conclusions as regards the nature and the date of Dryden's *Amboyna*. According to Professor Bredvold, who conjectures that the date of the first performance fell in 1673, the play could not have a serious political purpose: ‘It appeared after the support of the Dutch war had ceased to be a real political issue. It was only a potboiler’\(^3\). It is not easy to see how this

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1 Italics mine.
2 *The Sea-mans Grammar*, p. 31, ‘Netting, which is small ropes from the top of the fore castle to the Poope, ... and this Netting or Grating, which is but the like made of wood, you may set up or take down when you please, and is called the close fights fore and aft’.

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opinion can be reconciled with the general trend of the play and especially with the prologue and epilogue.

Another authority, C.E. Ward, also starting from the idea that in 1673 war propaganda was no longer necessary, argues that the play may have appeared on the stage at a much earlier date, adducing as evidence a passage in the *Covent Garden Drollery* of 1672, which speaks of critics who ‘dislocate’ the scenes of a play with more art ‘than in Amboyna they (do) the limbs of men’. Secondly he comments upon a puppet show at Charing Cross performed in November 1672 and called ‘The Dutch Cruelties at Amboyna’, thus assuming that these references to Amboyna had been suggested by Dryden's play. But neither the passage in the *Covent Garden Drollery* nor the puppet show necessarily refer to Dryden's drama, the story of the Amboyna ‘massacre’ being familiar to every Englishman.

There would seem to be good reason for challenging the premises of these scholars. Was there a united nation in 1673, firmly resolved to fight the Dutch to the last? Does war-propaganda cease, as soon as the whole nation is willing to fight? It is true that Parliament had granted money, but not before it had imposed the Test Act, directed against the Roman Catholics in England and over their heads against His Catholic Majesty in France. The French ambassador wrote in 1673 about considerable anti-French sentiment in both Houses. The clever spy Du Moulin, former servant of Arlington, now Dutch William's secretary, was busy winning over members of Parliament to a different attitude towards Holland by ingenious pamphleteering. In less than a year the French ally was to be left in the lurch and a separate peace with the Netherlands concluded (1674). To counteract anti-French trends, propaganda for the prosecution of the war was certainly not superfluous in 1673. Therefore

2 The Amboyna tragedy had even been treated in theatrical form long before Dryden; as early as 1625 a play on this subject was ready for performance, but the Privy Council stopped the representation, fearing tumult against the Dutch living in London. (Cal. of S.P. Col. 1625-29, p. 32).
3 Colbert in a dispatch of April 1st 1673.
5 *England's Appeal* (Knuttel 10912) was meant to create pro-Dutch sentiment in England.

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we may be sure that Dryden lost no time in getting his play, which had been very successful on the stage, into print (the end of June 1673) and May or the beginning of June 1673 still seems the most probable date of the first performance.

c. Critical estimate of the play.

The question may well be raised if *Amboyna* is worth discussing from a literary point of view. ‘It is beneath criticism’, says Sir Walter Scott in his edition, ‘I can hardly hesitate to term it the worst production Dryden ever wrote’. When Saintsbury re-edited Scott's edition, he added: ‘utterly worthless, except as a curiosity’. The next editor of the complete collection of Dryden's plays, Montague Summers, is of another opinion. To him it seemed ‘a very fine and pathetic drama”. He modified his statement later on: ‘If we can put on one side its intended and acknowledged purpose, this drama seems to me highly interesting and very well written”. Such diversity of opinion is not what one would expect of a play that is a mere ‘curiosity’, though Dryden himself thought little of it. He said:

‘Amboyna... though it succeeded on the Stage, will scarcely bear a serious perusal, it being contriv'd and written in a Moneth, the Subject barren, the Persons low, and the Writing not heightned with many laboured Scenes’.

In the prologue of *Amboyna* he apologizes to his audience:

‘But hope not either Language, Plot, or Art;
'T was writ in haste, but with an English Heart’.

Though some allowance must be made for the fact that in a dedication Dryden was apt to belittle his own achievement as against the merits of his patrons, it is certain that he would not rank *Amboyna* among his better productions, since it did not meet his own requirements for a good tragedy. But this need not mean that the play is utterly worthless. After all something may have been wrong with Dryden's standards. In some of his essays¹ there is ample information about his dramatic conceptions

3 Dedication to Lord Clifford.
before he wrote *Amboyna*. According to him, a play ought to be a just and lively image of human nature, but, as far as tragedy is concerned, it should be

‘Nature wrought up to an higher pitch. The Plot, the Characters, the Wit, the Passions, the Descriptions, are exalted above the level of common converse, as high as the imagination of the Poet can carry them’¹.

Obviously, precepts such as these almost advocate melodrama and bombast. Characters are often pushed beyond the limits of probability; virtue and vice are set in crude apposition to one another. Dryden considered conflicts between love and honour to be pre-eminently suitable subjects for tragedy, the more so where the minds and fortunes of kings and noblemen were involved. The so-called heroic tragedy found in him its greatest exponent.

It is easy to see that in *Amboyna* he was much hampered by his subject and purpose from embodying his own precepts for tragedy. The persons in the play are ‘low’. Surely Dryden did not mean only the Hollanders, for even the respectable merchant Towerson, being neither a king nor a nobleman, was scarcely a fit character for the hero of a heroic tragedy. There was no place for conflict between love and honour. The subject was ‘barren’; within only two acts (the first and the fifth) Dryden had exhausted his chief source, the *True Relation*.

Another characteristic widely associated with the heroic tragedy, though perhaps not indispensable to it, was rhyme (the heroic couplet). Dryden had defended it most ardently in his essays, declaring:

‘I dare confidently affirm, that very few Tragedies, in this Age, shall be receiv'd without it...’².

It is characteristic of him that a few months later he wrote *Amboyna* without rhyme. Was he loath to put heroic couplets into the mouths of boorish Dutchmen or was it just lack of time? Sometimes there is an attempt at blank verse, according to Dryden the next best form for heroic tragedies. But he took care to avoid having it printed as such, probably expecting that critics would find fault with too many lines. The two editions that appeared in his life-time were published as prose; an edition of 1735 has parts of acts IV and V in blank verse, and even

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¹ An Essay of Dramatick Poesie, Ker I, p. 100.
² An Essay of Heroique Playes (1672), Ker I, p. 148.
more could have been printed in this way, especially parts spoken by Towerson and Ysabinda. Occasionally even the Dutch begin to talk metrically under the influence of Towerson's flowing numbers:

Fiscal: We cannot help your want of Wit; proceed.
Confess; if you have kindness, save your Friend.
Harman: Hold; I have some reluctance to proceed
To that extremity: he was my Friend,
And I wou'd have him franckly to confess.

In spite of himself the playwright seems to credit these Dutchmen with some feeling for poetry.

The unities.

Of course Dryden had carefully studied what Aristotle, Horace and contemporary critics had written about the unities. Since the Renaissance classical scholars had discovered more in Aristotle concerning these ‘mechanic rules’ than he actually wrote or meant. We do not mean to say that Dryden understood Aristotle much better, but at any rate he was more lenient in the application of the ‘rules’ than contemporary critics, especially the French. As to the unity of place he remarks:

‘There is a latitude to be allowed to it ...; yet with this restriction, that the nearer and fewer those imaginary places are, the greater resemblance they will have to Truth: and Reason which cannot make them one, will be more easily led to suppose them so’.

Of the unity of time he writes:

‘In Tragedy the Design is weighty, and the Persons great, therefore there will naturally be required a greater space of time in which to move them...But it is an error ... to make too great a disproportion betwixt the imaginary time of the Play, and the real time of its representations’.

Yet he would not limit too strictly the time of the action to 24 hours. Unity of action was sufficiently preserved, if the underplots were con-

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1 Cf. A.W. Verrall, *Lectures on Dryden*, Cambridge 1914, p. 117. When Aristotle declared that tragedy endeavours to confine itself to a single revolution of the sun, he stated a fact which is neither condemned nor blamed. Of place he said nothing at all; the word ‘unity’ is not used. Nor did he bring time, place and action into connection.


3 ibidem Ker I, p. 131.

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ducive to the main design. According to him, servile observation of the unities would cause a meagre plot and narrowness of imagination. As far as these unities are concerned, the subject-matter of *Amboyna* allowed Dryden to live up to his own principles. The imaginary places are near and few - the castle of Amboyna, Towerson's house near the castle and a wood. The whole duration of the action is about three days - the day of Towerson's arrival, the wedding day and the day of the trial. There is a great variety of incidents, but they are all conducive to the main design, and culminate in the wicked attempts of the fiscal and the governor to entrap Towerson and his fellow-countrymen.

Characterization.

Dryden's characters were often admirably conceived when he had the original before him, as in *Absalom and Achitophel*, in which a few strokes, hard and clear, were sufficient to portray contemporary statesmen for all posterity. A subtler art, however, is required for a drama. The spectator or reader should not be told about the characters; these should be revealed to him by their own actions and words; the characters should come to life in their conversation. If we consider Dryden's notions about tragedy - actions raised 'above the life', characters 'heightened' and diction 'elevated' - we shall not be surprised that more often than not he failed to present people of flesh and blood. His conceptions of tragedy almost inevitably lead to false psychology and melodramatic effects. Yet it would seem that *Amboyna* suffered less from Dryden's self-imposed principles than his other tragedies. Modern readers need not share his regret that the persons in *Amboyna* are 'low'; it saved him from indulging in too much 'heightening' of character and 'elevation' of diction. Those who have 'enjoyed' half a dozen of Dryden's heroic tragedies proper, will probably read *Amboyna* with some sense of relief. Here we often move in a more real world. The Dutch merchants in the opening scene, eagerly discussing the latest news from Holland and laying plots to oust their hated rivals, are drawn more villainous than they actually were, but they do not strike us as impossible characters. They are the hard and cunning men as we find them portrayed in the State-Papers and Minute-books of the English East India Company and they appear no worse here than the average Englishman probably thought them to be. We are also spared those eternal conflicts between
love and honour, which form an almost indispensable part of heroic tragedy. In act II Towerson is asked to choose between yielding his bride to young Harman or being thwarted in his business dealings. We might call it a conflict between love and commercial instinct. If it is intended as a substitute for the love-and-honour theme, it must be deemed a failure. No one expects Towerson to consider the choice for one moment; there is no real conflict in his mind. It only serves to emphasize the baseness of the rascal who made the proposal.

We have seen that Dryden was prevented by his choice of subject from making a king or nobleman the principal character of his tragedy. He had to be content with an honest, brave English merchant. Helpful, liberal and easily moved to pity, he presents a sharp contrast to the governor Van Spelt, who ‘makes a jest of men in misery’. Towerson is very conscientious in the execution of his duties and feels his responsibility for the other Englishmen living in Amboyna. Provoked by young Harman, he refuses to fight a duel, fearing reprisals against his fellow-countrymen if he should win. His anxiety to avoid offending the Dutch prompted him to warn his friend Beaumont, who wanted to hear a song commemorating Towerson's brave battle at sea:

‘Call not for that song, 't will breed ill blood’.

In Towerson's pleasant dream, that young Harman, reconciled, strewed his bride and him with flowers, Dryden is indulging his inclination towards heroics. It was not enough that the English merchant controlled himself when provoked by a young hothead, and that he forgave him; Towerson should be virtuous, even in his dreams. His ‘low’ birth prevented Dryden from endowing him with high-flown language, but occasionally an attempt at elevated style results in bombast:

‘I receive you both as Jewels, which I'll wear in either ear...’

Towerson's fatal defect of character is his credulity. He is stupid enough to believe that common ties of religion will make it possible to live in peace with the Dutch. His fault inevitably leads to his ruin, but at the same time it adds to his greatness, because only noble minds are subject to it: ‘He thinks all honest 'cause himself is so’.

Dryden makes it clear in the prologue that Towerson's fault is actually the fault of the English nation. They allow the Dutch to encroach on

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1 Towerson to van Herring and the fiscal.
their rights ‘rather than make a War with those who of the same religion are’¹. Though Towerson's character cannot be called great, it is well conceived and free from inconsistencies. His chief counterpart in the play is not the Dutch governor, but the fiscal. The former is a willing tool in the hands of the unscrupulous lawyer. This is more or less in accordance with the historical facts. It has been pointed out already that the fiscal, and not the governor, was rebuked by the Dutch authorities at Batavia for not showing more judgment in the Amboyna case. Here is the worst kind of lawyer, not knowing the spirit of the laws, ‘but only their tricks and snares’. His experience and insight into human character make him the most dangerous adversary. He understands at once why Towerson does not want a duel and keeps young Harman in check when his rashness would lead him into difficulties: ‘Let me advise you first...’ To religion he is at best indifferent, a base hypocrite and a coward when it comes to personal risk in a fight. Young Harman gives a good characterization: ‘You are as mischievous as hell could wish you, but fearful in the execution’.

Compared with him, young Harman is more courageous. Though he tries to avoid a duel with Towerson after the rape, he is ashamed to be taken for a coward: ‘Stand back, I'll fight with him alone’.

We are almost surprised to discover that Harman shows remorse after the rape of Ysabinda and that he refuses to listen to the fiscal's advice to kill her. We were not aware that Dryden thought Dutchmen capable of such feelings. In spite of Harman's indescribable meanness his character is more human than the fiscal's.

The governor is the conventional type of Dutchman seen through the eyes of seventeenth century Englishmen, an unwieldy figure, given to drink, whose only interest is in his commerce. Even his sorrow at his son's death is dissipated when he considers the advantages to Dutch trade that may accrue from it.

The same conventionality also clings to the character of the Spanish captain. His military qualities are undeniable; he is of course proud, poor and revengeful, though he makes it a point of honour not to kill Towerson when the latter is asleep. His wife's behaviour makes him a slightly ridiculous person. One may wonder why Dryden calls him a

¹ Prologue to Amboyna.

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Spaniard, whereas he must have read in the *True Relation* that he was a Portuguese. Was it because the Queen was a Portuguese princess? In any case, there was no harm in ridiculing the Spaniards a little, since Spain was an ally of the Dutch in 1673.

Towerson's friend Beaumont surprises us more by his love of wine and women than by his constancy in suffering. He is the fiscal's rival in his relations with Julia; temperance is not his greatest virtue. ‘You have drunk too much; you are past all care’, says his mistress. Dryden may have realized that too much virtue on the side of the English would make the play unconvincing.

Ysabinda, the heroine of the play, is of course flawless. She is beautiful, young, full of pity for the distressed and very docile when Towerson teaches her Christian morals. After the rape they devote a lengthy discussion to a consideration of suicide, voluntary martyrdom and ‘the greatest law of nature’, self-preservation. Ratiocination was second nature to Dryden, but he might have repressed his inclination at this tragic moment.

In summarizing the literary qualities of the play, one may conclude that it is not entirely worthless, though it has manifest faults. Lack of time or real interest in his subject prevented Dryden from bestowing his usual care on it. On the other hand, it contains passages well worth reading and this was only to be expected from an artist who made such a careful study of his art. The exposition of the chief characters in the first act is clear and succinct; compared with other heroic tragedies, they do not suffer so much from ‘heightening’ or ‘elevation’ of diction; the action is rapid and the plot well constructed, all the more remarkable, because the *True Relation*, which is mainly a serious of trials and confessions, does not give much to build on. The epithalamium, whatever else may be said about it, is certainly not bad poetry; Towerson's spirited defence makes interesting reading. It is a pity that so few English critics have troubled to give a more or less detailed analysis of *Amboyna*, though the rich dramatic literature of their country has, of course, provided them with many better plays to devote their attention to.

*From the end of the Anglo-Dutch wars to the Glorious Revolution.*

After the third Anglo-Dutch war Dutch affairs play an almost negligible part in Dryden's writings. It would have been an unremunerative folly to
have reviled the Netherlands at a time when the majority of the English nation sought peaceful relations with them. Dryden himself had not changed his opinions, but now his references to the Dutch were restricted to occasional sneers and those rather hackneyed at that. He kept repeating the same stock-examples of Dutch vices, their drinking habits, unscrupulous pursuit of gain, overbearing conduct wherever they were superior in numbers and so on. His anti-Dutch feelings provided him with a simile, when he wrote some satirical lines on literary court-circles (1676). These courtiers, he says, ‘treat Wit like the common Enemy, and give it no more quarter, than a Dutchman would to an English Vessel in the Indies; they strike Sail where they know they shall be master'd, and murder where they can with safety’.

When he worked up Paradise Lost into an opera (1677), the Council of the devils in Hell suggested a comparison with the States General of the ‘rebel state’ across the North Sea. He makes Lucifer say:

> ‘Most high and mighty lords, who better fell
> From heaven, to rise States General of hell’

In the epilogue to Oedipus (1679) the audience was humorously warned not to find fault with the play, based as it was on an immortal drama from classical antiquity. The spectators had better stifle unfavourable criticism, for

> ‘....when your Children find your judgment such,
> They'll scorn their Sires, and wish themselves born Dutch’.

One of the characters in The Kind Keeper (printed in 1680), Dryden's most obscene play, says that only ‘dull, plodding Fellows’ can play the game of marriage well, ‘and 'tis as natural to them, as Crimp is to a Dutchman’.

In the prologue to The Spanish Friar (published in 1681) Dryden still relies on anti-Dutch sentiment among the theatre-going public:

> ‘The heavy Hollanders no Vices know
> But what they us'd a hundred years ago,

1 Dedication of Aureng Zebe.
2 The State of Innocence, act I scene 1.
3 The Kind Keeper, act II scene 1. Of the various meanings of ‘to crimp’ ‘to play at cards’ seems the most likely. This explanation is suggested by Dryden's reference to the game of marriage. Unfortunately this meaning does not suggest plodding dullness. But the game was well known in Holland (krimpen) and so Dryden may have thought it a very dull one.

J.A. van der Welle, Dryden and Holland
Like honest Plants, where they were stuck, they grow;
They cheat, but still from cheating Sires they come;
They drink, but they were christ'ned first in Mum’.

The often-told story of Dutch merchants renouncing their religious principles in
heathen countries to ingratiate themselves with the native authorities, was revived
in *The Hind and the Panther* (1687):

‘Yet some improve their traffick more than we,
For they on gain, their only God, rely:
And set a publick price on piety.
Industrious of the needle and the chart,
They run full sail to their Japponian Mart;
Prevention fear, and prodigal of fame
Sell all of Christian to the very name;
Nor leave enough of that to hide their naked shame’

Dryden's censure in these lines cannot be said to have been wholly unmerited. The
Dutch merchants abroad sometimes showed a remarkable degree of pliability in
religious matters when their interest was at stake. As far as Japan is concerned, the
chief Dutch factor had warned his subordinates not to irritate the Japanese by religious
observances; it might endanger the ‘rich capitals of the company’. He strictly enjoined
them not to celebrate Sundays or other feast-days, but to do all work that might crop
up as on ordinary working-days, not to pray either before or after meals or to practise
such-like Christian customs...as long as they were in Japan. The deviation from
Calvinistic custom was hardly disguised by the pious exhortation that in the meantime
every one be diligent to serve his God by holy inward thoughts

*The Hind and the Panther*, which contained Dryden's satire on the religious
indifference of Dutch merchants when commercial interests

1 *The Hind and the Panther* II, lines 568-575.
2 *Documenta Reformatorioria* I, Kampen 1960, p. 386, Extract uyt een...placcaet...van Jan van
Elseracq, 4 Aug. 1644, daema vernieuwt 15 Sept. 1648 door Fredrick Coyet, oppercoopman
ende opperhoof over de Compagnies comptoir, schepen en volckeren in Japan.
...Insglycx, dat voortaen geene Sondagen off andere feestdagen vieren, maer soo wel op
die, als ordinaire werekdayen, gelyck in Japan gebruyckelyck is, allen voorvallenden arbeyt
sullen moeten doen en waernemen. Item, dat gene uytleryncke byeencompstven, gebeden, soo
voor als nae de maeltyn...soo lange in Japan syn, sullen vermogen te pleg...Ondertussen
betrachte een yder met heylige innerlyccke gedachten synen Godt te dienen.

J.A. van der Welle, *Dryden and Holland*
were at stake, appeared in 1687. The next year William of Orange came to the throne in England, a historical event that could hardly alter Dryden's feelings concerning the Hollanders, but made him more careful in his publications. As a Roman Catholic and a staunch adherent of the Stuart cause, difficult times lay ahead of him.

**Dryden under Dutch William and his Government.**

After the Glorious Revolution Dryden's enemies no doubt hoped that the poet would turn protestant again. It would have made him ridiculous in the eyes of the nation as a notorious time-server. Indeed, there was a rumour in circulation that he had recanted his Roman Catholic tenets. The Oxford antiquarian Anthony à Wood commented on some satirical lines written to expose Dryden:

‘Made on John Dryden, poet Laureate, who turned papist in May or June 1686. Returned to his old opinion when the prince of Orange came to be king’.

Others published poems under Dryden's name, full of excessive flattery of King William, thus persuading the nation that he was trying to ingratiate himself with the new sovereign. Dryden, however, did no such thing; he remained a faithful Roman Catholic and refused to take the oath of allegiance. Consequently he could not be retained as Poet Laureate and Historiographer Royal. The loss of these offices reduced him to penury and he was compelled to take to play-writing again. Of course he had to be very cautious in his public utterances, for the position of a Roman Catholic and non-juror was extremely vulnerable. It is true that he still had many friends, even in the circles of the new government, but his scathing satire had also created a lot of enemies, who were inclined to read odium into every word he spoke. Some occasional criticism on William's government he cleverly hid in prologues, plays

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The lines that Wood had copied were,

‘On all religions present and in past
Long hast thou rayl'd, and chose the worst at last.
'Tis like thyselfe, 'tis what thou didst before
Rayl'd against all women- and then married a whore’.

2 The Address of John Dryden Laureat to his Highness, the Prince of Orange. And another, *A Poem on His Majesty's Happy Accession to the Crown*. Both probably the work of Shadwell.
and even translations. But he took care to keep the person of the King out of
discussion, except perhaps for a sly dig at William in the dedication of the *Aeneis*
(1697):

‘Aeneas, though he married the heiress of the crown, yet claimed no
title to it during the life of his father-in-law’.

Though Dryden restrained himself in his comment on political affairs during King
William's reign, he sometimes caused offence. As early as 1689 Queen Mary had
some uncomfortable moments, when she, at her own request, saw his play *The Spanish
Friar*. The prologue was downright insulting to her Dutch husband and his followers.
(Cf. p. 73). Unfortunate remarks in the dialogue compelled her to hold up her fan,
to look behind her, to call for her palatine and hood and anything else to hand, while
the people in the pit turned their heads to see the Queen's reactions. In act I she must
have been offended by the lines:

‘Very good: She usurps the Throne; keeps the old King in Prison; and,

at the same time, is praying for a Blessing: Oh Religion and Roguery, how

they go together!’

It was even worse in act IV scene 2:

‘What title has this Queen but Lawless Force?

And Force must pull her down’.

Dryden may have felt some secret pleasure when he heard about the Queen's
embarrassment, the more so because nothing could be laid to his charge. He had
written the play long before the Revolution in his protestant days.

The next year Dryden's prologue to *The Prophetess* was forbidden. In it he had
allowed himself some criticism of the brave young men that went to Ireland to fight
for King William. In 1691 he ventured to bring out a second edition of *Amboyna*.
He - or his printer - dutifully changed

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1 King William and the unpopular Dutch guards were obviously in Dryden's mind, when he
adapted Boccace's *Sigismonda and Guiscardo* (1700).

‘What Kings decree the Soldier must obey:

Wag'd against Foes, and, when the Wars are o'er,

Fit only to maintain Despotick Pow'r:

Dang'rous to Freedom, and desir'd alone

By Kings, who seek an Arbitrary Throne,

Such were these Guards...' (lines 597-602).


3 The operatic version of Fletcher's *Prophetess*.
the title into: *Amboyna*...as it is acted by their Majesties' servants.

This is of course no proof at all that *Amboyna* was acted again in King William's reign; indeed it is very unlikely, since the cast of actors printed in the 1691-edition is exactly the same as in the first edition eighteen years earlier. It contains the names of actors who had died in that period and of others that had left the stage a long time before 1691. The change in the title-page was probably no more than a clumsy attempt to make an old play appear up-to-date in print. However that may be, the reprinting of *Amboyna* does not seem to have landed Dryden in any difficulties. His next drama, *Cleomenes* (1691), did however cause fresh trouble. The story of a virtuous King forced to live in exile was a delicate theme when many people still sympathized with the banished James II. The Queen forbade the performance and the intervention of an influential courtier was necessary to induce her to revoke the interdiction.

In spite of the desperate struggle that the English nation under King William fought against Louis XIV, Dryden now and then saw fit to panegyrize the French King, though he was careful only to refer to him as a Maecenas of art:

‘To what height the magnificence and encouragement of the present King of France may carry Painting and Sculpture is uncertain...’.

Even the glory of the British navy had somewhat suffered in Dryden's eyes, now that it was under the supreme command of Dutch William. There is sarcasm in his words about the failure of the fleet to give adequate protection to merchantmen:

‘Thus, as convoy-ships either accompany or should accompany their merchants, till they may prosecute the rest of their voyage without danger...’.

A sneer at King William's Dutch friends, who were, according to the popular British notion, unduly favoured by the Sovereign, is to be found in the dedication of the *Aeneis* (1697). They were called ‘Dutch boors brought over in herds, but not naturalized’.

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1 My italics
2 Wintershal, who took the part of the fiscal in 1673, had died in 1679; Hart (Towerson) and Mohun (Beaumont) do not seem to have acted after 1682. Cf. Allardyce Nicoll, *A History of Restoration Drama*, Cambridge 1923, pp. 67 and 269.
4 ibidem p. 124.
5 Dedication of the *Aeneis*, Ker II, p. 223.

J.A. van der Welle, *Dryden and Holland*
At times friends and relations felt anxious for him, lest he should go too far. A complimentary poem which Dryden wrote for his cousin, a well-known member of Parliament, was refused by him, unless the poet should alter some lines containing invective against Dutch valour. We do not know what Dryden had written originally; as we have it now, the text runs:

‘What has been done, was done with British Force.
Namur subdu'd, is England's Palm alone;
The Rest Besieged; but we Constrain'd the Town’¹.

When his own sons warned him to be more careful he answered:

‘I remember the Counsell you give me in your letter: but dissembling, though lawfull in some Cases, is not my talent: yet for your sake I will struggle, with the plain openness of my nature...”².

In his private correspondence to relations and trusted friends Dryden betrays an ill-concealed impatience for William's defeat and the return of James II:

‘But we all believe that the King of France...is gone for Flanders... He may poure in his horse upon them³, of which he has fifty thousand...

‘Them’, signifying the army under King William, sounds rather aloof if not aggressive. Dryden's letters of the period contain much war-news, but mostly of the scare-monger type, strangely different from his patriotic effusions in the Anglo-Dutch wars:

‘The French burnt a village, within a mile of the Town (Brussels); and the Garrison, though they knew of it, yet durst not venture out... the Town wishes the French were Masters of it’⁴.

‘We have lost about forty or fifty ships...de Tourville says he has destroyed Seaven Dutch and English men of warr, and that he is still in pursuit of Merchants ships...The Confederacy toters... All things favour the Monarch’. (Louis XIV or perhaps James II)⁵.

At last Dryden's hopes for the return of his old master ran so high, that he delayed the publication of his Virgil-translations, intending to

¹ To my honour'd Kinsman, John Driden, of Chesterton, lines 151-153.
² Letter of 3 Sept. 1697.
³ My italics.
⁴ Letter to Walsh, 9 May 1693.
⁵ Letter to Walsh, 7 August 1693.
dedicate the work to James II after his return to the English throne. This was indeed a great sacrifice for a man who lived precariously on the proceeds of his writings. The printer Tonson, who had a better judgment of the political situation, tried to induce Dryden to dedicate the translation to King William, meanwhile anticipating the poet's consent by printing Aeneas' picture with William's features and aquiline nose. But Dryden positively refused; he wrote to his sons:

‘...he (Jacob Tonson) has missed of his design in the dedication, though he had prepared the book for it; for, in every figure of Aeneas, he has caused him to be drawn like King William, with a hooked nose’.

Of course Dryden's letters contain the usual complaints about the King, who tried to keep up a standing army and favoured his Dutch friends. But still Dryden had some confidence that William would succeed in preventing Parliament from persecuting the Roman Catholics. The poet, however, was to be disappointed. All papists who had not taken the oaths of allegiance and supremacy would be debarred from holding inherited property after Sept. 29th 1700. In one of his last letters Dryden complains:

‘But all Our hopes of the House of Commons, are wholly dash'd; Our properties are destroy'd: and rather than we should not perish, they have made a breach in the Magna Charta; for which God forgive them’.

If Dryden had ever expected any worldly gain from his conversion to Roman Catholicism, he had been sorely mistaken. Neither had his staunch adherence to the Stuart cause brought anything but disaster upon him. As a champion of England's sovereignty on the sea in defiance of the Dutch, he lived long enough to see his fellow-countrymen offer the sovereignty of the country itself to a Dutch prince. His well-known lines in *Aureng Zebe* proved to be prophetic for the end of his own days, in so far as his worldly prosperity was concerned:

[1] Letter of 17 Febr. 1697, I have hinder'd it (the publication of Virgil) thus long in hopes of his return, for whom, and for my Conscience I have suffer'd that I might have layd my Authour at his feet.


‘If we consider Life, 'tis all a cheat;
Yet, fool'd with hope, men favour the deceit;
Trust on, and think to-morrow will repay:
To-morrow's falser than the former day;’

But being first and foremost a man of letters, he had at least the satisfaction of having risen to pre-eminence among his fellow-poets. He ruled the younger generation of authors as a law-giver from his chair in Will's coffee-house.

1 Act IV.
Chapter II
Drydeniana in Holland

Having considered Dryden's opinions of the Dutch, the question naturally arises what the Dutch knew or wrote about him. Did they read Dryden in English or in translations? Does his name occur in the extensive periodical literature of Holland in the last decades of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century? Are there any references to him in subsequent ages?

In 1711 a well-known bookseller in the Hague, named Thomas Johnson, began publishing a collection of the best English plays and in the period between 1711 and 1730 about 70 comedies and tragedies appeared. ‘Un beau Recueil de toutes les meilleurs Comédies Angloises, très proprement imprimées en petit volume’, runs the advertisement in one of his own periodicals1 and again in another: ‘Un Recueil des meilleures Comédies et Tragédies Angloises... la moitié meilleur marché qu'on ne les vend en Angleterre’2. Dryden is represented by twelve plays in this collection and, curiously enough, Amboyna is one of them. Even if we assume that Johnson hoped to export part of his output to England, he must have found a fairly good sale on the continent, to enable him to continue his publishing activities over a long stretch of years. But was the number of Dutchmen who could read Dryden in his own language significant?3 Every student of the period is struck by the number of Englishmen who stayed in Holland for a longer or shorter time. Merchantadventurers, religious refugees, English troops, strolling players, all must have disseminated their vernacular language in the United Provinces. And yet contemporary writers and modern investigators give a very gloomy picture of the spread of English in the Netherlands in this period. The reviewer in the Bibliothèque Choisie (a Dutch periodical) says that the English poets are not so well known in Holland, because few men understand English well enough to read them4. The Nouvelles

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1 Le Misanthrope for September 1711.
2 Journal Littéraire X (1718).
3 Cf. H. Scherpbier, Milton in Holland, p. 86, on the knowledge of English in the United Provinces.
4 Volume XXI, review of Shaftesbury's Advice to an Author.
de la République des Lettres declares characteristically: ‘...les Anglois s’étant opiniâtrément attachés à leurs manières Gothiques & Barbares on peut faire bien du Chemin au delà de leurs Isles sans trouver trois personnes qui ayent une médiocre connaissance de la Langue Angloise’.

William Sewel in his famous English-Dutch dictionary of 1708 reproached his Dutch readers for being unable to believe that anything beautiful is to be found in English, ‘though it is second to none in richness of words and dignity of style’.

The best proof of the neglect of English in the United Provinces is the absence of schools where English was taught. Clearly people did not want their children to learn that language. Whereas Holland teemed with ‘French schools’, there was only one ‘Scottish school’ (in Rotterdam). This unsatisfactory state of affairs lasted throughout the eighteenth and the greater part of the nineteenth century. As late as 1822 an English schoolmaster at Amsterdam complained of deep-rooted prejudices against his native language. The Dutch said that they could make neither head nor tail of it; it was a language to poison dogs and cats; it was only the scum of other languages.

Indeed, Holland had to wait till 1863, when the new secondary school, the so-called H.B.S., was founded, before English was widely taught. Our conclusion must be that the number of Dutchmen who read Dryden in his own language was negligible, owing to ignorance of English and in spite of the fact that an Anglo-Dutch bookseller in the Hague was the first outside England who printed some of Dryden's plays on a large scale.

This conclusion is borne out by a search we made in the catalogues of more than a hundred Dutch private libraries sold between 1680 and 1750. The French books in these catalogues outnumber the English works by far; Dryden hardly occurs at all. Only Christiaan Huygens' library, sold in 1695, formed an exception. Though not a very big one, it contained The Indian Emperor, Troilus and Cressida, Oedipus, The...
Kind Keeper, The Duke of Guise and An Evening's Love. Of course Christiaan's visits to England and his membership of the Royal Society partly account for his interest in Dryden.

Though but few Dutchmen had an adequate knowledge of English, there was nevertheless in the last decades of the seventeenth and throughout the eighteenth century an ever increasing interest in books of English origin. Philosophical, historical, religious and scientific works came first to be translated and appreciated in this country and spread England's fame as a nation of profound thinkers. Hobbes, Locke, Boyle, Newton, Tillotson, these were the men who captured the fancy of the Dutch, whereas English literature almost completely failed to make an impression in seventeenth century Holland. Even Shakespeare and Milton had to wait rather long before their greatness came to be realized here. But in the eighteenth century English prose and poetry gradually began to be appreciated in the United Provinces, and interest, greatly stimulated by Justus van Effen and others, showed itself in an increasing demand for translations. Dryden, however, does not seem to have appealed very much to the Dutch reading public; a search for Dryden translations was disappointing; a Dutch version of The Tempest (as re-written by Dryden and Davenant), a prose translation and two nineteenth century metrical translations of Alexander's Feast were the meagre result. Perhaps it was presumptuous to have expected more; after all the bulk of Dryden's work - his plays - was not congenial to Dutch taste in the eighteenth century. The French drama was thought superior in almost

1 In the Boekzaal for March-April 1695 Rabus wrote without a blush, that English poets did not interest Dutchmen very much, as W. d'Avenant, J. Denham, J. Donne, B. Jonson, J. Milton, J. Oldham, W. Shakespeare, Ph. Sidney, E. Spenser and others. (review of Pope Blount's De Re Poëtica).

2 As to Shakespeare we may leave out of account such seventeenth century plays as Aran en Titus (Jan Vos), Veinzende Torquatus (Brandt) and Piramus and Thisbe (Gramsbergen). Though they contain many elements derived from Shakespeare, it is unlikely that the authors borrowed consciously and directly from the great English dramatist. As late as 1778 there seems to have been a sudden outburst of enthusiasm for Shakespeare translations. Between 1778 and 1782 fourteen plays were rendered into Dutch. Cf. J.A. Worp, Geschiedenis van het drama en van het toneel in Nederland, Groningen 1908, p. 333.

3 Cf. W.J.B. Pienaar, English Influences in Dutch Literature and Justus van Effen as Intermediary, Cambridge 1929.

4 To mention a few, Cato, Paradise Lost, Venice Preserved, Robinson Crusoe, Tale of a Tub, Gulliver's Travels.
every respect. As to Dryden's poems, they often contain too many allusions to persons and political affairs relatively or completely unknown on the continent¹ to arouse much interest outside England. Moreover, when at last English belles lettres began to be appreciated in Holland, it was to be expected that the interest would be mainly directed to contemporary authors (Addison, Steele, Defoe, Pope, Swift etc.), whereas Dryden belonged to a preceding generation and another age. Except Da Costa's rendering of *Alexander's Feast* the Dryden translations in Dutch have no literary value at all, though they may be of some interest to the student of comparative literature.

**Translations and an Adaptation.**

**a. The Tempest.**

In the municipal library of Haarlem there is a translation in manuscript of *The Tempest* as it was spoiled by Dryden and Davenant, under the title of *De Hartogh van Savoy*. It was re-discovered by W. Zuidema in 1905, who wrote a short notice about it in the *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsche Taal en Letterkunde*.² He presumed that this prose translation had been made for someone who intended to give a rhymed version but could not read English. This seems rather improbable, since the translator took pains to give a rhymed version of the passages that are also rhymed in the English text. Why would he have done so, if he wrote the translation for another who could do the job better than he? Moreover there are indications in the manuscript that it was actually used for a performance, judging from some notes in a different hand, evidently meant for the players. Haarlem had had a theatre since 1706; *The Tempest* may have been acted there ³.

It is no way surprising that the translation of an English play should have been discovered in the Haarlem library. In the beginning of the eighteenth century this town had a coterie of cultured young men who met to enjoy music and literature, and, contrary to what might have been expected in view of what has been said about the knowledge of English in Holland, several of them knew that language well, as van

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¹ Even *Absalom and Achitophel* was misunderstood in Holland. Van Effen thought that it was a scurrilous attack on the King.

² No. XXIV, 1905, p. 159.

³ Unfortunately there are no records extant of this theatre.
Zanten (who later translated *Paradise Lost*), Pieter Langendijk (who rendered Addison's *Cato* into Dutch), Merkman (their president, who had lived in London for a long time), and others. Perhaps the anonymous translator of *The Tempest* must be sought among them. He uses a very queer and inconsistent spelling and his grammar is at times faulty, but he knew English fairly well and follows the original quite accurately.

In English there were some editions of *The Tempest* that differed more or less from Dryden's original text, and it is possible to find out which of these editions our translator used. The play was first printed in England in 1670, and soon turned into an opera. This operatic version appeared in 1674 and differed considerably from the original text of 1670, but was nevertheless used in the famous Scott-Saintsbury edition of Dryden's works. We also find *The Tempest* in the above-mentioned collection of the best English plays, printed for the bookseller T. Johnson in The Hague. The text of this edition differs only in some minor points from the original of 1670. From the following comparison it will become clear that the translator used this so-called Hague-edition, as indeed might be expected.

The division of the acts into scenes is the same as in Johnson's reprint, whereas Dryden's first edition had no such division.

In act I ed. 1670 we find: ‘Man your seere-Capstorm’. This is a misprint for ‘jeer-capstorm’. The Hague-edition probably attempted an emendation and has *steer-capstorm*. The translator writes: ‘een man nae het roer’, evidently thinking that *steer-capstorm* had something to do with the rudder.

In act I the Hague-edition has an extra line, ‘Nay once I rain'd a shower of fire upon them’. The translator follows faithfully: ‘ja eens heb ik een schouwer van vuur op hun neer geestort’.

In act II Hippolito says: (ed. 1670) ‘You taught me not to fear him’.

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1 Hippolito is sometimes Hipolito and also Hipollito. The weakstressed syllables be-, ge-, re-, are consistently spelt bee-, gee-, ree-, so that we find words as reegeere, geeweest, etc.
2 In such lines as ‘Miranda en Dorinda, dogters van Prospero die nooit geen man gezien heb’.
4 Summers II, p. 158.
5 N.E.D., jeer = tackle for hoisting and lowering the lower yards.
6 Summers II, p. 178.
(Hague-edition) ‘Sir, you taught me not to fear him’, which is translated ‘Mijnheer hebt gij mij niet geeleerd....’.


In act V Prospero says: (ed. 1670) ‘She would control the Moon’. (Hague-edition) ‘She could control the Moon’. Translation: ‘.... dat zij de maen kon dwingen’.

From these small variants, faithfully followed in the translation, we may safely infer that the Hague-edition was used. This leads to the conclusion that the M.S. cannot be older than 1711, the date when T. Johnson began to sell his English plays. At the same time it proves that at least some copies of Johnson’s edition were purchased in Holland. Though the translator kept fairly close to his English text, he did not venture to give a rhymed version of the three songs of Ariel, which Dryden had the good sense to copy unaltered from Shakespeare:

‘Come unto these yellow sands...’,
‘Where the bee sucks, there suck I....’ and
‘Full fathom five thy father lies...’

The sailor's song in The Tempest is replaced by a Dutch sea-ditty which was perhaps not of the translator's invention, but an existing one:

Een jong maetroos
Sat voor een poos
Te vrije bij zijn kniertie
En nae zijn lust
Zijn lief hij kust
En blust zijn minnevriertie.
Maer zij vergeet
Zijn herten leet

1 ibidem p. 190.
2 ibidem p. 206.
3 ibidem p. 227.
4 My italics.
5 It is, however, not to be found in Scheurleer’s collection of sailor's songs in Van Varen en Vechten, Den Haag 1914.
There are one or two other places in which the translator tries to give a Dutch colouring to the play without deviating too much from the original. Trincalo's England becomes ‘Amsterdam’, ‘a very rocky coast’ is ‘het barre strand’. The preface, prologue and epilogue were understandably omitted, since they could scarcely be of interest to a Dutch audience.

b. *Alexander's Feast*.

Among Dryden's poems *Alexander's Feast* was no doubt one of the most suitable to find appreciation abroad. Its subject matter was easy to understand, because the story was well known from classical antiquity; moreover, Dryden's attempt ‘to make the sound an echo to the sense’ strongly appealed to poets and those who had an ear for metrical effects; Handel's musical setting of the poem also contributed to spreading its fame outside England. It had already been introduced in Holland in a French prose translation by Antoine Prévost (in a periodical called *Le Pour et Contre*, The Hague 1738).

In this country Da Costa seems to have been the first to be so much excited by what has been called ‘Dryden's immortal rag-time’, that he attempted a translation. Considering his age - the translation appeared in a collection of 1821 - it was no mean performance.

‘Het feest der overwinning klonk
   door Perziës verslagen steden,
   door ’t zegepralend heer betreden,
   waar voor Darius macht verzonk...’

Da Costa, of course, realized that the beauty of the poem chiefly depended on the variations of rhythm used to indicate various passions; he imitated Dryden in those changes of metre, sometimes turning from iambbs to trochees, (in section I and V) and from iambbs to anapests (in section VI) to describe rising fury and the spirit of revenge. A difficult passage in section II, the metamorphosis of Jove, of which Prévost had declared

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1 besinnen = zijn zinnen zetten op.
2 vervaeren = verdwijnen.
that it would tax the resources of any translator, was tackled by Da Costa in this way:

‘...’t Lied begint
van Jupiter, van minnesmart ontzind.
De liefde voerde hem op aarde:
de vlammende opperhuid eens draaks verbergt den Vorst
der goed! Hij wringt zich aan de borst
der Koningin, die Alexander baarde,
en lecht zijn heete liefdedorst,
en schept een beeldnis van zich-zelf, een Wereldkoning...’

If not poetry, it is at least a tolerable rendering of a difficult passage in Dryden.

On the whole Da Costa succeeded in preserving a praiseworthy restraint in a translation that might easily have degenerated into unreadable bombast. Some idiosyncrasies the reader has to put up with; Cecilia's invention of the organ is referred to as ‘verhemelen van het stof’. The creation of a verb ‘verhemelen’ is driving poetic licence rather too far. Nevertheless, Da Costa's translation is the work of a poet and as such to be preferred to the next attempt, the metrical translation of *Alexander's Feast* by J.P. Heye.

J.P. Heye (1809-1876) was the untiring promoter of music and singing in nineteenth century Holland, and a minor poet connected with the literary movement of Potgieter and *De Gids*. His translation of *Alexander's Feast* cannot be regarded as any proof of a revived interest in Dryden. Heye had Handel's musical setting of the poem in mind and as it was his conviction that a clear understanding of the poetical text was essential for the full enjoyment of great vocal compositions, he was eager to make a metrical translation for a Dutch audience.

In *Alexander's Feast* Dryden synthesized fluctuating emotion and violent action into praise of music; variations of rhythm and metre represent different passions. Whether it was solely Dryden's natural genius that enabled him to do so, or perhaps rather his study of the Classics and the rules laid down by their commentators (Isaäc Vossius in *De Poematum Cantu ac Viribus Rythmi*), will be discussed below. At any rate a true judgment of rhythm and metrical effects is often difficult

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and it would not be fair to blame Heye for the fact that his work fell short of Dryden's original poem. Moreover the translator had to reckon with the exigencies of Handel's music. No wonder that he failed in many respects. Only a verbal artist like Dryden himself could have undertaken such a translation with any chance of success. It is less pardonable, however, that Heye did not study the original poem more carefully. He chiefly relied on a German translation by Ramler. The Dutch reader will be surprised to find the line 'In Flow'r of Youth and Beauty's Pride' (section I of the poem) translated as ‘Als Hebé jong, als Hebé schoon’. It is Ramler's rendering ‘Wie Hebe jung, wie Hebe schön’.

In his preface Heye wrote that he knew three German translations and that he had exerted himself to draw from the most poetical reading, but above all from the English text, famous as it was for vigour and melodiousness. He evidently thought that the German translations were sometimes more poetical than Dryden's original. Still worse, there is no proof that he profited by reading Dryden's text. It is only through a mistake that we discover that he has read it at all, for ‘ghastly band’ in section VI is translated by ‘geestendrom’. Perhaps he thought that it was an improvement on Ramler, who understood the word ‘ghastly’ better. He translates: ‘Ha! welche bleiche Schar...’.

How much the poem lost in vigour and melodiousness by Heye's translation is clear from the following comparison. In section I of Dryden's poem we find two sets of triple rhymes, ‘around, bound, crown'd’ and ‘side, bride, pride’, followed by the triple repetition of the word ‘happy’ and of the phrase ‘none but the brave’. In Heye's rhyme there is hardly any symmetry or system at all. Indeed, after the first section he almost abandoned the struggle, only following Dryden's metre to the best of his ability. The often quoted line, ‘None but the Brave deserves the Fair’ is turned into an insignificant, ‘Den Held omzwee' der Schoonheid glans’. In the last line of section II his metre is faulty. ‘And seemst to shake the Spheres’ becomes ‘Van vrees, 't Heelal zich ontzet’.

1 Karl Wilhelm Ramler (1725-1798), sometimes called ‘der deutsche Horaz’, wrote and translated many odes.

2 The German text which Heye prints together with the Dutch translation is to all intents and purposes Ramler's with very few alterations, though he professes not to know the author.
The drinking-song in section III,

‘Bacchus Blessings are a Treasure,  
Drinking is the Soldier's Pleasure;  
Rich the Treasure,  
Sweet the Pleasure,  
Sweet is Pleasure after Pain’,

is in the Dutch translation hardly fitting for a soldier in a gay mood:

‘Is de Beker niet ons erfdeel?  
Heelt de Druif niet iedere wonde?  
Heerlijk Erfdeel - Zoete Balsem  
Na den Strijd’.

In section IV we find:

‘Driemaal verslaat hij ’s Vijands heer,  
Driemaal, wien hij verwon!’

It sounds like ordinary prose and cannot be called a metrical translation of

‘And thrice He routed all his Foes, and thrice  
he slew the slain’.

The five times repeated word ‘fallen’, suggestive of the melancholy event of King Darius' death in Dryden's poem,

‘Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,  
Fallen from his high Estate,...’.

becomes in Dutch:

‘Valt,  
Voor ’t woen des Noodlots valt’.

Perhaps Heye relied on Handel's music, to make up for the missing syllables and the lack of feeling.

The passage in section V on the vanity of glory gained in war is also very unsatisfactory in the translation. Dryden's fine lines,

‘War, he sung, is Toil and Trouble;  
Honour but an empty Bubble.  
Never ending, still beginning,  
Fighting still, and still destroying,  
If the World be worth thy Winning,  
Think, O think, it worth Enjoying’.

were rendered

‘Oorlogsheld! vergeet uw strijden.  
Eerzucht is der Onrust prikkel,'
It was in the conclusion that Heye kept fairly close to the original text in his praise of St. Cecilia:

‘Timotheus leg uw zangkroon af!
Neen! déél met Háár de krans!
Gij voerde ’s Menschen ziel omhóóg,
Zij de Englen naar deze Aard!’

The Dutch translation, defective as it was, served its turn when Handel's oratorio Alexander's Fest was performed in Rotterdam on 9 Jan. 1866, conducted by the well-known musician Bargiel. It was sung in German, but the listeners had text-books with Heye's translation. What Dryden himself considered as the best of his poems, had reached eighteenth century Holland in a French translation. In 1866 a Dutch audience heard it sung in German, though they had already two Dutch translations at their disposal. It was not until the twentieth century that an appreciable number of Dutchmen could read it in Dryden's own language.


In 1793 Bilderdijk published Ridder Sox, an adaptation from Voltaire's Céqui plaît aux Dames (1763), who in his turn had borrowed the subject matter from Dryden's version of The Wife of Bath's Tale. Thus Ridder Sox may be considered an offspring of Dryden's Fables Ancient and Modern. It is doubtful, however, if Bilderdijk ever consulted the English source. At any rate there are no characteristic traces in Ridder Sox that remind us rather of Dryden's version than of Voltaire's;

1 Caecilia, Algemeen Muzikaal Tijdschrift van Nederland, 1866, p. 14.
2 Letter to his printer Tonson, Dec. 1697, ‘I am glad to heare from all Hands, that my Ode is esteemed the best of all my poetry, by all the Town: I thought so myself when I writ it but being old, I mistrusted my own Judgment’.
3 Prévost's in a Dutch periodical, Le Pour et Contre, The Hague 1738.
5 A.C. Hunter, Le 'Conte de la femme de Bath' en français au XVIII siècle. (Revue de Littérature Comparée, 1929). Hunter proves that Céqui plaît aux Dames does not go back to Chaucer, but to Dryden's Fables Ancient and Modern.
Bilderdijk followed the changes that Voltaire introduced in the tale\(^1\). That is why *Ridder Sox* can hardly be adduced as testimony of Dryden's influence on Bilderdijk.

In another of Bilderdijk's adaptations, *Koekeloer*, some have detected positive influence of Dryden's *The Cock and the Fox*. W. de Hoog\(^2\) suggests that Bilderdijk consulted Dryden ‘continually’ for *Koekeloer*, which he tries to prove from lines 281, 282:

> ‘En naderhand, wel meer dan twintig keeren,  
> Zat hij ze nog, bij poosjens, in de veëren’.

This, says de Hoog, was certainly derived from Dryden. If, however, we compare Bilderdijk's lines with the corresponding passages in Dryden and Chaucer, we find that both have the same couplet:

Chaucer, *The Nun's Priest's Tale*, lines 356, 357,

> ‘He fethered Pertelote twenty tyme,  
> And trad hire eke as ofte, er it was pryme’.

Dryden in *The Cock and the Fox*, lines 437, 438,

> ‘Then often feather'd her with wanton Play,  
> And trod her twenty times e'er prime of Day’\(^3\).

Clearly Bilderdijk might have derived his lines from Chaucer, as is very likely indeed\(^4\).

Other points of resemblance with Dryden's adaptation are few and far between. Chaucer in *The Nun's Priest's Tale*, line 57, had written, ‘But swich a joye was it to here hem synge’, whereas Bilderdijk's ‘Maar ’t was een lust, wanneer hij ’s ochtends vroeg...’ (line 53) seems to pair with Dryden's ‘But oh! what Joy it was to hear him sing’ (line 87). Chaucer's line 164, ‘Oon of the gretteste auctour that men rede...’, is rendered by Dryden as ‘An ancient Author, equal with the best...’

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1. The chief changes introduced by Voltaire and followed by Bilderdijk were,
   a. The old hag addressed her talk against pride and in favour of poverty not to the knight after their marriage, but to the ladies at court.
   b. Walking to the hovel, the woman beguiles the time by story-telling.
   c. The knight and the hag have supper in her hut.
3. Dr. Mak's note on the denounced passage is confusing. He says: ‘De “twintig keren” (regel 281) zijn bij Dryden honderd keren’, which is not true. Dryden also wrote ‘twenty times’ here, though he has ‘a hundred times’ in line 70.

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and by Bilderdijk as ‘Een oud' authour schrijft immers van twee knapen...’ (line 169). But such small variants cannot be called conclusive evidence of Bilderdijk's indebtedness to Dryden, since they may be purely accidental. There is no reason therefore to doubt Bilderdijk's own statement that he had imitated Chaucer in Koekeloer; at any rate, his library contained a Chaucer edition 1687. Whether Bilderdijk also consulted Dryden's version remains an open question. There were certainly no copies of Dryden's poems in his library at the time of his death, but, as Da Costa informs us in the catalogue of the book auction, Bilderdijk had lost many books in his exile and wanderings in Europe. Anyhow, one or more of Dryden's critical essays had drawn Bilderdijk's attention right enough, as can be proved from his preface to De Ondergang van de Eerste Wareld. Here Bilderdijk discusses the difficulty to find suitable ‘machines’, those supernatural agencies thought to be an indispensable element for a true epic poem. The Ancients had their gods to interrupt the natural course of events in their epics; but angels and demons, or even God Himself, as conceived by Christians, can never replace the heathen deities. They are so far removed from human existence and so incomprehensible that they fail to inspire sufficient interest in a heroic poem. Bilderdijk then continues to say,

‘Drijdens Beschermgeesten der Koninkrijken en Volken zijn even zeer krachteloos om belang te verwekken, en schoon ik niet zou willen ontkennen dat men daar eenig voordeel uit trekken kan, zy deelen misschien in de ongelegenheiten van die allen’.

It is to be expected that these ‘Guardian Angels of Monarchies and Nations’ are to be found in one of Dryden's critical essays. The question of ‘machines’ in epic poetry was the subject of lively discussions at the end of the seventeenth century; Dryden dealt with it in A Discourse con-

1 My italics.
2 The catalogue for the sale of Bilderdijk's library, 1832, p. 5: The works of our ancient, learned and excellent English poet Jeffrey Chaucer. Lond. 1687. (The last of the Speght editions was of 1687).
3 ‘Onze Christelijke begrippen van God en Geesten... zijn te zeer afwijkende en onbegrijpelijk voor ons menschen, om ons wederkeerige en genoegzame deelneming in te boezemen’.
4 Dryden's Guardian Angels of Monarchies and Nations are equally impotent to arouse interest and though I would not deny that sometimes these may be of some advantage to the poet, they partake of the deficiencies of all (supernatural beings invented by Christian poets).
cerning the Original and Progress of Satire (Ker II, pp. 32-34). Bilderdijk's preface is at times strongly reminiscent of Dryden's reasoning in this Discourse. Christians, Dryden argues, cannot boast that their religion has furnished them with any such machines as have made the strength and beauty of ancient poetry. But then he ventures to make a suggestion of his own to replace the heathen deities in epics; he wants poets to look for supernatural agencies in the book of Daniel,

‘The perusing of one chapter in the prophecy of Daniel, and accommodating what there they find with the principles of Platonic philosophy...would have made the ministry of angels as strong an engine, for the working up heroic poetry, in our religion, as that of the Ancients has been to raise theirs by all the fables of their gods...’.

In the book of Daniel Dryden had discovered that,

‘...there are guardian angels, appointed by God Almighty,...for the protection and government of cities, provinces, kingdoms and monarchies’.

He advised his fellow-poets to use these guardian angels as the supernatural agencies in their heroic poetry. Here is no doubt the origin of Bilderdijk's reference to Dryden. Bilderdijk, however, would not follow Dryden's advice, but preferred to find his ‘machines’ in the world before the Flood, when the giants, though of divine origin, were human enough to arouse interest in the reader.

**Dryden in the Dutch periodicals and some other references.**

What the Dutch actually knew about Dryden, they owed to their flourishing periodical press. Dozens of literary journals appeared towards the end of the seventeenth and in the beginning of the eighteenth century, containing announcements and reviews of new books in Holland and abroad. They were mostly written in French. The comparative freedom of the press in the United Provinces enabled reviewers and printers to publish what they thought fit; indefatigable French refugees

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1 Later on Dryden referred to this passage in a letter to Dennis, published in 1696, ‘But the Guardian Angels of Monarchies and Kingdoms are not to be touched by every hand: a man must be deeply conversant in the Platonic philosophy to deal with them’.

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and other people attracted by the religious toleration in the Netherlands, such as Bayle and le Clerc, filled volume after volume. Though most reviewers professed that the ‘belles lettres’ would have their constant attention, these magazines are somewhat disappointing as regards contemporary literature; the reviews are, for the most part, concerned with religion, science, philosophy and history. Consequently references to Dryden are scanty, but nevertheless interesting, and at least they made his name known in Holland. The epithets ‘fameux’ and ‘célèbre’ are never absent, but their criticism is nearly always unfavourable. And this is undoubtedly an additional reason why Dryden's works are rarely found in the libraries of eighteenth century Dutchmen.

A well-known periodical in the vernacular was *De Boekzaal*, started by one Rabus in 1692. Apart from short announcements of newly printed books of Dryden's, we find the first reference to this poet in the May-June number for 1695. Here Rabus reviews Pope Blount's *De Re Poëtica*, of which he says:

> 'd' Oudheid der Poezy treed eerst voor den dag, opgepronkt met het zeggen van den vermaarden Engelschen Dichter Mr. Dryden (want Britsche vernuften komen hier meest te pas) dat in het menschdom, zelf het allerwoeste, de zaden der digtkunde zyn ingeplant'.

A few years later *De Boekzaal* was continued by Willem Sewel, the grandson of a Brownist refugee, and although he completely identified himself with his Dutch environment, he still had a good knowledge of English. In the number for 1705 on page 275 he discusses English poetry. The triplets, it seems, were something of a thorn in his flesh. He says:

> 'het is nu al een goed getal van jaaren herwaards de mode geweest, driemaal achter één 't zelfde rym te laaten klinken; en opdat men die fraaiheyd niet ongemerkt zoude voorbygaan, zetten ze achter die drie regels altoos een haakje, en pronk ermee als iets moois.'

1 *De Boekzaal* (The Library) had a long life. Sometimes under a slightly different title, it ran into 200 volumes.

2 ‘First the antiquity of Poetry comes to light, embellished by the saying of the famous English poet Mr. Dryden (for British geniususes occur most in this book) that in mankind, even in the most savage part of it, the seeds of poetry were implanted’. (Dryden said so in *A Discourse concerning the Original and Progress of Satire*, 1693, ‘Mankind, even the most barbarous, have the seeds of poetry implanted in them’. Ker II, p. 45).
Indien dit nu geschiedde na een vast en gezet getal van regelen, 't was nog iets; maar dat komt alleenlyk naar 't valt..."1.

As an example he quotes one of Dryden's triplets:

‘Millions of opening mouths to Fame belong;
And every mouth is furnish'd with a tongue
And round with list'ning ears the flying Plague is hung"2.

In these lines was more for Sewel to find fault with. His Dutch readers had to be informed that ‘hung’ rhymes with ‘tongue’ but not with ‘belong’. Ironically he adds: ‘Dit puykje....is van den Engelschen Hoofdpoeët Dryden; zoud het dan niet goed weezen?’3 Sewel admits that there were English poets who had expressed lofty and significant thoughts in forceful and beautiful words, but they could improve their poetry very much and their verses would flow more smoothly, if only they would learn from the Dutch. But as a rule the English are unwilling to learn from foreigners,

‘Doch ik weet wel, dat het een aangeboorene eygenschap der Engelschen is, ongaern van Uytheemschen te willen leeren; en hierom zullen zy ’t my moogelyk slechten dank weeten, dat ik bestaa hen te berispen.’4

The same superior standpoint is to be found in Sewel's dictionary5. ‘To fill up an empty page or two’ he adds a short essay (in English) at the end of the book. With the Amsterdam literary society Nil Volentibus Arduum in mind, he reproaches the English poets for their lack of concentrated effort to set standards for English verse. He says:

1 ‘For a good many years it has been the fashion (in England) to use the same rhyme in three consecutive lines and to prevent that such a fine thing would pass unnoticed they always put a brace after it...if it only happened after a fixed number of lines, it would be something; but it occurs only by chance’.
2 They are lines 263-265 of the translation of the fourth book of the Aeneis. (Guy Montgomery, Concordance to the Poetical Works of John Dryden, Los Angeles 1957, is an indispensable guide for locating quotations).
3 ‘This fine specimen...has been written by the chief of the English poets, Dryden, and would it not therefore be good?’
Instead of indulging in a sneer, Sewel should have tried to refute Dryden's defence of the triplets, which occurs in the same work as the quoted lines, dedication of the Aeneis, Ker II, p. 228.
4 ‘But I know that it is an inborn characteristic of the English to be unwilling to learn from foreigners; that's why they will probably not be grateful to me that I venture to reprove them...’.
5 W. Sewel, A Large Dictionary English and Dutch, Amsterdam 1708.
‘If their famous Dryden, who was indeed a transcendent Wit, and who was pleased to call the Dutch heavy and gross-witted fellows, would have broken the ice, as our Vondel did with us, the thing might have been effected’.

In this short essay Sewel takes up his favourite subject again, arrogantly stating that English poetry could achieve a higher perfection, if in imitation of the Dutch, the poets would be more precise. They should not make ‘feast’ rhyme with ‘guest’, ‘well’ with ‘meal’, ‘proud’ with ‘load’, ‘ease’ with ‘palaces’, ‘praise’ with ‘Hercules’, ‘heir’ with ‘theater’, ‘where’ with ‘vinegar’, ‘him’ with ‘crime’, ‘clean’ with ‘green’2, ‘live’ with ‘drive’, ‘return’ with ‘born’. As Dryden is the only English poet mentioned in this short essay, we may expect that Sewel had culled this collection of imperfect rhymes from him. And indeed, with the exception of ‘proud - load’, they all occur in Dryden's poetry. The strange combinations ‘ease - palaces’, ‘praise - Hercules’, ‘heir - theater’, ‘where - vinegar’ are to be found in the translation of the third satire of Juvenal, so that we may safely conclude that Sewel had read this poem carefully, and no wonder, since he was interested in Juvenal. He had translated the thirteenth satire into Dutch six years before Dryden edited the translation of Juvenal.

But to return to the periodicals. De Boekzaal is of no further interest for our purpose after Sewel gave up the editorship; the index for the volumes 1715-1759 makes no mention of Dryden's name. Our search for Drydeniana in Holland must now extend to the periodicals printed there but written in French. These journals, though they were also circulated abroad, were of course primarily intended for Dutch readers.

1 This is a rare instance of a Dutchman knowing of Dryden's disdain for Holland. Sewel must have read the dedication of Examen Poeticum, where the passage occurs.

2 We may wonder why Sewel objects to the rhyme ‘clean-green’. The explanation is to be found in his English Grammar, attached to his dictionary, ‘EA. Wordt uytgesprooken als EE, gelijk...clean; lees tleen’ p. 4. EE represents the long close monophthong [e:]; in the Dutch grammar, also attached to the dictionary, we find the counterpart statement: ‘EE. Is always pronounced as EA in English, as in Zee...read Zea’ p. 38.

3 swell - meal, translation of the third book of Lucretius, lines 190, 191. him - crime, Sigismonda and Guiscardo, lines 278, 279. born - return, ibidem lines 557, 558. drive - live, Prologue spoken at the opening of the New House, lines, 38, 39. Feast - guest occurs no less than 13 times in Dryden's poetry.

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‘Ce genre de Poesie (blank verse)... est moins gouté dans nos Provinces’ says one of them. Another, the Bibliothèque Universelle, names the towns and booksellers where this periodical was for sale. They are all Dutch except one, ‘à Londres chez S. Smith’. Many volumes of these journals were to be found in Dutch private libraries between 1700 and 1750. A choice had to be made out of a veritable profusion of French titles, so that our search was limited to such as were widely read at the time. One of the oldest French periodicals printed in Holland, the Histoire des Ouvrages des Savans, sometimes mentions Dryden’s name. As early as May 1694 Love Triumphant is announced, ‘une Tragedie de Mr. Dryden l'un des meilleurs Poëtes d'Angleterre’. The editor, Henri Basnage de Bauval, refugee, lawyer and critic, tried to give courteous and impartial book reviews. In the number for May 1698, where he announces The Mock Astrologer, he cannot refrain from giving an example of Dryden's profaneness, citing part of a dialogue between two devils. When one of them sneezes, the other says politely, God bless you. The former replies that he had caught a cold because he was not accustomed to being removed from the fire for a long time.

The Nouvelles de la République des Lettres is of some interest in connection with Dryden's death. ‘La Parque n'eut pas plutot coupé le filet fatal de sa vie, que ses chers Confreres se préparèrent à verser des torrens de larmes sur son Tombeau’, we read in the number for September 1700. Then follow titles of obituary poems and we are advised to read A Description of Mr. Dryden's Funeral. The editor, Jacques Bernard, a Huguenot cleric, informs his readers that Dryden and Milton surpass the ancients, because true religion is far better able to establish harmony between reason and the passions than pagan beliefs. One wonders if he had read Dryden's plays.

The first criticism of Dryden in a Dutch paper on a more extensive scale occurs in the Journal Littéraire 1717, pp. 157-216, in an article which was ‘of paramount importance for the spread of a knowledge of

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1 Journal Littéraire, 1730, p. 319. My italics?
2 Dryden actually read this journal. This will be discussed under Jean le Clerc.
3 S.A. Krijn examined 100 catalogues of libraries sold between 1700 and 1750. From her account in De Nieuwe Taalgids XI, 1917. p. 161, we learn what periodicals were the most popular in Holland.
4 Spelling of the author Bernard.
5 The Nouvelles for January 1703.
English literature’. This essay bears no signature, but the writer has been identified by Pienaar as Justus van Effen. Among his co-editors van Effen was indeed the most suitable person to write this article, which appeared during his stay in England. Judging from the style and the parallel drawn between Shakespeare and Vondel, which is in keeping with van Effen's views, Pienaar did not hesitate to ascribe the authorship to him. Van Effen called his essay, *Dissertation sur la poesie Angloise*. He touches briefly on the difference between the French and the English language; the former is much impoverished by the purists, the latter far more copious and energetic. As to poetry he declares that the French poets are sometimes the slaves of rhyme and he hopes that in future some of them will imitate the English and try blank verse in poems of great length. Such predilection for certain aspects of English language and literature is quite remarkable for a gallicised Dutchman in the eighteenth century. When Dryden comes up for discussion, van Effen says:

‘Dryden...avoit encore des talens extraordinaires pour la Satyre, qu'il gatoit tout de même par une malignité odieuse, & par une dégoutante obscénité. Les moeurs licencieuses de la Cour de Charles II ne fournissaient que trop de matière au libertinage de cette plume, qui a bien osé jeter tout son venin sur ce Prince, sur ses favoris & ses favorites, sans prendre d'autre précaution que de cacher Charles, Monmouth & Londres, sous les noms de David, d'Absalon & de Jerusalem. Il y a dans cette pièce (*sic*) du feu infiniment, des pensées fort neuves, mais en recompense bien de l'obscénité & de profanation. L'on y voit un portrait d'une affreuse force, des infamies d'une Cour qui ressemblait fort peu à celle de David, & par consequent qui ne pouvoit gueres être déguisée sous les noms allegoriques dont l'Auteur avoit affecté de se servir’ (spelling van Effen's).

3 According to van Effen, Vondel was an untutored romantic genius.
4 It is not clear, why professor Robertson says in the above-mentioned article that Van Effen regarded the rhymeless verse of the English as no better than good prose. On the contrary, Van Effen writes, ‘... dans des Ouvrages de longue haleine, ils (English poets) se contentent de la mesure en renonçant à la rime, cequi soulage & le Poète & le Lecteur, en epargnant de la peine à l'un, & de l'ennui à l'autre. Il seroit à souhaiter que les François voulussent imiter une hardiesse si raisonnable’.

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It seems that van Effen missed the point in Absalom and Achitophel, considering it as a satire on a licentious King and his court. There is more evidence that his criticism of Dryden was faulty and unfair; it is even doubtful if he sufficiently realized Dryden's prominent position among seventeenth century men of letters, once calling him ‘a contemporary of the Earl of Rochester’. Van Effen returns to Dryden when he discusses the comedies. They are farces full of spirit, he says, but the plots are confused, the characters ill sustained and too coarse and licentious, while poetic justice is seldom observed in them. Moreover the English steal unscrupulously from the French.

‘C'est comme en agi M. Dryden, dans sa Comédie apellée Le Chevalier gâte-tout ou la fausse innocence; ce sont deux Comédies en une, dont la moitié est à fort peu de chose près l'Etourdi de Molière’.

Van Effen repeats the same theme, when he turns to the tragedies,

‘Dryden un des plus estimez dans le genre dramatique ose traiter de crème fouettée les Ouvrages de Corneille même, et cependant on n'a qu' à confronter son Oedipe avec celui de ce Poète François, pour voir que tout cequ'il y de plus beau est pillé, et même que des scenes entieres y sont copiées par une traduction literale’.

Here van Effen is on the wrong track again; he merely repeats what Dryden's calumniators had written, in disregard of the preface to the play, where Dryden (and his co-operator Lee) criticize Corneille and honestly avow that they had followed Sophocles ‘as close as possibly they could’. Indeed, later investigators have shown that only eleven lines may have been translated from Corneille against 250 from Sophocles.

Though van Effen did not fail to stress some better traits of Dryden's art, his extraordinary talent for satire, his new ideas, his remarkably powerful portraiture, yet his criticism was on the whole far from laudatory and sometimes beside the mark. His essay is nevertheless unique, also because it contains one of the earliest introductions to Dryden's work in the cosmopolitan literature of Europe.

Another and important means by which van Effen promoted interest in Dryden throughout Holland and the Continent, was his translation

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1 Cf. Werner Bentzien, Studien zu Drydens Oedipus, Rostock 1910.

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of *The Spectator* (begun in 1714). Here, of course, he could not give opinions of his own, but the references to and quotations from Dryden in this periodical, incoherent as they are, gave educated people in Europe some impression of Dryden's importance. Such was the popularity of van Effenn's French translation of *The Spectator* that a Dutch version became necessary, evidently meant for less educated Dutchmen. The task fell to a capable translator of English books, Pierre Leclercq. Again we find references to Dryden, but now in the vernacular. We read about his aversion to the unnatural use and maltreatment of words in acrostics, illustrated by lines 205-208 of *Mac Flecknoe*. Dryden's definition of Wit as 'a propriety of thoughts and words' is criticized with the common sense remark that Euclid's handbook might be considered as the best literature in the world, if this definition were complete.

Paragraphs of Dryden's dedication of the *Aeneis* are quoted to prove his preference of Virgil to Ovid and his disdain for 'mob readers'. Attention is drawn to the popularity of *Absalom and Achitophel* and some lines of *The Cock and the Fox* (lines 455-460) have been translated into eighteenth century Dutch:

(De Heer Dryden doet de Haan in zijne Fabel spreken):

‘Toen draaayende om zyn Hen, zeide hy tot haar, Myn waarde
Aanzie den blyden staat der vruchteteelende aarde;
Hoe nu de lente zich met kruidt en bloemen cier;
’t Gevogelt in de lucht van vreugde tereelict:
Dit alles is voor ons, voor ons alleen geschapen;
En ik zie met vermaak my van den Mensch na-aapen,
Hem juist gelyk als ik, recht op twee beenen gaan,
Hoovaardig op den tredt en gangh van eenen Haan’.

Van Effenn's efforts to bring English belles-lettres within the intellectual horizon of the Dutch soon began to bear fruit. A fresh impetus was given to the growing interest in English literature when the erratic French

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1 According to Robertson in *M.L.R.* I, p. 316, the most important contributions to the introduction of English literature on the Continent were 1. Van Effenn's French translation of *The Spectator* 1714, 2. Van Effenn's Dissertation on English poetry in the *Journal Littéraire*, 1717, 3. Mural't *Lettres sur les Anglois*, 1725.
2 Most, but not all. Van Effenn translated about 500 out of more than 600 articles of *The Spectator*.
3 Preface to *Albion and Albanius*, Ker I, p. 270.
4 Ker II, pp. 193, 194, 223, 224.
priest Antoine Prévost started a new periodical in The Hague, *Le Pour et Contre* (1733). It bore the subtitle *Ouvrage périodique d'un goût nouveau*. What is meant by this ‘goût nouveau’ is partly explained by his announcement,

‘Il faut commencer par se défaire du préjugé national, & croire un moment que le bon goût de la Poésie n'est pas borné à la France’.

Small wonder that English prose and poetry play a conspicuous part in this periodical and that Glorious John was to turn up sooner or later. In Tome X (1738) we come across a prose translation of *Alexander's Feast*.

‘Veut-on lire un chef-d'oeuvre de nos Voisins, & goûter du moins une partie du plaisir qu'il a causé dans sa Langue naturelle?... La Piece que je publie est du célèbre Dryden’. (Prévost's spelling).

Then follows *Fête d'Alexandre ou Le Pouvoir de la Musique* in prose. In a postscript he summarizes the contents. The poet makes the soul pass through various degrees of violent passions. Some parts had been difficult for him to translate, for instance the metamorphosis of Jove, but he hopes that some poet will undertake a verse translation. It would justify the labour of any hero of the Parnassus.

Sometimes it would seem as if Prévost speaks over the heads of the Dutch to his own countrymen in France. Yet the ‘advertissements’ leave no doubt that he relied on a large reading public in the United Provinces; the periodical was only for sale in the principal towns of this country. Thus eighteenth century Holland became acquainted with Dryden's famous ode, be it in a French translation. It was not until the next century that Dutch versions of the same ode appeared.

Such periodicals as the *Bibliothèque Angloise* (1717-1728) and the *Memoires Littéraires de la Grande Bretagne* (1720-1724) offer disappointingly little concerning Dryden, in spite of their promising titles. Practically the only item is an anecdote of very doubtful authenticity in the *Bibliothèque Angloise* IV, p. 540. A friend of Milton's (in a note indicated as Mr. Dryden, fameux Poëte), having read *Paradise Lost*, said to him: ‘It seems clear to me from reading your poem that you are an Arian’. ‘Pray, don't speak about it’, answered Milton, ‘for the clergy have not yet found it out’.

Even Pierre Bayle, the greatest of the polyhistors in Holland and

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1 Translations by Da Costa (1821) and Heye (1866).
founder of the oldest Dutch periodical\(^1\), is silent about Dryden in his journals, and there is only a short reference to Dryden in his famous *Dictionnaire Historique et Critique*\(^2\), under Milton, where he discusses *Paradise Lost*. Bayle says:

> ‘Le fameux Poëte Dryden en a tiré une Piece de Théâtre, qui fut extrêmement applaudie. Le même Dryden admirant le Poème du Paradis perdu a jugé que la Grece, l'Italie, & l'Angleterre on produit trois Poètes en differens Siecles: Homère, Virgile & Milton: que le premier excelle par la sublimité des penseés; & le second par la majesté, & que la nature ne pouvant aller au delà, avoir formé le troisieme par l'assembleage des perfecions des deux autres. C'est le sujet d'une Epigramme de Mr. Dryden insérée par Mr. Toland à la page 129 de la Vie de Milton’.

And then in a note, as if to spare his readers a disappointment: ‘Elle est en Anglois’.

In spite of occasional announcements of Dryden's works in the Dutch periodicals\(^3\), our conclusion as to his influence in Holland must be that he was little known and read here. English was to the great majority of the Dutch a ‘barbarous’ language. Though English books on philosophy, religion and science were appreciated and often translated, the time had not yet come for English literature as a whole to find acclaim in Holland. This was to change through the mediation of Justus van Effen and others; their comment on Dryden, however, was mainly adverse; licentiousness, profaneness and plagiarism were laid to his charge. This may be one of the reasons why he was so little known in the United Provinces, for where there was praise for English works in the periodicals, this was often followed by translations and imitations (*Paradise Lost*, *Cato*, *Tale of a Tub* etc.) Dryden's influence in Holland was less than in France\(^4\), the country that was considered as the interpreter between England and mankind. But in this process Dutch men of letters and Dutch printers formed an important link; ‘they gave France not merely

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1. The *Nouvelles de la Rép. des Lettres* (1684).
2. Third edition, Rotterdam 1720.
the science of Newton and the philosophy of Locke but by a constant process of
diffusion a whole range of the best in English literature’. Dryden was also included
in this ‘process of diffusion’; the Dutch periodicals - mostly written in French - in
their sparse critiques and references made his name known on the Continent before
such authors as Voltaire, Prévost and de Mural did so in France.

Having found that Dryden failed to make an impression in letter loving Holland
when he had reached the pinnacle of his fame (the end of the seventeenth and the
beginning of the eighteenth century), we cannot expect much of importance in
subsequent ages, when other great names superseded Dryden's in capturing the fancy
of those Dutchmen that felt attracted to England's literature. Even Rijklof van Goens
(1748-1810), who had an amazing knowledge of European literature and was
moreover half British by birth, does not seem to mention Dryden in his works², though
Dryden's poems were in his library³. But Willem de Clercq, also a promoter of
comparative studies in nineteenth century Holland, refers a few times to Dryden in
his unpublished memoirs⁴. Some notes jotted down in his diary - they can hardly be
considered serious criticism - are quite interesting as an illustration of what literary
minded Dutchmen thought about Dryden. De Clercq approached Dryden's poetry
without prejudice; there is no evidence that literary historians had already biased
his mind. It was the pleasure he took in reading Pope that induced him to take up
Dryden with great expectations. In 1812 he began to read Dryden systematically but
was very much disappointed (fort trompé dans mon attente). Starting from the funeral
ode on Cromwell and Astraea Redux he was at once annoyed by the gross flattery
in these poems. ‘Ceci ne donne pas une idée avantageuse de l'auteur’.

Next he read Annus Mirabilis, where Dryden's disdain for the Dutch hurt his
patriotic feelings and the description of the Four days' battle

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1 Charles Wilson, Holland and Britain, p. 66.
2 Cf. P.J.C. de Boer, Rijklof Michael van Goens 1748-1810 en zijn verhouding tot de literatuur
van West Europa, Amsterdam 1938.
3 Original Poems and Translations by Mr. Dryden, Lond. 1762 and Fables Ancient and Modern
by J. Dryden, Glasgow 1752 (nos. 6015-6018 in the Catalogue fait sur un plan nouveau
systématique et raisonné d'une Bibliothèque de littérature, Utrecht 1776.)
4 For the text of these references to Dryden in de Clercq's unpublished memoirs I am indebted
to Miss. M.H. Schenkeveld, who is writing a study on de Clercq.
as an English victory offended his historical sense. But there is also a note of positive appreciation when he admits, ‘Il y a de beaux morceaux sur l'incendie de Londres’.

*Absalom and Achitophel* is, still according to de Clercq, as cold as ice; *The Medall* and *The Hind and the Panther* simply baffled him; he frankly confesses that he does not understand these poems. The latter seems to him an allegory on the quarrels and intrigues of the court! ‘Diablement ennuyeux à lire’ is his verdict on the *Prologues*, but among the *Epistles* there are some full of spirit and poetry and a few *Elegies* are rather nice (assez jolies).

In one week he read as far as the *Fables*. He seems to have appreciated *Palamon and Arcite* and *Sigismonda and Guiscardo*, but confined himself to narrating the contents without comment. Sixteen years later he tried to occupy himself with Dryden once more (5-8 Febr. 1828), especially with *The Hind and the Panther* and *Annus Mirabilis*, but again they disappointed him as poetry and as history.

If such was the opinion of a man who had more than an ordinary interest in European literature, we should not be surprised to find that references to Dryden in Dutch literature up to our own times are scanty.

Apart from Bilderdijk, Da Costa and Heye, already mentioned, the poet Cornelis Loots (1765-1834) devoted a few lines to Dryden in his poetry. In a patriotic effusion, called *De Overwinning der Nederlanders bij Chattam* (*sic*) he described the spectacle of the burning English men-of-war on the river Medway; he continued, evidently referring to *Annus Mirabilis*:

‘Grijp, Dryden! grijp de lier, gesnaard om laf te vleien;
Zing, kruipend voor uw' vorst, gelijk gij eenmaal deedt,
De glorie van zijn volk, daar’t felle slagting leedt;
Zing thans: Iö triumf! tree voort aan ‘t hoofd der reijen.
Maar neen! op ‘t zien der vloot, vergaan in d'ergsten brand,
Glipt straks de valsche lier u uit de ontstelde hand’.

This quotation is exceptional. Dryden's anti-Dutch feelings and activities are hardly ever referred to in our country's literature. Yet they may at least partly account for that marked difference which exists in the appreciation of Dryden and Pope. The latter found ample praise and admiration from Dutch men of letters; his spiritual father Dryden was neglected or referred to as the base flatterer, the plagiarist and the licentious dramatist.
Chapter III
The influence of Dutch philologists on Dryden

Whereas Dryden was scarcely read in Holland and certainly had very little influence there, the reciprocal impact of Dutch learning in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries on Dryden was by no means negligible. In his works there are a good many traces of the influence of Dutch scholars, Erasmus, Joannes Secundus, Daniël Heinsius, Nicolaas Heinsius, Gerard Vossius, Isaäc Vossius, Franciscus Dousa, Cnippingius, Graevius, Clericus, and probably Franciscus Junius.

It is conspicuous that all these people were best known under latinized surnames. Nearly all of them were members of that cultural unit, often referred to as the 'Republic of Letters', a cosmopolitan community of scholars, characterized by a profound knowledge of the classics, a common language, Latin, and often a certain aloofness from contemporary politics and quarrels between the nations. Many of these scholars moved easily from one university in Europe to another; they found the same intellectual climate wherever they chose to take up their abode. There are numerous examples that they were more or less exempted from the ordinary laws of nations. An interesting case falling within the scope of this study is that of Isaäc Vossius, mentioned by Dryden in his Preface to Albion and Albanius. In 1673, when Vossius' native country was involved in a life-and-death struggle against England and France, he dedicated a new book to lord Arlington¹, one of the chief promoters of that war. And although on May 12th 1673 he became a Canon of Windsor, there is no evidence that he was ever considered as a traitor to his country.

As the language of these scholars was chiefly Latin or French and their way of life sometimes more cosmopolitan than Dutch, the question arises whether we may consider them as representatives of Dutch cultural life. There are indeed good reasons for doing so. Holland had become one of the chief centres of classical learning in Europe; the newly founded university of Leyden attracted the best scholars from other countries.

¹ Evelyn's Diary, 16 March 1673, ‘I dined at my Lord Arlington's. Here was also the learned Isaäc Vossius’.

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and this was made possible by the liberality of the industrious burghers. Secondly, Dryden treats these philologists as a separate group, though it must be admitted that he does not do so in the most flattering terms. For him they are the Dutch commentators, pedantic, vain Dutch prefacers, dull and unpalatable. Yet he tacitly admits to have benefited from their reliable information,

‘... and not to follow the Dutch commentators always, may be forgiven to a man who thinks them, in the general, heavy grosswitted fellows, fit only to gloss on their own dull poets. But I leave a further satire on their wit, till I have a better opportunity to show how much I love and honour them’.

The final clause of this paragraph can hardly be else than irony pure and simple, unless it should be considered as one of those unexpected turns in Dryden's prose, as an afterthought, when he remembered with gratitude what he owed to Dutch philologists. A satire on their wit need not be inconsistent with praise for other qualities. But we had better not press this point too much, for there is little evidence to presume genuine admiration in Dryden for Dutch scholars. But their strict adherence to the original text he could not deny; speaking of his own ‘additions and omissions’ in his translations of the classics, he had to confess,

‘I have ... sometimes made such expositions of my authors, as no Dutch commentator will forgive me. Perhaps, in such particular passages, I have thought that I discovered some beauty yet undiscovered by those pedants’.

It is obvious from these quotations that in spite of his invective Dryden had studied some Dutch commentators diligently; others he mentions only cursorily. At any rate, he regarded as of Dutch origin commentaries on the classics and learned articles in periodicals, written by people born in Holland or those for any reason resident there, and who, by their activities in the field of literature, whether in Latin or French, enriched Dutch culture.

1 *Preface to Sylvae*. Ker I, p. 252.
2 *The Life of Plutarch*. Scott-Saintsbury XVII p. 76.
3 *Dedication of Examen Poeticum*. Ker II, p. 10 (my italics).
4 Cf. *Absalom and Achitophel*, where Dryden mixed bitter satire with praise, when he characterized the Earl of Shaftesbury (lines 186-197).
5 *Preface to Sylvae*, Ker I, p. 252.
a. Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536).

Though Erasmus was a supreme example of what may be called the cosmopolitan classical scholar, the Low Countries have a right to claim him as a representative of their culture in the sixteenth century. He spent the first thirty years of his life in Dutch monasteries, long enough to be imbued with ideas current in the Netherlands. Nor did he forget the country of his birth in his old age. A short time before his death he declared that his efforts in the field of classical philology had been for the benefit of the people of Holland, Brabant and Flanders¹.

It goes almost without saying that Dryden was acquainted with Erasmus' works, the latter being part and parcel of the English Renaissance. His *Colloquies* were widely used as a textbook at English Grammar Schools, so that well educated gentlemen might be expected to have at least some acquaintance with the great scholar. They also occur in the earliest syllabus of Westminster School, though it is doubtful if the boys still read them when Dryden was a pupil there. At any rate, they are not to be found among Dr. Busby's books, still kept at the school. But for the poet Dryden, an artist in the neo-classic period, it must have been a matter of course to study Erasmus more closely.

Speaking about ‘Varronian satires’, Dryden says:

‘Amongst the moderns, we may reckon the Encomium Moriae of Erasmus’².

Afterwards he added that his own *Absalom and Achitophel* and *Mac Flecknoe* were of the same kind. What were the characteristics that Dryden admired in the tiny fragments of Varro's satires and Erasmus' *Praise of Folly*? A contemporary author quotes Varro saying:

‘Notwithstanding that those pieces of mine, wherein I have imitated Menippus, though I have not translated him, are sprinkled with a kind of mirth and gaiety, yet many things are there inserted, which are drawn from the very entrails of philosophy, and many things severely argued; which I have mingled with pleasantries on purpose, that they may more easily go down with the common sort of unlearned readers’³.

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² *A Discourse concerning the Original and Progress of Satire*, Ker II, p. 67.
³ ibidem.
Bearing this in mind, one can hardly find fault with Dryden when he calls the *Encomium Moriae* an imitation of Varro's satires. Whether he has a right to class his own *Absalom and Achitophel* and *Mac Flecknoe* among the imitations of Varro is a little doubtful. There is, it is true, no lack of ‘witty pleasantry’ in Dryden's satires, but they seem to be rather personal attacks than serious attempts to teach philosophy to his countrymen.

It is on an identical subject that Dryden refers to Erasmus again. He writes in his *Life of Lucian*:

‘...he who has best imitated him (Lucian) in Latin, is Erasmus ... The way which Lucian chose of delivering these profitable and pleasing truths, was that of dialogue...; happily followed, as I have said above, by Erasmus...’

Apart from his art, there was an additional reason why Dryden should be interested in Erasmus. He boasted of his ancestors' close friendship with the great scholar. Thus he told Aubrey with evident pride that Erasmus stood god-father to Dryden's great-grandfather, and the Christian name Erasmus had been kept in the family ever since.

Indeed, Dryden's grandfather, his father, his brother and his third son, all bore the name of Erasmus, though Dryden's story about his being god-father to one of his ancestors is considered by some to be only family tradition, not founded on truth. Yet in claiming direct connection with the great classicist, Dryden shows his admiration for him, and this cannot have failed to lead to a more than ordinary interest in his work.


The influence of Joannes Secundus' *Basia* in Dryden's epithalamium has been treated under *Amboyna*.

c. Franciscus Dousa (1577-1606).

Franciscus was the fourth son of the gallant defender of Leyden, Jan

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1 Scott-Saintsbury XVIII, p. 76.
3 Douglas Hamer in *Notes and Queries* CLXXX (1941), p. 209. Hamer proves from Dryden's pedigree that his great-grandfather's Christian name was not Erasmus but John. His grandfather was the first to be called Erasmus, probably after his mother's eldest brother Erasmus Cope.
van der Does. The latter distinguished himself when the Spaniards besieged the town and was a Latin scholar in his own right. Franciscus died prematurely, but had already proved his learning by editing the fragments of Lucilius. Dryden refers to him in *A Discourse concerning the Original and Progress of Satire*:

‘This passage of Diomedes has also drawn Dousa, the son, into the same error of Casaubon, which I say, not to expose the little failings of those judicious men ...”

The denounced passage is in Dousa's notes on Lucilius (pp. 98, 99), where he tells us that Lucilius was the first to write satires in the strict sense of the word; they have the title in common with those of his predecessor Ennius, but the matter is quite different. In Ennius not only various metres but also different subjects occur in one and the same satire and - still according to Dousa - there was nothing of malice or acrimony in them.

This is the ‘error’ to which Dryden refers. He argues that the difference between these Latin poets is not in the subject matter, but in their art. Lucilius was the more accomplished and polished of the two.

Dousa admits that Lucilius also used various metres, but not different kinds in the same satire. This statement is endorsed in Dryden's essay. The Latin quotations from Horace and Quintilian about Lucilius are also to be found in Dousa, and so is the fragment of the grammarian Diomedes. It is obvious that Dryden borrowed more from Dousa than our short quotation from the *Discourse* would suggest. Franciscus' notes provided him with much of the material that he needed for the pages which he devoted to Lucilius, though it is also clear that he did not follow Dousa uncritically.

Dryden's opinion of Franciscus, that he is a judicious man, is the more remarkable because of his normal reluctance to lavish panegyric on Dutchmen. In all his works only Erasmus, Isaäc Vossius and Michiel

2 Ker II, p. 64.
3 In “Testimonia & auctoritates veterum scriptorum”, which precede the texts of the *Fragments*. Latin quotations in Dryden's essays are not always testimony of his profound knowledge of the classics, since he sometimes borrowed them from commentators.
4 Ker II, pp. 62-64.
5 ‘The learned Vossius’ in the preface to *Albion and Albanies*. 

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de Ruyter's share with Dousa the honour of Dryden's moderate praise.

d. Gerardus Johannes Vossius (1577-1649).

Gerard Vossius is justly famous for the zeal with which he amassed and systematically arranged comment on the classics and the scope of his erudition, rather than his original and brilliant ideas, still excites admiration. Some of his works may be considered as predecessors of our encyclopedias, reliable guides in the field of classical scholarship. Dryden seems to have consulted him occasionally. In his Life of Plutarch he says:

‘Joh. Gerrard Vossius has assigned his (Plutarch's) birth in the latter end of that Emperor (Claudius)...but the most accurate Rualdus....has manifestly proved him to be born in the middle time of Claudius, or somewhat lower ....”.

In his De Historicis Graecis Vossius states that Plutarch was born in the reign of Claudius and 17 or 18 years old when Vespasian became emperor (A.D. 69). If this were true, the date of his birth would have been about 52, towards the end of Claudius' reign (41-54 A.D.). Modern scholars, however, assume 46 as the date of his birth, corroborating Rualdus' opinion and rejecting Vossius'. A.D. 46 was ‘the middle-time of Claudius or somewhat lower’.

But our quotation from Dryden concerning Vossius - though true in itself - might put us on the wrong track, in so far as the emphasis on ‘the most accurate Rualdus’ might suggest that on the whole Vossius' work was less reliable. The latter, however, abhorred inaccuracy and slovenliness, while Rualdus, a Frenchman who wrote a life of Plutarch, which was prefixed to the Paris edition of Plutarch's works (1624), is, by comparison, an almost unknown scholar.

When Dryden, with Gerard Vossius in mind, in the same Life of

1 ‘The famed commander’ in stanza 54 of Annus Mirabilis.
2 Dryden was inaccurate as to Vossius' Christian names.
3 Scott-Saintsbury XVII, p. 21. To find chapter and verse of Vossius' abovementioned statement is not difficult. De Historicis Graecis suggests itself immediately in connection with Plutarch. An excellent index facilitates the search for sections dealing with this particular author.
4 De Historicis Graecis, Liber II, Caput X, ‘Cum Vespasianus coepit imperare, fuisset videtur XVII, aut XVIII annorum’. In his comment on Plutarch Vossius also mentions Rualdus, who was to become Dryden's chief source for his Life of Plutarch.

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Plutarch suddenly begins to theorize about history, ‘the profit and pleasure of that study...the most pleasant school of wisdom ...’\(^1\), one cannot help wondering if he had also consulted Vossius’ *Ars Historica*.\(^2\) Of course there are points of resemblance, but Dryden's treatment of the subject is so different from what Vossius wrote, that it is impossible to say if and to what extent he is indebted to him.

e. Isaäc Vossius (1618-1689).

Isaäc Vossius was the only son to survive his learned father, Gerard, whose life is said to have been ‘a quiet walk to the grave between two rows of ponderous folios’. The son, however, had a more chequered career. At one time Queen Christina of Sweden's favourite and librarian, he fell into disgrace but managed to get away with one of her most valuable manuscripts, the priceless Codex Argenteus; at another time he was the salaried historiographer of the States, though he never wrote one word of their history. After much travelling and collecting of manuscripts abroad he spent the last twenty years of his life in England. Isaäc dabbled in geography and natural philosophy (physics), but it was the study of the classics that took most of his time. As a canon of Windsor he even shocked the clergy by reading his Ovid during service in St. George's chapel. It is highly probable that Dryden was personally acquainted with this eccentric manuscript-collector. Common friends\(^3\), common interests, their visits at court in London and Windsor, their membership of the Royal Society\(^4\), with all this it is unthinkable that the two should never have met. When Dryden mentions Vossius, his tone is friendly without excessive flattery, as if speaking about an equal, whom he respects. Dryden refers to Isaäc in his preface to the opera *Albion and Albanius*\(^5\), a work that had remained unfinished for some time on account of King Charles's death. After a few months Dryden took it up again, adding a postscript to the original preface. He says that he saw no reason

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1 Scott-Saintsby XVII, p. 56.
2 Analysed by father Grootens in *De betekenis van Vossius Ars Historica, Historisch Tijdschrift* XX.
3 John Evelyn, Saint Evremont, and others. Evelyn's *Diary*, 16 June 1683: ‘Visited Windsor and dined with Mr. Dryden there’.
4 Both Dryden and Vossius were proposed by Dr. Charleton, Dryden in 1662 and Vossius in 1664.
5 Ker I, p. 280.
to alter much, but that he had changed his opinion as to the origin of the Italian opera, which he had formerly traced to the feasts of Spanish Moors. Now it seemed more probable to him that the Italians had derived their opera from the ‘shipwrecks’ of the Athenian and Roman theatres. Then Dryden continues: ‘But of this the learned Monsieur Vossius, who has made our nation his second country, is the best, and perhaps the only judge now living’.

What induced Dryden to insert this seemingly irrelevant passage? What, in fact, had Vossius to do with the Italian opera? At least one of his works seems to have some bearing on this subject, *De Poematum Cantu ac Viribus Rythmi* (1673). Here Vossius investigates the close connection between poetry and music in the classics, and for the moderns he recommends strict adherence to the ancient rules of prosody. The problems with which he deals are the same as those Dryden encountered in writing his opera. It is these questions of metre and rhythm, of how to adapt his poetry to the exigencies of a musical setting, that Dryden discusses in his preface. Although there is no direct statement in *De Poematum Cantu* that the new Italian opera was derived from the Ancients, the points of resemblance between ancient dramatic poetry, as described by Vossius¹, and the new Italian opera are so conspicuous that Dryden may have come to the conclusion that contemporary opera was derived from the Grecian and Roman theatres. Dryden was most probably acquainted with this work, which, in addition to being written by a well-known scholar, published in England and often discussed and criticized², was also of such importance for the study of his own technique. If this surmise is correct, the allusion to Vossius in Dryden's preface to his opera is not irrelevant.

There is another curious passage in this preface with which Vossius' name is closely connected. Speaking about his opera Dryden says:

‘....it has attempted a discovery beyond any former undertaker of our nation; only remember, that if there be no north-east passage to be found, the fault is in nature, and not in me’.

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¹ Speaking about Ariosto's comedies Vossius says, ‘...Quod si hac quoque in parte veteris comoediae leges diligentius observasset Ariostus, multo procudubio plures habuisset admiratores, praesertim si dramata istae modulis animata musicis, & à peritis artis scenicae recitata fuissent cantoribus.

² Discussed in the Royal Society in 1673. (*Philosophical Transactions* no. 93, April 1673).
For a long time the north-east passage had been something of an obsession to Vossius. The subject - of such importance because of West European trade with the Indies - had been revived by Nicolaas Witsen, a burgomaster of Amsterdam and famous geologist. It 1674 Witsen sent a letter to the Royal Society about Nova Zembla. According to him it was not an island, but was connected with the continent. Isaäc Vossius, credulous as ever, immediately took up the subject and his imagination soon ran away with him. Improving upon Witsen's information, he told King Charles that the north-east passage could be discovered north of Nova Zembla. The sailors would find an open sea there, and behind the 'peninsula' the coast would at once decline to the south. The King lent his ear to the discussion and provided a ship for an expedition, while the Duke of York, Pepys and some other gentlemen bought another. The two vessels sailed under the command of one captain Wood, but the expedition proved a failure; one ship was wrecked and many sailors perished. Confidence in the validity of Vossius' opinion was badly shaken. But, nothing daunted, he kept hammering away at the same theme. In 1685 - the year of Dryden's new opera - Vossius published *Variarum Observationum*, which again contained an essay about Northern navigation to the Indies and Japan. Perhaps after all, it is not so strange that Dryden, having Vossius in mind, should hit upon the metaphor of the north-east passage to explain his difficulties. He had attempted to write an opera in English, which language - according to the same Vossius - would conform less readily to the ancient rules of prosody. If Dryden had failed to adapt his poetry to a musical setting, the fault was in the nature of the language and not in the poet.

1 *Philosophical Transactions no. 101* (1674).
2 Charles II is said to have remarked about Vossius, ‘He is a strange man for a divine; there is nothing that he will not believe, if only it is not in the bible’. Sandys, *History of Classical Scholarship* II, p. 322.
3 Witsen repeatedly dissociated himself from Vossius' rather fantastic notions. In 1691 he sent a letter to the Royal Society, ‘...The late Monsieur Vossius would needs persuade himself, as well as he did others to their Ruine, that there was a passage to Japan by the North and that the Tartarian Countries behind Nova Zembla did immediately decline towards the South; I did always oppose it...’ (printed in *Philosophical Transactions* no. 193).
4 *Recueil de Voyages au Nord*, tome II, 1732. Captain Wood relates the story of this voyage. He says that a letter from Holland to the Royal Society was one of the causes that an expedition was sent out.
5 De Patefacienda per Septentrionem ad Japonenses & Indos Navigatione p. 187.
Nor should *De Poematum Cantu ac Viribus Rythmi* be overlooked in the discussion of Dryden's *Alexander's Feast*. The ode in itself is nothing if not an illustration of the 'vires rythmi'; the story of Thimotheus and Alexander is also mentioned by Vossius¹ as the stock example of the power of music, defined by him as the power to rouse and afterwards to tranquillize the passions². *De Poematum Cantu* also offers an explanation and the justification for certain changes of metre in *Alexander's Feast*. In section I of the poem there is an abrupt transition from iambics to trochees, immediately followed by a dactyl, to express the happiness of the King and his bride. Vossius had explained: ‘trochaeus...lenibus & amatoriis affectibus exprimendis est aptus (p. 6). Si quod hilare & jucundum sit explicare velimus, advocandi sunt dactili’ (p. 73).

Something analogous - the sudden change of iambics into trochees - occurs in section V, where the King's mind is turned to love:

‘Softly sweet, in Lydian Measures,
Soon he sooth'd his Soul to Pleasures...’.

In section VI of *Alexander's Feast* the iambics, not unsuitable in themselves for the description of bellicose feelings, are followed by even more suitable anapaestics. They accelerate the movement, suggesting rising fury and the spirit of revenge. In *De Poematum Cantu* p. 73 we read: ‘Vehemens & iracundus est iambus. Si furorem & insanium inducentibus numeris opus habemus, praesto erit...anapaestus’.

Of course not every irregularity of metre in *Alexander's Feast* can be explained so easily. Neither should it be suggested that Dryden slavishly applied rules derived from Vossius and others. A good deal may be due to his fine ear for metrical effects. But if Dryden had read *De Poematum Cantu* - and there is little reason to doubt - the book must have contributed to his acquisition of that technical dexterity which enabled the poet to write his *Encomium Musicae*.

**f. Daniel Heinsius (1580-1655).**

Heinsius, professor of the university of Leyden, a most important figure in the field of classical philology, contributed materially to the formation of literary criticism in the seventeenth century. According to Saintsbury, there is no clearer or more workmanlike exposition of the

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1 *De Poematum Cantu*, p. 59.
2 ibidem p. 75. Vossius calls music ‘virtus illa excitandis & sopiendis apta affectibus.
neo-classical dramatic ideal than his *De Tragoediae Constitutione*. Influence on Dryden is apparent in *A Discourse concerning the Original and Progress of Satire*, the dedication of the *Aeneis*, the *Essay on Dramatick Poesie* and the translation of *Ovid*.

As Dryden excelled in the field of satire, it is interesting to consider what he owed to Heinsius for his theoretical conceptions in this particular branch of literature. In his above-mentioned *Discourse* Dryden asserts that he had read Heinsius attentively, which is no doubt true, since his definition of satire is a literal translation of Heinsius in *De Satyra Horatiana*, which the latter had added to his edition of Horace. One may wonder why Dryden borrowed this definition from the Dutch commentator. It did not satisfy him at all; in fact he calls it obscure and perplexed, and instead of translating a long passage, he might have attempted to give a definition of his own. However, he preferred to follow Heinsius, which at any rate gave him an opportunity of attacking some of the views of a generally accepted authority. Dryden's chief objection is that Heinsius thought a 'low and familiar way of speech' characteristic of satire. According to Dryden, this low and familiar way of speech was to be found in Horace, but not so in Juvenal and Persius. To his regret he realized that on the whole Heinsius preferred Horace as the author who best applied the rules for satire proper. 'Heinsius and Dacier are the most principal of those who raise Horace above Juvenal and Persius.' But Dryden was by no means inclined to follow these critics in their preference for Horace. Neither does he approve of Heinsius' assertion that satire should be nearer to comedy than to tragedy. Heinsius had written that Juvenal was faulty in this respect, because he shocks us in his satire as if it were a tragedy, rousing horror and indignation.

2 Ker II, p. 100.
3 Dryden's definition in Ker II, p. 100 is the same as Heinsius' in *De Satyra Horatiana* p. 54.
4 De Elzevir edition of Quintus Horatius Flaccus 1629 consists of I. The works of Horace. II. Heinsius' dissertation *De Satyra Horatiana*. III. Notes. IV. A re-arrangement of the text of the *Ars Poetica*. (Heinsius thought that the order of this text as he found it in the manuscripts was corrupt).
5 Ker II, p. 69.
6 ibidem, p. 91.
7 *De Satyra Horatiana*, p. 75, ‘Quos inprimis limites excessit Juvenalis qui cum nuptias vironum commemorat cum viris, non tam odium quam indignationem & abominationem movet’. Ibidem p. 83, ‘Flaccus enim Comice illudit; Juvenalis saepe Tragice percellit’.

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Another point of difference between Dryden and Heinsius is the question of the origin of Roman satire, whether it was derived from Greek satirical plays or not. Dryden labours to demonstrate that Roman satire came into being without influence from Greece.\(^1\)

It is clear from these examples that Dryden studied Heinsius' *De Satyra Horatiana* diligently but above all critically. His literal translation of Heinsius' definition shows that he had the book ready at hand when he wrote his *Discourse*.

There is another reference to Heinsius in Dryden's dedication of the *Aeneis*. He says that he wrote his dedication ‘in a loose epistolary way’, after the example of Horace in his epistle to the Pisos (the famous *Ars Poetica*). Dryden continues that in this epistle he sees no method, ‘whatever Scaliger the father, or Heinsius, may have seen, or rather think they had seen...\(^2\)’. Indeed, Heinsius was of the opinion that the confused order of the *Ars Poetica* was due to corruption in the manuscripts and he made a systematic attempt to rearrange the text.\(^3\)

On another occasion Dryden refers erroneously to Heinsius. He was probably relying on his memory, when he imputed to Heinsius the opinion that amusement and delight were the only end of comedy. The guarded terms of Dryden's statement suggest, indeed, that he himself was in some doubt here. ‘It is disputed, *I think*, by Heinsius, before Horace his Art of Poetry, whether instruction be any part of its (comedy's) employment.’\(^4\) Heinsius, of course, wrote no such thing. On the contrary, for him comedy meant delight and instruction. He expressly states that among the Greeks the writers both of comedies and of tragedies were called ‘teachers’.

‘Comoedia enim delectat & docet...\(^5\).’

Heinsius’ influence on Dryden's Ovid translations will be treated under Cnippingius, whose variorum edition the poet used.

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1. Heinsius defends the opposite point of view on pp. 18 and 42 of his dissertation *De Satyra Horatiana*.
2. Ker II, p. 164. This remark is not true as far as Scaliger is concerned, who did not see any method in the *Ars Poetica* either. Cf. Ker's note on the passage.
3. Heinsius gives the revised text at the end of his edition of Horace 1629. His example was followed by Ben Jonson in one of his translations of the *Ars Poetica*.
5. Heinsius' note on line 270 of the *Ars Poetica*. He gave almost verbatim the same paragraph on page 2 of *De Plauto & Terentio judicium* 1618.
So far Dryden's indebtedness to Heinsius is above question because in these instances he frequently mentions Heinsius by name. But there are other places in Dryden's essays which have a distinctly Heinsian flavour, where proof of direct influence is lacking, e.g. his theories about the purpose of tragedy, the ideal tragic hero, verisimilitude in a work of art, and the vexed question of catharsis or purgation of the passions. It is a commonplace in Dryden's essays that a tragedy should not only delight but also instruct, a utilitarian interpretation which was typical of Heinsius. As regards catharsis the latter had taught that the passions in themselves are neither good nor bad; only their lack or excess is harmful. In witnessing a tragedy the passions are roused, chiefly pity and fear, but at the same time the spectators get used to these feelings so that they are no longer unduly upset. Thus the effect of tragedy prepares man for the sufferings that fate may have in store for himself. The passions are purged and tempered, which contributes to the spiritual welfare of the individual. Heinsius realized that pity and fear cannot easily be aroused in the spectator's mind by entirely good or entirely bad characters. A certain identification of the spectator with the actor on the stage is necessary; therefore he should be ‘moderately’ good. This was also Dryden's conception:

‘All reasonable men have long since concluded that the hero of the poem ought not to be a character of perfect virtue...nor yet altogether wicked’.

As to the purgation of the passions Dryden's opinions are not always clear, but once he seems to follow Heinsius:

‘But I hasten to the end and scope of Tragedy, which is, to rectify or purge our passions, fear and pity’.

To rectify the passions surely means to reduce them to such a state that they are no longer harmful.

Heinsius preferred verisimilitude to truth in the work of a poet, truth

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1 De Tragoediae Constitutione, p. 18, ‘Tragoedia est seriae absolutaeque actionis...imitatio...quaque non narrando, vero per misericordiam & horrem, eorundem expiationem affectuum inducit’.
2 ibidem, p. 75, ‘terror (excitatur) vero a nobis simili’.
3 Preface to All for Love, Ker I, p. 191.
4 Preface to Troilus and Cressida, Ker I, p. 209.
being chiefly the business of the historian. But he adds that the plot of a tragedy may be historically true. Dryden has similar ideas,

‘The last quality of the action is that it ought to be probable... Tis not necessary that there should be historical truth in it; but always necessary that there should be a likeness of truth,... probable being that which succeeds, or happens oftener than it misses.’

It seems likely that Dryden derived more from Heinsius than he knew or would care to admit. This influence may have been indirect, that is to say through the intermediary of his favourite French critics and Ben Jonson. How much French dramatic theory owed to Heinsius is proved by Edith Kern in her well-known dissertation. She argues that the French, when they became interested in the theory of dramatic art, turned to the latest commentaries on Aristotle and Horace, which were mainly the work of Heinsius and later Vossius. This is proved by numerous quotations from Chapelain, Mesnardière, Sarrasin, Scudéry, the Examens of Corneille etc. Dryden himself frequently mentions Ben Jonson's Discoveries as one of the chief sources for his Essay of Dramatick Poesie. Jonson, however, borrowed extensively from Heinsius. In fact the last 300 lines of the Discoveries are almost literal translations of various passages in the latter's works.

Our surmise - the indirect influence of Heinsius through the intermediary of other critics - is not mere guess-work, as may be illustrated by the following examples. Dryden wrote in his Essay of Dramatick Poesie about the unity of action:

‘For two actions equally laboured and driven on by the writer, would destroy the unity of the poem: it would be no longer one play, but two: not but that there may be many actions in a play, as Ben Jonson has observed in his Discoveries; but they must be all subservient to the great one...’

1 De Tragoediae Constitutione, p. 45, ‘sequitur non minus veram admitti actionem, cum praesertim verisimilis quoque esse possit, qua est vera’.
2 Preface to Troilus and Cressida, Ker I, p. 209.
4 Cf. Ker I, Introduction XXVIII, where exactly the same names occur as ‘the ancestors of Dryden's prose’.
5 Ker I, pp. 41, 122, 125.
6 ibidem, p. 41.
The passage in the *Discoveries* to which Dryden refers is an involved one:

‘Now, that it (the action) should be one, and intire. One is considerable two waies: either, as it is only separate, and by itself: or as being compos’d of many parts, it beginnes to be one, as those parts grow, or are wrought together. That it should be one the first way alone, and by itself, no man that has tasted letters ever would say, especially having required before a just Magnitude, and equall Proportion of the parts in themselves. Neither of which can possibly bee, if the Action be single and separate, not compos’d of parts, which laid together in themselves, with an equall and fitting proportion, tend to the same end; which thing out of Antiquitie it selfe, hath deceived many; and more this Day it doth deceive.’

Dryden does not seem to realize that this passage is an almost word-for-word translation of Heinsius, which accounts for the extreme obscurity of the style. Again, in his discussion of Aristophanes’ comedies Dryden unconsciously borrows from Heinsius. Dryden says:

‘Thus when you see Socrates brought upon the stage, you are not to imagine him made ridiculous by the imitation of his actions, but rather by making him perform something very unlike himself: something so childish and absurd, as by comparing it with the gravity of the true Socrates, makes a ridiculous object for the spectators’.

These lines were no doubt suggested by Jonson in his *Discoveries*, where he says about Aristophanes' comedies:

‘What could have made them laugh, like to see Socrates presented, that Example of all good life, honesty, and vertue, to have him hoisted up with a Pullie, and there play the Philosopher, in a basquet? Measure, how many foote a Flea could skip Geometrically...’

But Jonson surely translated Heinsius. A comparison with the original will reveal the striking resemblance.

‘Quis non ridet, quando Socrates ridetur; ipse pater omnium

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2 *De Tragoediae Constitutione*, caput IV, pp. 33, 34. Dryden disapproves of this manner of translating. He says that Jonson could not avoid obscurity. Ker I, p. 238.
3 *An Essay of Dramatick Poesie*, Ker I, p. 84.
4 op. cit., vol. VIII, p. 644.
virtutium, & ipsa innocentia; cum in corbe philosophatur; cum geometrico quot pedes
pulices saliant, metitur?"

From the foregoing the conclusion seems warranted that Dryden owed more to
Heinsius than is indicated by the occasional references in his essays.

g. Nicolaas Heinsius (1620-1681).

Nicolaas Heinsius, an ambassador of the Netherlands, who went on diplomatic
missions to various countries, was Daniel Heinsius' only son. Just like his father he
was a distinguished classical philologist, though his travels in the service of the
government prevented him from becoming a dull and pedantic scholar. He had
excellent opportunities to collate manuscripts in the famous libraries of Europe and
he was gifted with a natural aptitude for textual emendation, so that his editions of
classical authors were among the best of the seventeenth century.

Dryden does not distinguish between Daniel the father and Nicolaas the son. The
Heinsius to which he refers in his Preface concerning Ovid's Epistles was no doubt
Nicolaas. Dryden can hardly be blamed for his inaccuracy. Both Heinsius the father
and the son had edited Ovid; Nicolaas' edition even appeared in his father's life-time'.
Comparison of the two editions, however, will show that Dryden owed something
to Nicolaas for his translation of Ovid, but hardly anything to Daniel. The following
passages are an illustration of Dryden's indebtedness to Nicolaas. In his Preface
concerning Ovid's Epistles Dryden says:

‘But Heinsius has judged more truly, that the inscription of our author
was barely Epistles; which he concludes from his cited verses, where Ovid
asserts this work as his own invention, and not borrowed from the Greeks’.

This refers to the first note on the Epistles in Nicolaas' edition; it does not occur
in Daniel's. Nicolaas argued that Epistolae Heroidum was a corruption of the original
text; it should be simply Epistolae.

1 Ad Horatii de Plauto & Terentio judicium Dissertatio, Amsterdam 1618, prefixed to Heinsius'
edition of Terentius, (p. 5).
2 Daniel Heinsius, Pub. Ovidii Nasonis Opera, Leyden 1629. This edition has synopses before
the Epistles and short notes at the end.
Nicolaas Heinsius, Operum P. Ovidii Nasonis editio nova, Amsterdam 1652. Neither synopses
nor notes. But the reprint of 1659 has copious notes though still no summaries.
Dryden also follows Nicolaas when he discusses the cause of Ovid's banishment. Nicolaas had declared: ‘Non satis est liquido cognita causa mihi’¹, where most commentators supposed that Ovid was banished because he had seen Augustus' incest with his own daughter.

These examples are taken from Dryden's Preface. His translation of Ovid also contains matter from Nicolaas' notes. In The Art of Love, Book I, line 837, Dryden writes: ‘Nor fail a night-cap in full health to wear’. ‘Full health’ is not in the original text. It was derived from Nicolaas' gloss on this line: ‘....enim infirmae valetudinis erant, palliolis obnubeant caput’. From such passages we may conclude that Dryden borrowed from the younger Heinsius; but they are not convincing proof that Dryden actually consulted Nicolaas' Ovid edition, since the text and many of his notes have been incorporated in the variorum edition of Borchardus Cnippingius. This was the chief source for Dryden's Ovid translation, and here he may have found all that he owes to Heinsius the son, the reliable text, many of his notes, and the comments of other scholars into the bargain. When Cnipping quotes Nicolaas Heinsius, he simply refers to him as ‘Heinsius’ or ‘Heins’, which may have led Dryden to associate the name with Daniel.

h. Borchardus Cnippingius (1623 or 1624-1674).

The Dutch philologists whose influence is traceable in Dryden's works were in the main outstanding scholars. As biographical dictionaries and histories² contain particulars of their lives, it has not been thought necessary to repeat these details. Cnipping, however, is an unknown figure in the realm of classical scholarship, though his well-printed Ovid edition seems to have been popular in Holland³ and abroad and was chosen by Dryden for his Ovid translations. Jöcher says that Cnipping probably lived in Holland⁴. The Dutch Dictionary of Biography (van der Aa) gives the scanty information that he was perhaps a schoolmaster in Leyden. Indeed, Cnipping's variorum edition of Ovid was dedicated

¹ This is N. Heinsius' note on ‘Cur aliquid vidi, cur noxia lumina feci’. (Tristium, Book II, line 103).
⁴ Cnipping's edition had at least two reprints, 1683 and 1702. Bilderdijk possessed an edictio princeps. Cf. the catalogue for the sale of Bilderdijk's library, 1832.
⁵ Allgemeines Gelehrten Lexicon, Leipzig 1751.

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to a Leyden magistrate, Herman van der Meer, ‘gymnasii nostri curatori’; so it was to be expected that the register of the Leyden Latin School\(^1\) would provide material to piece together something of Cnipping’s lifehistory.

He was born in Bremen in 1623 or 1624\(^2\), and in 1647 we hear of him in Holland, when, at the age of 23 or 24 he was appointed rector of the Latin School at Culemborg by Maria Magdalena, dowager-Countess of Waldeck Piermont and Culemborg. His German descent may have appealed to the Countess, but his appointment to a responsible position at an early age also presupposes some confidence in his abilities. An elaborate school-regulation\(^3\) was made for him, and he seems to have carried out its articles to the satisfaction of the magistrates; at least, his salary was raised several times, till it amounted - according to himself - to 700 guilders and a house rent-free. Having married Maria Catharina du Molijn, he gave up his position of rector to become a third-class teacher at the Leyden Latin School\(^4\). This meant a drop in salary, but Cnipping was ambitious enough to suffer a temporary set-back for a better prospect in the future. Leyden, as a seat of learning, offered him more opportunities for a successful career. He at once matriculated into Leyden university\(^5\); this happened ‘humanitatis ergo’ - for the sake of charity - and as such he was annually registered\(^6\) until his death eighteen years later. As he never took his doctor's degree, it is not certain if he really studied at the university. As a third class teacher he must have been in rather poor circumstances and such people were sometimes admitted among the gownsmen to give them the benefit of certain privileges.

Cnipping soon made friends in the university; the famous Coccejus, professor of theology, and himself a native of Bremen, stood godfather to his eldest son. The next twelve years saw Cnipping quietly at work among his ‘liberos ac libros’. Six children were born to him; two sons

\(^1\) Now in the municipal record-office of Leyden.
\(^2\) He matriculated in Leyden 5 May 1656, as Borchardus Cnippingius Bremensis, 32 years old. (Album Studiosorum, column 448). So he was born in 1623 or 1624.
\(^3\) Record-office Culemborg no. 1994.
\(^4\) Praeceptor tertiae classis. (Leyden, Archief v.d. Triviale Scholen no. 3).
\(^5\) Album Studiosorum, colum 448.
\(^6\) Among the non-resident scholars (huysshouders), which was a separate list until 1664, as distinct from the boarders (costgangers).
matriculated in 1668, at twelve and thirteen years old. In the mean time Cnipping had risen to the rank of con-rector and worked diligently at a variorum edition of Ovid. The work was published in 1670, and his prospects became bright indeed. Leyden, however, was an unhealthy place to live in. His friend Coccejus had already fallen victim to an outburst of the plague in 1668; he himself died prematurely in 1674. After his death the magistrates graciously granted a quarter of his annual salary to his children; it is not clear whether the money was to be paid every year or only once.

In his edition of Ovid, Cnipping used Nicolaas Heinsius' text and a number of his notes, adding a good many from various sources and some of his own. For the synopses before the *Epistles* Cnipping borrowed from Heinsius the elder; some of them he copied verbatim; others he abbreviated and altered.

Now Dryden, whose indebtedness to Cnipping is to be shown, strongly disapproved of word-for-word renderings, and as it was his aim to give the meaning and spirit of his author as clearly as possible, he did not hesitate to introduce explanatory matter into his translations. It is these deviations from the original text which give a clear indication of the editions which Dryden used. We shall compare some seeming mistranslations and intrusions in Dryden's Ovid translations with Cnipping's own notes. Glosses from other philologists, also included in the Cnipping-edition and sometimes used by Dryden, are of course no proof at all that he used Cnipping's work; he might have borrowed them directly from these scholars.

*De Arte Amandi*, Liber I, lines 27, 28,

‘Nec mihi sunt visae Clio Clusque sorores
Servanti pecudes vallibus, Asca, tuus’.

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1 Poor boys! The great majority of students matriculating in 1668 were 20 years of age and older.
2 Leyden, *Burgemeestersdagboek* N folio 65.
3 It is less pardonable that Dryden could not always refrain from a sneer at political enemies in his translations. He makes Ovid say in the *Art of Love*, Book I, lines 588, 589, ‘Dress not in short too little, or too much;
And be not wholly French nor wholly Dutch’.
4 Dryden did not translate the whole of Ovid's works, but a considerable number of fragments, which appeared in various miscellanies between 1683 and 1704.
5 Fortunately Cnipping mentions his sources when he copies notes from another.
Dryden translates, ‘Nor Clio, nor her sisters have I seen;
As Hesiod saw them on the shady green.’

Hesiod is introduced here on the authority of Cnipping's note on these lines. He explains that Ovid refers to Hesiod, who tended his flock near mount Helicon when he was made a poet by the muses, ‘Hesiodum dicit qui cum patris oves pasceret juxta Heliconum à Musis ad fontem Hippocrenem ductus, poëta evasit’.

De Arta Amandi, Liber I, lines 69, 70:
‘ubi muneribus nati sua munera mater addidit...’, where ‘ubi’ refers to a public building, probably the Porticus Octaviae. But Dryden translates, ‘Concord's fane, or that proud edifice...’. ‘Concord's fane’ may have been taken from Cnipping's note on the corresponding lines.

De Arte Amandi, Liber I, line 75, ‘...Veneri ploratus Adonis’. In the translation, ‘they mourn Adonis with Assyrian Rites’. The Assyrian Rites are not in the original text, but in Cnipping's note: (Venus) .... quae ritu Assyrict Romae colebatur cum Adonide.

Dryden's translation, ‘And free your arm-pits from the ram and goat’ seems a far cry from De Arte Amandi, Liber I, line 522: ‘Nec laedant nares virque paterque gregis’, until we consult Cnipping, who explains ‘nares’ as ‘alae sive axillae, partes...sub brachiis’.

In Metamorphoses, Book I, line 418, we read, ‘The stag swims faster, than he ran before’. The Latin text only says that the swift legs of the stag are useless in a flood; in Dryden's translation the stag seems to be more actively engaged. This may be due to a gloss in Cnipping, that ‘ablato cervo’ means ‘celeritate pedum subducto’.

Ovid writes in Metamorphoses, Book VIII, lines 622-3:
‘ipse locum vidi: nam me Pelopeia Pittheus
misit in arva, suo quondam regnata parenti’.

Dryden translates, ‘I (Lelex) saw the Place and them, by Pittheus sent
To Phrygian Realms, my Grand sire's Government.’

Seemingly an inaccuracy. Cnipping, however, had explained that Pittheus in his turn was the great grandfather of Lelex, so that Lelex
too could claim the ‘Phrygian Realms’ as the territory of his ancestors. From a mythological point of view it was immaterial whether Dryden translated ‘his’ or ‘my’. For some reason or other he preferred ‘my’ and so introduced Cnipping's information in his text.

Dryden also translated the synopses before Ovid's *Epistles*, which Cnipping had borrowed almost wholesale from Daniel Heinsius. The summary of *Epistola XI* (Canace to Macareus) is a good example. Cnipping took it verbatim from Heinsius the elder and Dryden translated Cnipping literally.¹

Our small collection of borrowings from Cnipping's commentary is by no means exhaustive,² but it is sufficient to warrant the conclusion that Dryden used Cnipping's edition extensively, though, it should be added, not exclusively. This is in accordance with Dryden's method. When he began a translation from the classics, he collected various editions,³ compared the texts and chose what in his opinion was the best, though he did not hesitate to borrow occasionally from other editors.

Though it was no mean achievement for Cnipping to publish a variorum edition of Ovid which was afterwards chosen by a famous poet as the chief source for his translations, yet he was never recognized as a worthy member of the Republic of Letters. When Burman gave a new Ovid edition in 1727, he mentioned Cnippingius and Crispinus in his preface as ‘commentatores e plebe’. Curiously enough they are the same editors whose influence can be clearly shown in Dryden's translation.

i. Graevius (1632-1703).

In his *Life of Lucian* Dryden writes, ‘.... for Lucian, that is the sincere example of Attic eloquence, as Graevius says of him, is only a mass of solecism, and mere vulgarisms in Mr. Spence...’⁴ From this

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1 This is another instance of Dryden unconsciously and indirectly borrowing from Daniel Heinsius.
3 Cf. *Aeneis, postscript to the reader*, ‘... Gilbert Dolben... enriched me with all the several editions of Virgil, and all the commentaries of those editions in Latine’.
4 Scott-Saintsbury XVIII, p. 80.
it is clear that Dryden strongly disapproved of an English translation of Lucian, made by one Mr. Spence, and that Dryden had read a commentary on Lucian from Johann Georg Graeve, Professor of Eloquence at Utrecht.

It is generally assumed that Dryden is here referring to some passage in Graevius' variorum edition of Lucian, published in 1687. But there does not seem to be anything corresponding to the above mentioned statement concerning Lucian either in Graevius' preface or in his notes. It is more probable that Dryden had another book in view. As early as 1668 Graevius had edited one of Lucian's dialogues, *Luciani Pseudosophista, seu Soloecista*. In a preface to the reader Graevius says that in this dialogue Lucian pungently and wittily exposes the sophists, who did not know the true nature and the peculiar character of Attic speech. Graevius promises to expound the solecisms which Lucian tried to correct, and he does so at the end of the book in an ‘Expositio Soloecismorum’.

The quoted passage in Dryden's *Life of Lucian* must have been inspired by Graevius' preface to *Luciani Pseudosophista, seu Soloecista*. It deals with the problem of solecisms and these especially irritated Dryden in Spence's work. The latter had not been careful enough to avoid offence against grammar and idiom. Lucian, a master of the Greek language and promoter of its purity, deserved better treatment from his translator.

**j. Joannes Clericus (Jean le Clerc 1657-1736).**

Jean le Clerc², professor of the Mennonite Seminary at Amsterdam, is sometimes erroneously taken for a French Huguenot. He was a Geneva protestant who had abandoned his Calvinistic tenets for those of the Arminian denomination. Consequently he had little in common with the orthodox Huguenots flocking to Holland. Having lived in England for some time, he settled at Amsterdam in 1683. Besides being a theologian, he was a polyhistor and writer of numerous books on philosophy and history, and the founder of one of the oldest Dutch literary periodicals: the *Bibliothèque Universelle*. Dryden sometimes read this paper³, which is apparent from a passage in his dedication of the

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1 *Luciani Samosatensis Opera*, Amsterdam 1687.
3 It was for sale in London. The advertisement in tome VI (1687) says, ‘...on trouvera toujours le dernier (tome)... à Londres chez S. Smith’.

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Aeneis: ‘Le Clerc has told us lately, and I believe has made it out, that David's Psalms were written in as arrant rhyme as they are translated’\(^1\). Le Clerc had treated this particular subject in an article called ‘Essay de Critique, où l'on tache de montrer en quoi consiste la Poésie des Hébreux’\(^2\), where he proves that the psalms in the original language consist of rhymed poetry. He concludes his essay by reconstructing psalm 150 into rhymed Hebrew verse.

This article may have appealed to Dryden, because he had some knowledge of Hebrew since his school-days; in the seventh form of Westminster School he had been obliged to study the Psalter in Hebrew, for which his famous head-master Busby had written a grammar\(^3\).

Though Dryden seems to have realized that Le Clerc was an important figure in the Republic of Letters, there cannot have been much sympathy between them. Le Clerc was a friend and correspondent of Gilbert Burnet and of the third Earl of Shaftesbury, both outspoken enemies of Dryden. He even undertook to defend the reputation of the first Earl of Shaftesbury (Dryden's Achitophel) against attacks of the ‘Jacobites’\(^4\), of whom Dryden had no doubt been one of the most famous.

k. Franciscus Junius (1589-1677).

One star in the firmament of seventeenth century Dutch scholarship remains for discussion, Franciscus Junius. Dryden refers to Junius' father\(^{5}\), he consulted the works of Junius' brother-in-law (Gerard Vossius) and admired Junius' nephew (Isaäc Vossius), but he does not mention Franciscus himself. Yet it is unlikely that Dryden should not have heard of this diligent promoter of Anglo-Saxon studies, who had lived in England for more than thirty years in the service of the art-loving Earl of Arundel, and had returned to the quiet of Oxford in his old age,

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1 Ker II, p. 220.
2 Bibliothèque Universelle IX, pp. 219-291 (1688).
4 Bibliothèque Choisie VI (1705), pp. 342-412, in what is called the first biography of Locke. Locke had been the first Earl of Shaftesbury's secretary.
5 In the dedication of the Aeneis, Ker II, p. 204, and in Religio Laici, line 241. About 1680 Dryden bought two books of Junius the elder, evidently to prepare himself for religious controversy, Amiable confrontation de la simple vérité de Dieu, Leiden 1581, and Indices expurgatorii duo, testes fraudum ac falsationum pontificiarum, Hannover 1611.

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leaving his collection of Anglo-Saxon manuscripts to the University.

Dryden's Parallel of Poetry and Painting sometimes reminds us of Junius' well-known textbook on the painting of the ancients, *De Pictura Veterum* (1637). The work was so popular that Junius himself gave an English translation, and it contains a chapter devoted to a comparison of poetry and painting. There seems to be parallelism with Dryden's essay when Junius speaks about the Greek painters Apelles and Protogenes. Junius: ‘...for he (Apelles) said...that Protogenes in one thing was farre inferiour to him, because he knew not when to hold his hand’. Dryden: ‘Apelles said of Protogenes that he knew not when to give over’. Junius: ‘When Apelles had made any workes, says Plinie, he exposeth them in a place, where all that passed by might see them: hiding himselfe in the meane time behind the picture, to hearken what faults were noted in his works’. Dryden: ‘Thus, like Apelles, you stood unseen behind your own Venus, and received the praises of the passing multitude’.

In the last decades of his life Dryden paid more than usual attention to the art of painting (*To Sir Godfrey Kneller, Parallel of Poetry and Painting*). He may have consulted Junius' book, but our evidence is not conclusive, since Junius and Dryden may quite independently have derived the parallel of poetry and painting and the particulars of Greek painters from the Ancients. Influence of Junius' book must remain as surmise, though bordering on probability.

If Dryden himself could be believed, we should also include the famous Julius Scaliger among the philologists discussed in this chapter. At least he seems to think that the elder Scaliger was a Dutchman,

‘...it must be acknowledged, in spite of his (Ovid's) Dutch friends, the commentators, even of Julius Scaliger himself, that

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1 ‘Franciscus Junius died at his nephew's house Isaác Vossius of a feaver, aet. 89, at Southlie neare Windsore: and had before given his MSS of Saxon and Northerne languages to the University’. (*Wood's Life and Times* II, p. 393.)


5 *The Painting of the Ancients*, p. 214.

6 *Dedication of the Aeneis*, Ker II, p. 163.

7 Dryden himself mentions Bellori as his chief source.
Seneca's censure will stand good against him: Nescivit quod bene cessit relinquere¹.

References to Scaliger's Poetices² are fairly numerous in Dryden's essays and offer a field for research, but unfortunately Julius Scaliger never graced Leyden university with his learning nor did he ever take up his residence in Holland. Of course Dryden's mistake is understandable, for the elder Scaliger's son Justus was from 1593 till his death in 1609 the outstanding classical scholar in the Netherlands. But there are no traces of Scaliger the younger's works in Dryden.

In concluding this chapter, we may state that the impact of Dutch scholarship on Dryden was not inconsiderable. If foreign influence in Dryden's works is to be discussed, the writers of classical antiquity stand pre-eminent as an important factor in stimulating his critical faculties. Next come French, Italian and Spanish authors and critics, who never failed to excite Dryden's admiration, even if he would not always follow them unconditionally. Finally some continental influences can be traced back to Dutch scholars, whom, in spite of national prejudices, and almost reluctantly, he chose to study for the improvement of his knowledge and his art. From a historical point of view it may seem curious that Dryden, who disliked both the Dutch and their culture, should occasionally turn to the great Dutch philologists for information. In reality it is a confirmation of a generally accepted truth³. When in the seventeenth century interest began to be felt in dramatic theory and literary criticism, and ideas from the Republic of Letters were transmitted to literature in the vernacular, critics almost naturally turned to the latest commentaries on the classics, which happened to be issued by the Dutch press and were often written by Dutch scholars; it is also clear from what Dryden borrowed, that Daniel Heinsius was the most prominent figure among them, whose influence far exceeded the boundaries of his own country.

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¹ Preface to the translation of Ovid's Epistles, Ker I, p. 234.
² Poetices Libri Septem, 1561.
³ Also defended by E.G. Kern in The Influence of Heinsius and Vossius upon French Dramatic Theory.
Appendix I

Short summary of *Amboyna*.

As *Amboyna* is not a play that is favoured with an occasional reprint<sup>1</sup>, a synopsis of it is offered here.

Act I. The scene is laid in the castle of Amboyna. The Dutch governor Harman van Spelt, the fiscal (a lawyer also acting as public prosecutor in courts of justice) and a merchant, van Herring, discuss letters recently received from Holland. They rejoice at the news that damages done to the English to an amount of half a million pounds had been redeemed by the Dutch for a small sum. Yet the fiscal is by no means satisfied. He fears that the heavy charges incurred by the Dutch company in the East-India trade will lead to its ruin. As long as there are English spice traders in Amboyna, it will be impossible to get the monopoly necessary to raise the profits. He has already a plot in ‘pericranio’ to cut the throats of the English ‘rascals’. The merchant van Herring has some qualms of conscience, but is soon overruled. They agree to treat the English with feigned kindness till the time is ripe to draw the net over them. Now Beamont and Collins, two English merchants, come in to announce the arrival of Towerson, chief English factor in Amboyna. When Towerson himself enters, he is accompanied by the governor's son, Harman junior, whom he had recently rescued from pirates at sea. In a dance, the natives of Amboyna show their jubilation at Towerson's arrival. The Dutch merchants feign a cordial welcome in ambiguous terms. Ysabinda meets Towerson, her fiancé, and the governor promises a feast in honour of the English merchant and his bride. In this act we become acquainted with all the chief characters but one (Perez), and the purpose of the plot is clearly exposed.

Act II. Young Harman falls head over heels in love with Ysabinda. Of course his advances meet with a rebuff. When Towerson himself enters, the two lovers quarrel and young Harman challenges his rival to a duel. The latter refuses because he feels responsible for his compatriots; if he should kill Harman, he would endanger the position of all the English in the island. The disappointed Harman consults the fiscal,

<sup>1</sup> Though of course it is to be found in the Scott-Saintsbury edition and in Montague Summers' edition of Dryden's dramatic works. Recently a photo-copy appeared.

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who advises him not to be too hot-headed, but nevertheless promises to find means of killing Towerson even before he can lay hands on the other Englishmen. A fit instrument is found in Perez, a Spanish captain in the Dutch service. Perez's desire for money and a grudge he bears Towerson on account of unrewarded services, induce him to accept the fiscal's proposal to try and murder the chief English merchant. While Perez is away to obtain the governor's permission for his murderous scheme, both the fiscal and Beamont try to win over Julia, Perez's wife, to become their mistress. In her presence they make fun of the Spaniards, especially of their attempts to keep up the appearance of gentlemen living in luxury despite their poverty. When Julia invites her lovers also to give their opinions about their own respective nations, the Dutch fiscal takes the lead. He scoffs at England for bad management of the fisheries in the narrow seas - always a thorn in the flesh of those who wanted to improve England's economic position - for the heavy charges incurred in trading, which made their merchandise dear and the profits small, and even, most cynically, for the stupidity of giving up the cautionary towns in Holland (1616). At last Julia becomes impatient to hear the Dutch reviled. Beamont ridicules them for not being gentlemen, though ‘they have stolen the arms of the best families of Europe’. But his main theme is the Dutch ingratitude: ‘We have set you up, and you undermine our power....’. As to religion, the Dutch are only tolerant to those who can pay for it. He admits that the English cannot compare with the Dutch for economy in trading. But then the English merchants live like noblemen, whereas Dutch gentlemen - if there are any - live like boors. The much praised liberty in Holland is a hoax. They are ten times more taxed than any people in Christendom. Julia cleverly puts an end to the heated dispute by inviting both to supper.

Act III. Perez, dagger in hand, enters Towerson's house and finds the latter sleeping on his couch. On the table is a memorandum: Towerson had remembered his debt to Perez and intends to pay him 500 pounds as a testimony of gratitude for honourable service done to him. Perez, full of shame, leaves the room after writing on the paper: ‘Thy virtue saved thy life’. Towerson awakes and his friend Beamont calls on him, intending to accompany the bridegroom to the wedding. Almost at the

same time the governor and the fiscal arrive; in order to lay any suspicions on the part of the English, they have come to apologize for young Harman's rashness and insolence. They try to persuade Towerson to celebrate the wedding at the castle. After some hesitation Towerson consents and the wedding takes place with songs and dance. In the midst of the festivities a captain, called Middleton, comes in with an English woman in a deplorable physical condition. She accuses the merchant van Herring of treacherously sinking her husband's ship, but the Dutch governor refuses to hear complaints against the Hollanders and the feast goes on as if nothing had happened.

Act IV. Scene: A wood near the castle.

At night young Harman and the fiscal lurk in the wood, waiting for an opportunity to kill Towerson before the wedding is over. They had asked him for a meeting on an urgent business. When Towerson fails to come, the fiscal promises to try and find him. The conversation is overheard by Perez and his lieutenant and the indignant Spaniard at once attacks the assassin. Towerson arrives only just in time, to save young Harman from inevitable death and receives a ring as a reward. Young Harman hurriedly disappears to find his accomplice, the fiscal. They meet Ysabinda who cannot find her bridegroom, but young Harman politely offers to take her to him. On their way he rapes her and Towerson finds his bride, gagged and bound to a tree. When young Harman and the fiscal return to the spot of the crime, a fight follows in which young Harman is killed and the fiscal, now left to himself, pleads with the indignant Towerson for his life. But when the governor and his guard appear on the scene, the tables are turned. The fiscal accuses Towerson of robbery (he is possessed of Harman's ring!) and murder. The governor feigns to believe the fiscal's story and all the English are apprehended, charged with murder and with a conspiracy to take the castle.

Act V. A tribunal is set up and before the trial of the English merchants the fiscal explains how he will make away with them. He has tortured a Japanese soldier, whose confession is sufficient ground for accusing all of them. First Beamont and Collins are led in; they do not confess anything. Next Towerson's page, another boy, and a woman are tortured. Towerson himself is the last victim; he makes a spirited defence, but of course all to no purpose. In the mean time Julia succeeds in persuading the fiscal to spare her lover Beamont, which he only grants if she will be
his mistress'. Needless to say, there are scenes of cruel torture to produce the necessary effect on the audience. The English merchants are condemned to death and led away to execution, but not before Towerson had prophesied the total ruin of Holland. Only the Dutch judges remain on the stage, drinking 'with joyful hearts to the confusion of all English Starts'.

1 Dryden seems to have been puzzled by the fact that two Englishmen, Beamont and Collins, were pardoned; he ascribes the escape of Beamont to the fiscal's sensuality.
Appendix II
Some notes on *Amboyna*.

1. Those who are interested in the play will find copious and on the whole reliable notes in Summers' edition of Dryden's plays\(^1\). Dryden could not have wished a more sympathetic editor than this ‘eremitical and rigid old Victorian’\(^2\), whose views correspond with those of the Tories in the seventeenth century. Yet his labours are sometimes entirely overlooked.

In the *Review of English Studies VIII* (New Series) 1957, where the forthcoming edition of *The Works of John Dryden* under the supervision of Professor Swedenberg is enthusiastically announced, the reviewer\(^3\) says: ‘The Scott-Saintsbury edition is difficult to buy. Only a few of the plays are accessible in any form whatever’. Not a word about Summers' edition of 1932. It is true that his work met with criticism; when he gives expression to his rough and ready high-Tory views, he becomes at times exasperating. Many of his comments will not pass unchallenged, such as, ‘with an intruder (William III) in power any illegality was possible’; ‘the so-called reformed religion in Holland was wide enough to include almost any fanaticism and eccentricity’; ‘it is true that if one scratches a Whig one finds an atheist’ etc. etc. But we may nevertheless be grateful for the enormous amount of work that has been done in collecting notes for the plays. One or two errors in about 20 pages of annotation on *Amboyna* should not pass uncorrected, while other comment is added on passages in the play that warrant further treatment.

On page 346 of his edition Summers says: ‘Dryden in the main has scarcely departed from history’. It all depends on what is understood by ‘in the main’ and ‘scarcely’. Act II, III, and IV are merely fictitious; acts I and V contain much that is not in accordance with the historical facts; for instance, nothing is known about van Speult's son, Ysabinda, or a woman who was tortured. In the fifth act no Englishman confesses in spite of hideous torments; in reality they all ‘confessed’, Beamont even twice. Dryden deviated considerably from historical truth, partly

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1 *Dryden. The Dramatic Works* III.
2 As Summers calls himself in his edition of Shadwell's Works.
3 James Kinsley.

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because his material was insufficient to make good drama, but even more so because of his desire to rouse popular feeling against Holland.

Summers seems convinced that the Low Countries were flooded with abusive pictures and medals directed against King Charles. ‘They were the veriest factory of lampoon’ (p. 562). There was, however, but one medal struck that could be called abusive. Pictures deriding Charles II are also rare before the third Anglo-Dutch war (Romein de Hooghe's art flourished most in and after 1672). The affair of the abusive pictures and medals was much exaggerated to form another justification for war (see also note 4).

On page 562 Summers quotes Sanderson's *Compleat History*: ‘the Governour of Amboyna, leaving his Command, was forced by fowl weather upon our Coast, his Ships seized on, and his person brought to give an accompt heroef before our Admiralty...’. But Sanderson was misinformed. After his governorship van Speult never returned to Europe. He went from Batavia on an expedition to the Red Sea and died at Moncha1.

Summers defines *fiscal* as ‘a magistrate whose duty it was to take cognizance of offences against the revenue’. But Dutch ‘fiskaal’ had the wider meaning of Public Prosecutor2.

2. The Epistle Dedicatory, p. 349. Principles, which are asserted with so generous and so unconstrain'd a Tryal = Principles which were maintained in such a noble and voluntary test.

‘Their Pictures and Inscriptions well we know; We may be bold one Medal sure to show’.

Dryden seems to have studied Dutch emblems with some relish. A graphic description is to be found in his postscript of the *History of the League* 1684, when he wanted to illustrate his conviction that Calvinists and Jesuits held the same tenets as regards the right of the people to depose a ‘heretical’ King,

1 inter alia *Cal. of S.P. Col.* 1625-29, p. 690.
2 *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal*: fiskaal = rechterlijk ambtenaar die voor de belangen van den souverein of van de schatkist optreedt; ambtenaar van het openbaar ministerie.
3 The pages throughout refer to Summers' edition.

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‘And if, after so many advices to a painter, I might advise a Dutch maker of emblems, he should draw a Presbyterian in arms on one side, a Jesuit on the other, and a crowned head betwixt them; for it is perfectly a battle-royal. Each of them is endeavouring the destruction of his adversary; but the monarch is sure to get blows on both sides’.

In 1672 King Charles saw a reason for war in these pictures and medals. He could bear the Dutch insolence no longer, ‘….n'y ayant presque point de ville dans toute l'étendue de leur Jurisdiction, qui ne soit remplie de Peintures offensantes, de Medailles, ou de Monumens faux, dont il y a même, qui ont été mis au jour ou exposés publiquement en montre par ordre de l'Etat’. (Declaration of war).

Judging from what is extant in the Dutch museums of prints and numismatic collections, this accusation seems rather exaggerated. One or two engravings and only one medal in the period between 1667 and 1672 may be called abusive. One of the prints' was also known in England; Henry Stubbe reproduced it in his pamphlet, *A further justification of the war against Holland*. It contains conventional allegorical figures, a virgin (Holland) trampling down another woman (England) adorned with peacock-feathers and resting her head on a globe. In front of her a Dutch sailor is cutting off the tails of English dogs. In the left hand top corner a farmer is killing a snake (Charles II) which had been warming itself in front of his fire. Another print that may have roused indignation in England is the *Sinnebeelt op d'Engelse Brandt-stichters* 1666 (*Emblem of the English Incendiaries*). Charles II, sitting on his throne, rewards sailors who had burnt the Dutch merchant-men in the Vlie, but at the same time the miserable victims of the Great Fire of London come to implore his help. Charles's crown slants on his head. In a rhymed explanation the attention of Parliament is drawn to the King's unsteady position:

‘Ja siet gy niet alreets gy Heeren met u allen,  
Hoe dat van Karels hooft de Kroon begint te vallen’.

The King's features, however, are regular and not unpleasant. The
time had not yet come that caricature began to tamper with the features of its victim.

At the command of the States General a medal was struck in remembrance of the peace of Breda (1667). The obverse shows a virgin (Holland) trampling down Discord (a witch-like figure with features that may or may not resemble Charles II). In the background we see the burning of English ships at Chatham and the motto: Procul hinc mala bestia regnis. The Master of the Mint in England showed the medal to the King, because ill-disposed people applied ‘mala bestia’ to Charles himself. The Dutch government requested Sir William Temple, the English ambassador at The Hague, to convince the King that mala bestia referred to ‘war, envy and discord’. At the same time they ordered the seal-engraver, Christoffel Adolphi, to break the dies, awarding him one thousand ducatons as a compensation for his loss.

The indignation in England about pictures and medals was politically engineered; of course the Dutch tried to prove that the affair had been inflated out of all proportion. The Dutch writer of a surreptitious pamphlet, called England's Appeal, said that the English had not been able to procure any defamatory pictures. It is true that one medal was struck, but the dies were broken and what is more, all impartial people that had seen it, could not find anything in it that was insulting to His Majesty. This pamphlet was a serious attempt to influence members of Parliament in favour of Holland, and the author would not have written it, if the contrary could easily have been proved, since this would obviously have defeated his own object. Dryden seems to have had such Dutch denial in mind when he wrote his prologue. He, at least, could show an abusive medal - his picture of the Dutch cruelties in Amboyna.

5. Act I, p. 356. ‘Did he (Towerson) not leave a mistress in these Parts?’ Towerson's real love-story is rather different from Dryden's narrative. From scattered items in the State Papers may be inferred that his feelings towards his ‘mistress’ had a solid material basis in the shape of ‘great diamonds’. She was an Indian lady, the widow of one captain

1 C. Veth, Geschiedenis van de Nederlandsche Caricatuur, Leiden 1921.
3 Resolutiën der Staten van Holland, 18 May 1669.
4 Knuttel no. 10912. The writer was probably Du Moulin, secretary of William of Orange.
`Hawkins, and said to be very rich. Her wealth even roused the greed of Towerson's employers in London. In the court-minutes of 1614 we read: “Mrs. Hawkins has one diamond of 2000 lb. and a smaller one worth 4000 lb, beside other precious stones. The governor charges all present to keep these things secret”’. Towerson married the rich widow and began to travel through India ‘with a large retinue, a trumpet and more show than the lord ambassador’¹. The latter was sorry ‘for him and his little vanity’. Towerson discovered to his chagrin that his wife's friends and relations were poor and he was soon ‘weary of his new kindred’. He left for England, his wife and his mother-in-law staying at Agra, evidently not in the best of circumstances, for they had to borrow money ‘until his return’. But he never saw them again; his company sent him to Amboyna, where he met with his death.

6. Act I, p. 359. ‘we must use your Head in a certain Business’. Towerson's head was put on a stake, where it remained for a long time. This caused much indignation and protest⁴

   Ysabinda: You do belie him basely.
   Harman: As much as I do you, in saying you are fair...
   It would seem that Harman means: I do not belie you if I say that you are fair; neither do I belie Towerson in saying that he is false; it is the truth.


9. Act II, p. 369. Beamont: ‘...you made bold with the first of the Divine Attributes; and call'd your selves the High and Mighty: though, let me tell you, that, besides the Blasphemy, the Title is ridiculous;’ Beamont's pious words were irrelevant.
   ‘Hoogmogend’ (title of the members of the States General) is not an attribute reserved for God. The epithet was often ridiculed. In *The Wild Gallant* (1663) Bibber confesses: ‘I was drunk with Ale, great Hogen Mogen bloody Ale’. In *The Assignation* (1673) Laura says: ‘I have found thee out for a high and mighty fool’ (act III, scene 1). In 1674 appeared an anonymous

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1 *Cal. of S.P. Col. 1513-1616*, pp. 277, 278.
2 *Cal. of S.P. Col. 1617-1622*, pp. 86, 120, 140, 334 etc.
3 Cf. Amboyna, act II, p. 369. ‘...for our Merchants live like Noblemen...’
4 *Cal. of S.P. Col. 1625-1629*, p. 155.

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satire on the Dutch, an imitation of *Hudibras*, under the title of *Hoganmoganoides*, ‘an account of the birth, parentage and education of Hogan, the lubberly representative of their High Mightinesses’. For Dryden's bitter mockery in *The State of Innocence* see p. 73.

10. Act II, p. 369. ‘...for our Merchants live like Noblemen: your Gentlemen, if you have any, live like Boors’. An ever recurring description of English and Dutch merchants. Sprat wrote in his *History of the Royal Society*: ‘The Merchants of England live honourably in foreign Parts, those of Holland meanly, minding their Gain alone: ours converse freely, and learn from all; having in their Behaviour very much of the Gentility of the Families, from which so many of them are descended. The others when they are abroad, show that they are only a Race of plain Citizens...’. But he added: ‘This I have spoken not to lessen the Reputation of that industrious People...’.

11. Act II, p. 370. Beamont: ‘...I prophesie...that some generous Monarch...will re-assume the Fishery of our Seas’. Of course ‘some generous Monarch’ stands for Charles II. Indeed, measures were taken in his reign to promote British fishery. Immediately after the Restoration the House of Commons passed the *Bill for Encouragement of the Fishery Trade of this Nation*. But this bill did not reach the House of Lords, because Parliament was prorogued. Later on great privileges were promised to those who would apply themselves to fishing. But the generous Monarch did not succeed in driving the Dutch fishermen from the British coasts, except, of course, in war-time, when the Dutch government did not allow the fishing busses to sail out. Again and again the Dutch Republic managed to maintain the right of free fishing so clearly expressed in the *Magnus Intercursus*, the treaty of 1496 between the English King and Philip, Duke of Burgunduy, which allowed fishermen of both parties the right of fishing ‘absque aliquo Impedimento, Licentia, seu Salvo Conductu’.

It was James I who tried to encroach upon the rights of Dutch fishermen in 1609, when his *Proclamation touching Fishing* was published. He ordered that ‘no Person... be permitted to fish upon our Coasts and

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1 Cf. also N.E.D. sub Hogen Mogen.
2 p. 88.
Seas of Great Britain...until they have orderly demanded and obtain'd Licences from us’. His proclamation appeared two months after Grotius’ *Mare Liberum*, which was originally written to prove that the Portuguese had no exclusive rights in the Indian Ocean. But the book was also applicable to the situation in the Narrow Seas, which were claimed by the English King as his own dominion. The term ‘Narrow Seas’ was originally confined to the Channel, but in the seventeenth century English statesmen began to extend the meaning to the sea between England and the Netherlands. With this interpretation the prospect for the Dutch herring fishery was gloomy indeed. Yet King James did not press his alleged claims; the question remained unsettled and the Dutch fished practically unmolested, till, in 1635, John Selden’s *Mare Clausum seu Dominium Maris* appeared. Soon after the publication Charles I repeated his father’s attempt to make the Dutch fishermen pay taxes. Again the Netherlands managed to evade a settlement of the question, till the events in England broke the King’s power to assert himself abroad. There was a last endeavour to impose the so-called rights of the English King in 1664. War was imminent and England proffered passports to Dutch fishermen against payment of safeguard-money. But the Dutch government strictly prohibited the acceptance of such licences, because it made their fishermen indirectly tributary to the King of England. Thus they maintained their right of free fishing against the English pretence of the ‘mare clausum’. Nevertheless the hey-day of the Dutch herring fishery was past when naval warfare against England began. Long periods of inactivity caused by wars, loss of ships, and failure to maintain the high quality of salted herring in spite of the strict regulations, led to a rapid decline of the trade.

12. Act III, p. 372. Beamont: ‘...t was certainly an Enemy, who came to take your sleeping life; but thus to leave unfinish’d the designe, proclaims the act, No Dutchman’. Summers gives the reading of the oldest editions. The Scott-Saintsbury edition has: no Dutchman’s, which certainly makes more sense.

13. Act III, p. 377. ‘...our Countrymen...were dispossed, and naked sent away from that rich Island (Lantore) and from Poleroon’.

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1 Dryden refers to the alleged English superiority in the Narrow Seas in act III, p. 378: ‘(I) told him he should dearly answer it, if e're I met him in the Narrow Seas’.


*J.A. van der Welle, *Dryden and Holland*
In the beginning of the seventeenth century there was an English factory in Puluroon, one of the Banda islands. When the Dutch began to extend their authority in the Moluccas, the English East-India Company sent one of their best servants, Nathaniel Courthope, to defend the island to the utmost of his power, if the Hollanders should ‘offer violence’. Almost unsupported by his company, he held out till 1620, when, trying to procure stores for his fort, he was killed at sea. Soon afterwards the Dutch took Lantar (Dryden: Lantore), seized the English company's goods, and landed on Puluroon. By virtue of a treaty in 1623 the island had to be ceded to the English East-India Company, but nothing happened till 1654, when the unhappy issue of the first Anglo-Dutch war compelled the States General to order the Dutch company to give up the island. But the English did not avail themselves of the opportunity. Two directors of the English company had been bribed for an annuity of £ 1000 to prevent the occupation. After the Restoration and the death of those corruptible gentlemen the English company again claimed the island. The Dutch demanded a formal authorisation from King Charles II that his subjects were entitled to occupy the island by virtue of the treaty of 1654. Of course nothing was easier than to obtain an authorisation, but the King positively declined to recognise a treaty made by Cromwell. So the Dutch refused to give up Puluroon; Charles had recognised Cromwell's Navigation Acts; he should have recognised Cromwell's treaty of 1654 as well. This was not merely petty bickering. The treaty of 1654 had settled the so-called ‘pretentions’ of the English company; if Charles did not recognise the treaty, the older claims could be resurrected again. At last, after long negotiations, the States General gave in and ordered the Dutch East-India Company to accept Charles's authorisation without any allusion to the treaty of Westminster. Before long, English representatives appeared before the authorities in Batavia to claim possession of Puluroon. To prove the legality of their demands, they produced a document. But the Dutch council, seeing that the paper was ‘begrimed, soiled and rather mutilated’, doubted if it was the King's authorisation. They would not begin to speak about a cession before the English representatives had sworn solemn oaths. Pending the

1 N. Japikse, De Verwikkelingen tusschen de Republiek en Engeland van 1660-1665, Leiden 1900, p. 87.
2 ibidem, p. 370: ‘bemorst, bemeuselt ende toegesteldt’.
negotiations the second Anglo-Dutch war broke out. At the peace of Breda Puluroon remained Dutch; together with Surinam if was thought an adequate compensation for the loss of the New Netherlands.

14. Act IV, p. 383. Yough Fro = Dutch, juffrouw. The other Dutch words used in the play are skellum (p. 354), stert and start (p. 354 and p. 405), romer (p. 360), Min Heer (p. 363), Swager (p. 366) and Hans in Kelder (the unborn babe, p. 383). As Dryden had some knowledge of German, it is not impossible that he could also understand - or thought he could understand - the Dutch language. At any rate he makes bold to judge Dutch poetry. It had less of music in it than ordinary speech of the Italians. Dutch poets were insipid and dull. But the words mentioned above were evidently common knowledge in England in the seventeenth century, and they cannot be used as proof that Dryden knew Dutch.

15. Act V, p. 403. Towerson: ‘...give to my brave Employers of the East-India Company the last Remembrance of my faithful Service’. Towerson's relations with his employers were not so ideal as Dryden would have us believe. He was in the habit of doing a little business on the side, even pretending that he had the Company's licence for private trade. This roused the envy of his fellow-merchants, who complained to the company at home. It did not come to a definite breach between Towerson and his employers, but there were frequent frictions.

16. Act V, p. 404. Perez: ‘But I am guilty of a greater Crime; For, being married in another Country, the Governors persuasions...made me leave the first...’. There is a reference to Perez's wife in an authentic copy of the Acts of the Processe. ‘...the wife of Augustine Peres which hath beene a slave of the honourable Dutch East-India Company, who was given to the said Augustine in hope of his good carriage for the present, shee shall returne to her ancient Maisters of the said Compagnie, untill such time that shee shall be otherwise disposed of by the Governour’.

17. Act V, p. 405. ‘There's ne'er a Nostradamus of’em all shall fright us from our Gain’. Though Dryden was a dabbler in astrology

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2 Cal. of S.P. Col. 1617-1622, pp. 86, 117, 120, 296.
3 Knuttel no. 3552.
till the end of his life, he did not seem to take the famous Michel de Nostredame seriously, which is clear from his reference in *The Hind and the Panther*, part III, lines 519-522,

‘Each Nostradamus can foretell with ease:  
Not naming persons, and confounding times,  
One casual truth supports a thousand lying rimes’.

If Dryden speaks humorously of the French astrologer, many took him seriously in those ‘prophesying times’. In the same year as *Amboyna*, there appeared ‘*Predictions tirées des Centuries de Nostradamus*’, written by Le Chevalier de Jant and dedicated to Louis XIV. De Jant took seven stanzas from Nostredame which seemed to point to Holland's downfall, and explained that Louis was destined to fulfil the prophecy. As there is no indication that Dryden knew the booklet, we might ignore it, if it did not throw light on the affair of the abusive medals. De Jant quotes the inscriptions of two specimens as the ‘ridicule trophée de leur vanité’. One, showing the sea, bears the proud inscription: ‘Sic fines nostros, leges tutamur et undas’, and the other: ‘...Vindicata Marium Libertate...Stabilita Orbis Europaei Quiete, hoc Senatus Foederati Belgii cudi fect’. De Jant indicated that these were one of the reasons for the English King's war against Holland. They were not insulting to Charles personally; it was the jubilation of the Dutch at their victory that excited his anger.

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Stellingen

I.

De bewering van Mark van Doren, dat Dryden zo weinig tot zijn landgenoten te zeggen heeft gehad, kan na de onderzoekingen der laatste 30 jaar moeilijk gehandhaafd worden. (Mark van Doren, The Poetry of John Dryden, Cambridge 1931, p. 241: ‘Dryden, who has had so little to say to his countrymen, has had no claim at all on the ears of foreigners’).

II.

Dryden behoorde niet tot de Katholieken die grote voordelen verwachtten van het regime van Jacobus II, zoals degenen die de oproertheid van zijn bekering in twijfel trekken, schijnen te menen (o.a. Macaulay en Christie in zijn Memoir of Dryden, pp. LVIII en LIX).

III.


IV.

Het zou wenselijk geweest zijn, dat Coolhaas de bron had vermeld van zijn cursief gedrukte woorden: ‘In 1673 echter moet Dryden op bestelling van een der “Cabal” ministers het onderwerp (de berechting der Engelsen op Ambon) als tragedie bewerken’. Het bewijs is moeilijk te leveren. (W.Ph. Coolhaas in Aanteekeningen en opmerkingen over den zoogenaamden Ambonschen moord. Bijdragen tot de taal-, land- en volkenkunde van Nederlandsch Indië. 1942).

V.

De opvatting van Sir Winston Churchill, dat John Dryden zelf de memoires van Jacobus II heeft gecopieerd, is te verkiezen boven de

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VI.


VII.

Dr. Mak onderschat de faam van Chaucer in de 17de en 18de eeuw op het vasteland, als hij beweert, dat Bilderdijk de eerste niet-Engelsman was, die Chaucer zelf heeft gelezen. (Ridder Sox gevolgd door Koekeloer, met toelichting van Dr. J.J. Mak, Amsterdam 1956, p. 56).

VIII.

Als Willem Sewel onder enkele duidelijke voorbeelden van onzuiver rijm bij Dryden ook de combinatie clean-green vermeldt, dan is dat geen vergissing, maar een bewijs te meer, dat de Middel-engelse ‘slack ε’ (meestal gespeld ea) op het eind der 17de eeuw nog lang niet algemeen was overgegaan in [i:]. (De voorbeelden van onzuiver rijm zijn te vinden in het *Groot Woordenboek der Engelsche en Nederduytsche Taalen*, Amsterdam 1708, p. 687).

IX.

Het mislukken van de pogingen om in de 17de eeuw een Engelse Academie te stichten in de geest van de Académie Française, is eerder toe te schrijven aan toevallige historische gebeurtenissen, dan aan het gezond verstand der Engelsen, zoals Kruisinga beweerde. (E. Kruisinga, *Het Taalbegrip van Dryden*, Utrecht 1929, p. 9: ‘Het gezond verstand, meer dan theoretische wetenschap, heeft de Engelsen ook hier voor het dwaze, en volkomen hopeloze, experiment bewaard’).

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De opmerking van Dr. Ter Horst, dat we over de hoofdzaken uit het leven van Isaäc Vossius thans wel voldoende zijn ingelicht, geldt niet voor diens Engelse periode van 1670 tot 1689. (Dr. D.J.H. ter Horst, *Isaäc Vossius en Salmatis*, ’s-Gravenhage 1938, p. 7).


Het voorstel van Dr. P.J. Somers om te trachten voor het grootste gedeelte van de candidaten van de H.B.S. het mondeling eindexamen moderne talen te laten vervallen, verdient geen steun. (Dit voorstel werd gepubliceerd en verdedigd in *St. Bonaventura* en andere bladen, o.a. het weekblad van het C.G.M.O., no. 1497, 1498, 1499 en 1500).

Schooluitwisselingen met het buitenland behoren meer gestimuleerd te worden; ze hebben het meeste effect, als de periode van het verblijf niet te lang wordt gemaakt, bijv. tien, hoogstens veertien dagen.

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