

verheerlyke Vrede door zyn KEYSERLYKE MAYSTEIT VAN RUSLAND, etc: etc: etc: en den KONING en d  
sloeten, en naar dien oek geratificeerd, heeft den Ed. Heer CHRISTOFFEL VAN BRANTS, Zydes Edelman, H  
teit van Rusland, resideerende tot Amsterdam, dit vreugde-jaar laten oprechten, en doen aensteecken den 9 December

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# AMSTER DIPLOMACY

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Amsterdam as a diplomatic city, 1648-1795

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Tessa de Boer, s1614541

RMA thesis, 'Europe 1000-1800'

Leiden University

30 ECTS || 28627 words || Supervisor: Dr. M. A. Ebben

*Triumphale Säulen, welche die Völker der Welt in der Mitte des 17ten Jahrhunderts in Amsterdam erblickten. Die Säulen sind mit den Namen der Kaiser, Könige und Fürsten beschriftet, welche in diesem Jahre gestorben sind. Die Säulen sind von den Niederländern errichtet worden. Die Säulen sind von den Niederländern errichtet worden.*

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## Introduction

I will no longer resist the call of my good city,  
and the need I feel to reside within its welcoming arms.<sup>1</sup>

Thus King Louis Napoléon Bonaparte of Holland replied to a group of Amsterdam magistrates on April 9th, 1808. They had come to request the King to transfer the seats of royalty and government from The Hague to their city. Louis accepted, glad that the matter had finally been resolved. Both Louis and his overbearing brother had intended for Amsterdam to be the capital of their venture from the beginning, but both were also aware of the sensibilities and connotations that would accompany moving the center of government away from The Hague.<sup>2</sup> In his 1820 memoirs, Louis detailed his anxieties. The Hollanders, ever negatively inclined towards change, would not take kindly towards this shift. The citizens of The Hague were much more invested in government than those of Amsterdam had ever been.<sup>3</sup> Yet these objections did not weigh up against the personal wishes of the Bonapartes and the Amsterdam magistracy. After a slow process of gradual transfer, sealed by Louis' declaration on April 9<sup>th</sup> and his eventual entrance into the city on the 20<sup>th</sup>, Amsterdam was without a doubt the official capital of the new kingdom. Magistracies and ministries were moved from their The Hague establishments to improvised housing scattered around Amsterdam. The King himself made the City Hall his palace, though he declared his intention to move out as soon as more suitable accommodations could be found or built; the City Hall should in time return to the purpose it was famously built for.

Amsterdam, in all, proved a disappointing capital. The City Hall was a cold and uncomfortable royal lodging. Court life was exceedingly dull and uninspired. The Amsterdam elite was uninterested in being an accessory to a royal court. They could not claim a centuries-old tradition of ceremonies, parades and fêtes, or at least not to the extent of The Hague.<sup>4</sup> Even the layout of the city proved disappointing.

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<sup>1</sup> Cited by G. Rommelse and D. Onnekink, *The Dutch in the early modern world: a history of global power* (Cambridge 2019) 277.

<sup>2</sup> Rommelse and Onnekink, *The Dutch in the early modern world*, 277.

<sup>3</sup> L. Bonaparte, *Documents historiques et réflexions sur le gouvernement de la Hollande. Tome second* (Paris 1820) 34-35.

<sup>4</sup> N. Wisman, 'Een vergeten jubileum', *Ons Amsterdam* 6 (2006) 232-236.

Leisurely going out for a ride in a carriage required extensive planning due to narrow canals and severe restrictions on carriage use due to the ground being ‘sponge and unstable’.<sup>5</sup> In the end, the departure of Louis Napoléon in 1810 also stripped Amsterdam from the seat of government. It returned to The Hague, and stayed there.

The 1808 move from The Hague to Amsterdam represented a cumulation of over three centuries of competition between the two cities. With The Hague serving as the political and diplomatic center of the Republic, and Amsterdam as the economic and financial motor, a bipolar distribution of power and influence quickly developed. This characterization of the two cities, though largely correct, negates a subversion of these interests. In (popular) historiography, the political aspirations of Amsterdam have been generally assigned to a couple of paragraphs in works detailing Amsterdam’s economics, colonialism and art. Amsterdam’s diplomatic interests are reduced to mere footnotes. This is surprising given the scale and nature of Amsterdiplomacy – that is, the corpus of diplomatic activity centered around Amsterdam. In the early modern Dutch Republic, existing (attempts at) legislation designated the Estates General in The Hague, and by extension The Hague as a town, as the only address to direct diplomatic requests to and to perform the ceremonies. In practice, however, this supposed monopoly wasn’t that clear-cut at all, and this was largely due to Amsterdam.

Amsterdam was both an actor and receptor when it came to diplomacy. Various parties in Amsterdam took an active interest in determining foreign policy and negotiating with foreign envoys, and sent many of their own abroad to serve as diplomats. In essence, this constituted toying with setting up and managing entire networks of secondary, shadow diplomacy. As the receptive party, large volumes of diplomatic correspondence were addressed to the city. Physical presence, too, was very significant: besides visiting envoys from The Hague, a sizeable community of envoys assigned to Amsterdam lived and worked within city bounds. All of the above tended to tread the legal edges of state-driven geopolitical diplomacy. It tested the will of the Amsterdam magistracy to obey and

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<sup>5</sup> Anonymous, *The present state of Holland, or a description of the United Provinces. Wherein is contained, a particular account of The Hague, and all the principal cities and towns of the Republick, with their buildings, curiosities &c.* (Leiden 1765) 159. See at <https://tinyurl.com/ybwm76wz> [accessed May 29th 2020].

cooperate with the Estates General. On the whole, the existence of Amsterdiplomacy implied a deep rift between legal stipulation and practical application within early modern diplomatic practice.

However, this tension has warranted little scholarly attention, as has Amsterdiplomacy as a phenomenon. The obscurity of Amsterdiplomacy in the historiographical record is partly explained by the *modus operandi* and research interests of diplomatic history as it existed up until approximately the 1990s. Traditional diplomatic history was centered around states, constitutions and bureaucracies. Actor-wise, it preferred clear-cut diplomats, such as those designated ‘ambassadors’.<sup>6</sup> The emphasis was on the fruits of their labor: what were the results of their negotiation, and how did they advance international relations?<sup>7</sup> This type of diplomatic history had tendencies towards whig history, presenting the development of (geopolitical) diplomacy as teleological: Taking the early Italian Renaissance as a starting point, international relations would grow more sophisticated and efficient with time.<sup>8</sup> Central attention was given to the events of 1648 and the development of the so-called ‘Westphalian system’, which rested on the mutual recognition of the sovereignty of other European powers and the establishment of a network of continuous representation.<sup>9</sup> The traditional historiography on Dutch diplomacy in specific was additionally characterized by its legal emphasis, due to the subject mostly having drawn the interest of jurists or political scientists instead of historians. These works, especially that of Fockema Andreae<sup>10</sup>, neatly outlined the early modern diplomatic legislation: the Estates General in The Hague was in possession of the sovereign right to diplomacy, and there was little room for other entities to claim this privilege otherwise. The discrepancy between the legal framework and the actual exercise of political power still went unnoticed. Within this paradigm in diplomatic history, it is understandable that Amsterdam would face neglect. The state-driven, geopolitical diplomacy featuring high-ranking ambassadors was to be found in The Hague. A notable exception to this historiography is the 1856 work of Georg Willem Vreede, *Inleiding tot eene geschiedenis der Nederlandsche diplomatie*,

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<sup>6</sup> T. A. Sowerby, ‘Early modern diplomatic history’, *History compass* 14:9 (2016) 441-456: 443.

<sup>7</sup> L. H. J. Sicking and M. A. Ebben, ‘Nieuwe diplomatieke geschiedenis van de premoderne tijd. Een inleiding’, *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis* 127:4 (2014) 541-552: 541.

<sup>8</sup> J. Black, *A history of diplomacy* (London 2010) 17.

<sup>9</sup> Black, *A history of diplomacy*, 27.

<sup>10</sup> S. J. Fockema Andreae, *De Nederlandse staat onder de Republiek* (Amsterdam 1975).

which would be the standard work on Dutch diplomacy for a number of decades.<sup>11</sup> Whilst clearly displaying the historiographical tendencies as described above, Vreede occasionally commented on Amsterdam's ventures in diplomacy. This usually occurred during descriptions of the diplomatic rights of cities and examples of perceived transgressions. It is unclear what Vreede's final verdict on Amsterdam's diplomacy was: he variably deemed it 'annoying and treasonous' as well as 'a sign of noble and unwavering patriotism'.<sup>12</sup> The *Inleiding* thus presents us with a perspective on Amsterdam's diplomacy through the eyes of traditional diplomatic history – with a dubious verdict as a result.

Diplomatic history has since evolved. Emerging in the late 1990s, so-called 'new diplomatic history' constitutes a revisionary course in the historiography of diplomacy. It can be considered part of the wider trend to broaden the scope of political history. This is done by stepping away from the (nation) state as the primary base and actor of its narratives.<sup>13</sup> New diplomatic history can be summed up by three main interests.

Firstly, it centralizes diplomatic actors.<sup>14</sup> In traditional diplomatic history, their signature underneath a treaty would be of more interest than the actor himself. In recent historiography, it has been suggested that diplomatic actors had much more personal agency in negotiation than was previously assumed. For example, an article by Cátia Antunes on Portuguese diplomats in the Dutch Republic demonstrates that the political actions of the Portuguese agents were deeply influenced by their own personal and commercial interests, as opposed to blindly following orders from the Lisbon government.<sup>15</sup> This recognition of personal agency (and a willingness to employ it in diplomatic negotiation) generates interest in the lives and personalities of individual actors.

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<sup>11</sup> G. W. Vreede, *Inleiding tot eene geschiedenis der Nederlandsche diplomatie* (Utrecht 1856).

<sup>12</sup> Vreede, *Inleiding tot eene geschiedenis*, 27.

<sup>13</sup> Sicking and Ebben, 'Nieuwe diplomatieke geschiedenis', 542.

<sup>14</sup> Sowerby, 'Early modern diplomatic history', 444-445, T. A. Sowerby and J. Hennings (eds.), *Practices of diplomacy in the early modern world c. 1410-1800* (London 2017) 3 and A. J. Krischer and H. von Tiessen, 'Diplomacy in a global early modernity: the ambiguity of sovereignty', *The international history review* 40 (2018) 1-8:2.

<sup>15</sup> C. Antunes, 'Dutch-Portuguese diplomatic encounters, 1640-1703: exchanges, sovereignty and "world peace"', *Journal of early modern history* 23 (2019) 458-474. Similar arguments are made by J. Israel in 'The diplomatic career of Jeronimo Nunes da Costa: an episode in Dutch-Portuguese relations of the seventeenth century', *BMGN* 98:2 (1983) 167-190.

Secondly, it recognizes a broader range of actors involved in diplomacy. The ‘main’ ambassador, to which traditional diplomatic history assigned so much value, was normally surrounded by an array of family members and staff, both bureaucratic and domestic. The (in)direct influence of these ‘invisible agents’<sup>16</sup> on diplomatic decision making – for example, a wife discussing politics at the dinner table – is taken into account.<sup>17</sup> It is dubious to which extent these orbiting actors can be deemed diplomats. Less disputable in this case are verified diplomats of lower rank, such as agents, residents and commissaries. Consuls, whose diplomatic status has been disputed for centuries<sup>18</sup>, can more or less be considered to be part of this group as well. These ranks had been relatively neglected in traditional diplomatic history. In new diplomatic history, there is more interest in the activities of these lesser envoys, thus broadening the range of diplomatic actors under investigation.

Thirdly, following in this interest in lesser, often economically-oriented agents, comes an increased emphasis on the socio-economic aspects of diplomacy.<sup>19</sup> This can be taken two ways. Either it refers to the socio-economic consequences of traditional geopolitical diplomacy (‘how was the treaty of Ryswick celebrated in The Hague?’), or to socio-economic diplomacy in itself (‘how did consuls in Spain cooperate with local Dutch merchants?’). This broadening of the scope of diplomacy itself opens up new areas of interest, such as the mutual exchange between diplomatic communities and urban environments. At the same time, it creates problems of definition: what can be considered diplomacy? For the sake of this thesis, the definition of Tremml-Werner and Goetze will be upheld: ‘...*anyone involved in negotiating with others in order to maintain a position or to define future relations qualifies as a diplomatic actor*’.<sup>20</sup> One addendum is to be made, namely that the negotiation should involve the interests of parties considered to be a) foreign and b) preferably stately entities. Furthermore, the word ‘envoy’ is employed in this thesis as a synonym for ‘diplomat’ (following Berridge & James’s *A Dictionary of Diplomacy*<sup>21</sup>) and taken as the English translation of the Dutch word *gezant*.

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<sup>16</sup> Black, *A history of diplomacy*, 47.

<sup>17</sup> Sowerby, ‘Early modern diplomatic history’, 444, and B. Tremml-Werner and D. Goetze, ‘A multitude of actors in early modern diplomacy’, *Journal of early modern history* 23 (2019) 407-422: 411

<sup>18</sup> M. A. Ebben, ‘Uwer Hoog Moogenden onderdaenigsten dienaers. Nederlandse consuls en Staatse diplomatie in Spanje, 1648-1661’, *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis* 127:4 (2014) 649-672: 649-650, 653-654.

<sup>19</sup> Antunes, ‘Dutch-Portuguese diplomatic encounters’, 459, 467-468.

<sup>20</sup> Tremml-Werner and Goetze, ‘A multitude of actors’, 411.

<sup>21</sup> G. R. Berridge and A. James, *A dictionary of diplomacy* (Basingstoke 2003) 94.

Throughout these three aspects, the importance of networks is a common factor. Examples include personal networks of an individual actor, patronage networks, networks of main and/or lesser actors, consular networks and inter-city networks. In new diplomatic history, diplomacy is broader than political negotiation. It is rooted in local and international societies. It creates and is dependent on political, socio-economic and cultural networks. In short, a diplomatic agent is also a societal agent.<sup>22</sup>

It can be deduced that a study of Amsterdiplomacy would fit within the paradigm of new diplomatic history. Amsterdam's economic primacy and relative political power within the Republic made it an unavoidable diplomatic destination, though secondary to The Hague. The corpus of diplomatic actors in Amsterdam mainly consisted of lesser and economically-oriented envoys. A study of Amsterdam diplomatic networks, with an emphasis on individual envoys and the interplay between diplomacy and urban environments, could thus greatly demonstrate the virtues of new diplomatic history. It would abandon the traditional state-driven conception of diplomacy, and investigate the diplomatic agency of non-state powers. Unfortunately – and remarkably considering the vast array of primary source material on the subject – no such study has ever been thoroughly attempted.

The main aim of this thesis is thus to present a comprehensive survey of Amsterdiplomacy. It asks the question as to how Amsterdam functioned as a diplomatic city between 1648 and 1795. Whilst the importance (or even existence) of the Westphalian system has been debated<sup>23</sup>, 1648 and its accompanying peace congresses were still important milestones in the development of international relations and diplomacy. After 1648, the Dutch Republic was universally recognized as a stately and thus diplomatic entity.<sup>24</sup> Additionally, diplomatic networks throughout Western Europe standardized and stabilized to a degree. This makes 1648, despite recent disputes, still a viable enough choice as a starting point. The year 1795, with its accompanying Batavian Revolution, is traditionally taken as the end of the Dutch Republic and the end of its traditional diplomatic system. This time span of roughly 150 years is lengthy, but not unwarrantedly so. This is because the goal of this thesis is *not* to provide a comprehensive chronological treatise of all diplomatic meddling by Amsterdam over time. Its aim is not

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 419.

<sup>23</sup> Black, *A history of diplomacy*, 64.

<sup>24</sup> J. C. M. Pennings and T. H. P. M. Thomassen, *Archieven van Nederlandse gezanten en consuls tot 1813. Deel 1* (The Hague 1994) 20-21.

to detail and analyze specific policy changes and deeply contextualize these through the historical situation within the Republic or in Europe during one particular year or decade. Though this will of course be present whenever necessary, it is not the central component. Instead, the topic will be approached more thematically. Amsterdiplomacy was in some ways a remarkably stable phenomenon. It has proven possible to identify common themes and characteristics in diplomatic correspondence, common behavior in diplomatic agents and common sentiments in diplomatic policy makers that continue throughout the 1648-1795 period. Therefore, an analysis of these *longue durée* patterns will be more interesting and also more beneficial to the current historiography. Since there are virtually no comprehensive studies on Amsterdiplomacy, a survey of the most common characteristics is needed first. Such an introduction, presenting the available sources, key players and important networks, can later serve as the basis for more thorough and detailed analyses into specific periods in time.

Though works focused on Amsterdiplomacy are absent, there are several categories of literature that occasionally touch on some aspects of it. Treatises on the government of the Dutch Republic, such as that of Fockema Andreae, Vreede and Heringa<sup>25</sup> (the last on diplomacy specifically), detail the legislative aspects of diplomacy and the role cities such as Amsterdam nominally played within this scheme. Fruin's classic, *Geschiedenis der staatsinstellingen in Nederland*<sup>26</sup>, is more shaped as a constitutional history and likewise details some of Amsterdam's dealings in diplomatic law over time. These works are useful in the sense that they outline the things the way they should have been, therefore making it easier to identify 'illegal' Amsterdiplomacy. Groenveld's introductory chapters on the Republic's government in his work on Dutch statecraft surrounding the English Civil War<sup>27</sup>, as well as de Bruin's *Geheimhouding en verraad*<sup>28</sup>, are illuminating standouts in this category: they enumerate the same normative stipulations as the traditional treatises, but with added critical remarks referring to historical context and practice. Details on Amsterdam's influence on and interference with foreign

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<sup>25</sup> J. Heringa, *De eer en hoogheid van de staat. Over de plaats der Verenigde Nederlanden in het diplomatieke leven van de zeventiende eeuw* (Groningen 1961).

<sup>26</sup> R. Fruin, *Geschiedenis der staatsinstellingen in Nederland tot den val der Republiek* (The Hague 1922).

<sup>27</sup> S. Groenveld, *Verlopend getij. De Nederlandse Republiek en de Engelse burgeroorlog 1640-1646* (Dieren 1984).

<sup>28</sup> G. de Bruin, *Geheimhouding en verraad. De geheimhouding van staatszaken ten tijde van de Republiek (1600-1750)* (The Hague 1999).

policy making are relatively plentiful in bulky city histories such as the multiple volumes of Brugmans<sup>29</sup> and Carasso-Kok & Francissen<sup>30</sup>. Smaller, more general and more popular histories of Amsterdam generally tend to fall back onto the trope of Amsterdam as an economic and artistic city, neglecting its influence on domestic and foreign policy. By far the most fruitful category of literature, which touches the most on Amsterdiplomacy directly, are biographies or other works detailing the lives of individuals that were connected to diplomatic activity in Amsterdam. Works such as those of Franken<sup>31</sup> (on Coenraad van Beuningen) and Porta<sup>32</sup> (on Joan and Gerrit Corver) make it possible to compare individual instances of Amsterdiplomacy and draw broader conclusions.

A category of its own are Schutte's two repertoires of a) Dutch diplomats abroad<sup>33</sup> and b) foreign diplomats serving in the Dutch Republic<sup>34</sup>. These provide a *largely* complete enumeration of early modern diplomats connected to the Dutch Republic, detailing their biographies, career path and family relations. Schutte's repertoires are essential in two aspects. First, they allow the possibility of tentative quantitative analyses of diplomatic activity: several graphs in this thesis were drafted mostly based on Schutte. Secondly, they serve to familiarize the diplomatic historian with individual agents, providing a starting point for more intensive research. By combining Schutte with the types of literature as detailed above, it is more than possible to reconstruct the political and demographic framework in which Amsterdiplomacy operated.

It is due to the considerable amount of available primary source material that it is subsequently possible to go into great detail on the actual realities of Amsterdiplomacy. For this thesis, broad research into these primary sources was conducted, further opening up the prospect to quantitatively-oriented assessments. By combining three main source types, a multidimensional perspective on Amsterdiplomacy can be provided.

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<sup>29</sup> H. Brugmans, *Geschiedenis van Amsterdam. 6 volumes* (Utrecht 1972).

<sup>30</sup> M. Carasso-Kok and W. Francissen (eds.), *Geschiedenis van Amsterdam. 5 volumes* (Amsterdam 2004-2007).

<sup>31</sup> M. A. M. Franken, *Coenraad van Beuningen's politieke en diplomatieke activiteiten in de jaren 1667-1684* (Groningen 1966).

<sup>32</sup> A. Porta, *Joan en Gerrit Corver. De politieke macht van Amsterdam (1702-1748)* (Assen 1975).

<sup>33</sup> O. Schutte, *Repertorium der Nederlandse vertegenwoordigers, residerende in het buitenland 1584-1810* (The Hague 1976).

<sup>34</sup> O. Schutte, *Repertorium der buitenlandse vertegenwoordigers, residerende in Nederland 1584-1810* (The Hague 1983).

Firstly, diplomatic correspondence addressed to the burgomasters of Amsterdam provides insight into the breadth of the Amsterdam diplomatic network: where were the correspondents located, how often did they write and most importantly, why? What motivations did envoys abroad state for writing to Amsterdam alongside or instead of The Hague? Two collections of correspondence found in the Amsterdam City Archives have been incorporated, namely those of Dutch envoys stationed abroad and of foreign envoys present in the Republic.<sup>35</sup>

Secondly, the notarial deeds of Amsterdam elucidate the activities of envoys living in or visiting Amsterdam.<sup>36</sup> A surprising amount of diplomatic business was conducted inside a notary's office. Additionally, the many different deed types also detail the non-diplomatic activities of envoys, facilitating the lively reconstruction of the personal and economic interests of diplomats – as a group, but also as individuals. Not only Amsterdam-based envoys, but also those bound to The Hague visited Amsterdam notaries. Therefore, diplomatic mobility between The Hague and Amsterdam can be charted, and the exact reasons for travel more clearly distinguished. The notarial archives of Amsterdam are currently undergoing indexation (the Alle Amsterdamse Akten project<sup>37</sup>), hosted on the *velehanden* platform<sup>38</sup>, where ca. 950 volunteers provide input which is subsequently double checked by experts and then uploaded to an index. At the time of writing, an approximate 5% of all deeds (260,000 out of an estimated 5 million) were searchable through the index. For the purpose of this research, three main methods were employed to find envoys in deeds. Firstly, the names of envoys listed by Schutte were subjected to the index in its current state. Secondly, a notice was put on the project's *velehanden* forum, asking the volunteers to report any envoys they came across during their indexation efforts.<sup>39</sup> Thirdly, existing HTR (handwritten text recognition) models developed by the Amsterdam City Archives were

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<sup>35</sup> For foreign envoys in the Republic, see SAA 5026 (Archief van de burgemeesters: missiven aan burgemeesters) 42: Buitenlandse vertegenwoordigers in Amsterdam of Den Haag. For Dutch envoys abroad, see the entirety of SAA 5027 (Archief van de burgemeesters: diplomatieke missiven van ambassadeurs, gezanten en residenten in het buitenland aan burgemeesters).

<sup>36</sup> See SAA 5075 (Archief van de notarissen der standplaats Amsterdam).

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.amsterdam.nl/stadsarchief/organisatie/projecten/alle-amsterdamse/> [Project description AAA, Amsterdam City Archives. Accessed May 29th 2020]

<sup>38</sup> [https://velehanden.nl/projecten/bekijk/details/project/amsterdam\\_notarieel\\_2](https://velehanden.nl/projecten/bekijk/details/project/amsterdam_notarieel_2) [AAA project on velehanden. Accessed May 29th 2020]

<sup>39</sup> [https://velehanden.nl/messages/questions/view/project/amsterdam\\_notarieel\\_2/id/110495/page/1](https://velehanden.nl/messages/questions/view/project/amsterdam_notarieel_2/id/110495/page/1) [Notice on the velehanden AAA project forum, calling for diplomats. Accessed May 29th 2020]

employed to scan some sets of yet unindexed deeds on terms such as ‘consul’, ‘agent’ or ‘ambassador’.

These three methods resulted in the following amount of data:

	Envoys based in Amsterdam	Envoys based in The Hague	Combined <sup>40</sup>
Number of deeds	388	167	530
Number of individual diplomats involved	81	59	138

*Table I. Amount of relevant deeds found in the Amsterdam notarial archives.*

Newspapers, the third source type, help to clarify the public dimension to Amsterdam diplomacy. They attest to the overall visibility of diplomacy in Amsterdam. What kinds of diplomatic activity made the news, if at all? Which agents were prominent enough to warrant press attention? Public announcements and advertisements, placed in the newspapers by the envoys themselves, are also of significant interest in that regard. Did Amsterdam envoys advertise, and if so, what and why? A significant majority of all newspapers between 1648-1795 is available through Delpher, and was searched for data on diplomacy.

By combining correspondence, notarial deeds and newspapers, and by adding a collection of miscellaneous other primary sources (civil registries, resolutions of the Estates General, pamphlets, memoirs et cetera), a satisfying picture of diplomatic activity centered around Amsterdam can be drawn in this thesis. This will be done in three chapters.

Chapter one will focus on interactions between the Amsterdam magistracy and Dutch envoys abroad. It will provide an overview of Amsterdam’s history of meddling in foreign/diplomatic affairs, investigate the characteristics of diplomatic correspondence addressed to Amsterdam and assess Dutch envoys’ expressions of diplomatic duty towards Amsterdam.

Chapter two concentrates on interactions between Amsterdam and the ‘main’ foreign envoys stationed in The Hague. The rules on diplomacy and the role of cities in the Republic will be clarified. Central are the contacts that envoys in The Hague initiated in Amsterdam, and the degree to which these contacts caused problems in the relationship between The Hague and Amsterdam.

Chapter three elucidates diplomatic activity within Amsterdam city bounds. It introduces the (types of) envoys found stationed in Amsterdam, and attempts to reconstruct the degree to which this group was incorporated into urban society.

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<sup>40</sup> Taking doubles caused by cross-occurrences of envoys or changes in career status into account.

## Chapter I: Amsterdam and Dutch envoys

I take the liberty to notify Your Excellencies about a wicked woman, who has taken refuge in Amsterdam. I can assure Your Excellencies that this Madame Romellini is a heinous lady, who was ruined many young people, and who certainly deserves to spend time in jail.<sup>41</sup>

There was rarely a dull moment at Daniel Hogguer's posting as the Dutch minister with the Lower Saxon Circle and the Hanseatic cities.<sup>42</sup> On October 20<sup>th</sup>, 1776 he sat down to write a lengthy letter to the burgomasters of Amsterdam, containing an urgent warning about a murderess who had infiltrated the Hamburg diplomatic community. Madame Romellini (or Visconti, as she called herself whilst still in Hamburg) had been the mistress of the Spanish consul, and had conspired with her paramour to murder her estranged husband. According to Hogguer, the husband was eventually found dismembered through 'various cuts and hacks'. The Spanish consul was acquitted after a suspiciously quick trial – according to Hogguer, because the consul was a friend of the influential French minister, Baron de la Houze. Madame Romellini, however, managed to escape to Amsterdam. Hogguer's informants had told him that as of recent, she was hiding in the French café of one M. Sluyter. He acutely requested the burgomasters to take up the matter and actively seek to arrest the lady, before she could tarnish the lives and reputations of other members of the community.

Hogguer's dramatic and detailed reports on murder within polite diplomatic society are interchanged with correspondence on the recent position of ships, new local laws on trade during times of war, reports on assistance he offered to Dutch sailors, and New Year's wishes.<sup>43</sup> His letters to the burgomasters of Amsterdam are thus characterized by a wide variety of subject matter, and are

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<sup>41</sup> SAA 5027 (Archief van burgemeesters: diplomatieke missiven van ambassadeurs, gezanten en residenten in het buitenland aan burgemeesters) 205: Daniel Hogguer to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Hamburg, October 12th 1776).

<sup>42</sup> Schutte, *Repertorium der Nederlandse vertegenwoordigers*, 198.

<sup>43</sup> Among others, see SAA 5027 205: Daniel Hogguer to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Hamburg, November 11th 1779, September 22nd 1778, October 20th 1778, December 28th 1779).

representative of the general diversity found in the archive of diplomatic correspondence to Amsterdam. The question as to why and what Dutch envoys abroad wrote to Amsterdam is an important part of the broader investigation into the relationship between Amsterdam, foreign policy in the Dutch Republic and Dutch envoys serving overseas. This chapter will examine this complex scheme in two steps. Firstly, an outline is given of the theoretical, actual and (semi-)illegal influences exercised by Amsterdam on Dutch foreign policy and diplomacy throughout the 1648-1795 period. To what degree was the magistracy of Amsterdam interested in Dutch foreign policy and diplomacy at all, and how much influence did they (attempt to) claim? Secondly, diplomatic correspondence directed towards Amsterdam is utilized to examine to what extent the city of Amsterdam and the network of Dutch envoys abroad cooperated to mutual benefit.

### *I. Amsterdam and Dutch foreign policy*

Analyses of the foreign and domestic policies pursued by Amsterdam unequivocally agree that these policies were geared towards protecting trade interests.<sup>44</sup> The magistracy of Amsterdam advocated peace to benefit trade, and showed itself warlike to protect trade. Though the former tendency was pursued more often, the occasional tendencies to the latter made for more intense bouts of power display. There was an observable correlation between the overall aims in foreign policy of Amsterdam and the Dutch Republic at large: the generality, too, is often stated to have considered trade interests leading in determining foreign policy.<sup>45</sup> The extent to which there was a causal element present – that is to say, Amsterdam’s ideology demonstrably influencing the generality’s – is to be determined. Marjolein ‘t Hart, in a study on cities and statemaking in the Dutch Republic, asserts that Amsterdam ‘actually held little institutional power within the Republic’.<sup>46</sup> This statement, as we will see, fails to consider the layered nature of power and sovereignty naturally resulting from the political layout of the Dutch

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<sup>44</sup> Franken, *Coenraad van Beuningen*, 7-8, 246; W. Frijhoff, M. Prak and M. Hell, *Geschiedenis van Amsterdam II-2. Zelfbewuste stadsstaat 1650-1813* (Amsterdam 2005) 172-173; M. ‘t Hart, ‘Cities and statemaking in the Dutch Republic, 1580-1680’, *Theory and society* 18 (1989) 663-687: 673.

<sup>45</sup> Rommelse and Onnekink, *The Dutch in the early modern world*, 98

<sup>46</sup> ‘t Hart, ‘Cities and statemaking’, 663.

Republic, and therefore severely underestimates both the hard and soft power exercised by the Amsterdam magistracy.

### *1.1. Theoretical weight of the Amsterdam vote*

Generally speaking, there were three layers of government and sovereignty in the Dutch Republic. These were the towns/cities, the provinces and the generality. The respective bodies of government involved were the city councils, provincial estates and the Estates General. During and after the Eighty Year's War, several treaties and treatises were drawn up which all together were considered to be the founding tenets of the Republic. Out of these, the Union of Utrecht was considered the most important.<sup>47</sup> Its articles provided an outline of the political duties, privileges and rights of each individual level of government. As the name United Provinces of the Netherlands implies, the province was usually held to be the most prominent layer of the constitution, with the most sovereign duties attributed to it.<sup>48</sup> However, decisions on foreign policy (specifically the parts of it that would affect the generality) and the maintenance of foreign relations through diplomacy were allocated to the Estates General in The Hague.<sup>49</sup> As towns sent delegates to their provincial estates, and the provincial estates sent delegates to the Estates General, all levels of government had a small part in eventually determining foreign policy through the Estates General.

The urbanization rate and the political independence of towns and cities in the Dutch Republic were internationally famed and are historiographically agreed upon to be considerable, to the extent of deeming the Dutch Republic a 'city-state' in an alternative usage of the term.<sup>50</sup> The (pursuit of) independence and autonomy by Amsterdam is an example of this, though Amsterdam's position was a unique one. Economically, Amsterdam was responsible for generating 50% of all domestic and

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<sup>47</sup> Vreede, *Inleiding tot eene geschiedenis*, 6; de Bruin, *Geheimhouding en verraad*, 119; Groenveld, *Verlopend getij*, 66-67.

<sup>48</sup> Groenveld, *Verlopend getij*, 26.

<sup>49</sup> Franken, *Coenraad van Beuninghen*, 23-24; R. Fruin, *Geschiedenis der staatsinstellingen*, 346; T. Thomassen, *Instrumenten van de macht. De Staten-Generaal en hun archieven, 1576-1796* band I (The Hague 2015) 281; S. Groenveld, 'De institutionele en politieke context', in J. T. de Smidt (ed.), *Van tresorier tot thesaurier-generaal. Zes eeuwen financieel beleid in handen van een hoge Nederlandse ambtsdrager* (Hilversum 1997) 55-88: 59.

<sup>50</sup> M. Prak, 'The Dutch Republic's city-state culture (17th-18th centuries)', in M. H. Hansen, *A comparative study of thirty city-state cultures. An investigation conducted by the Copenhagen Polis Centre* (Copenhagen 2000) 343-358: 343.

international trade.<sup>51</sup> Demographically, the city housed 10% of the population in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, which had risen to 20% in 1730.<sup>52</sup> Fiscally, Amsterdam raised half of all taxes in Holland (with Holland, in turn, contributing around 50-60% to the generality<sup>53</sup>). In return, Amsterdam had one out of nineteen equal votes in the Estates of Holland – as much as small towns such as Medemblik or Schoonhoven. In the Estates General, where Holland occupied six out of twenty-four seats, Amsterdam had the permanent right to one of the six Holland seats, and thus one out of twenty-four in the assembly.<sup>54</sup> This imbalance was widely noted, and occasionally bemoaned. The anonymous British author of the 1765 *The present state of Holland, or a description of the United Provinces* compares this imbalance surrounding Amsterdam with that of his own capital, London<sup>55</sup>: London generated a third of all revenues in Britain, yet had only four out of a staggering 558 votes at its disposal in Parliament.<sup>56</sup>

Through its official vote, Amsterdam could thus exercise indirect influence on foreign policies as determined by the Estates General through the various levels of government. As a city, they had a vote in determining the stance of the Estates of Holland, which in turn dispatched delegates to the Estates General to discuss foreign policy and diplomacy there. As demonstrated above, this vote was only one among many. However, it was an enormously weighty one, and often decisively so.

### *I.II. Actual weight of the Amsterdam vote*

The uniqueness of Amsterdam's position within Holland and the Republic as a whole is due to its potential to trigger something of a domino effect through the different layers of government. Whilst Amsterdam had only one vote both in the Estates of Holland as well as in the Estates General, it was often regarded as an essential one in both assemblies.<sup>57</sup> If the Amsterdam city council decided among itself that it favored peace, chances were that this stance would be adopted by the Estates of Holland.

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<sup>51</sup> Franken, *Coenraad van Beuningen*, 7. Applies to the situation in 1650.

<sup>52</sup> R. Paping, 'General Dutch population development 1400-1850: cities and countryside'. Paper presented at the 1st ESHD conference, Alghero, Italy (2014) 13.

<sup>53</sup> Anonymous, *The present state of Holland*, 70-71; J. Israel, *The Dutch Republic. Its rise, greatness and fall 1477-1806* (Oxford 1995) 286.

<sup>54</sup> Thomassen, *Instrumenten van de macht*, 154-155.

<sup>55</sup> Anonymous, *The present state of Holland*, 70-71.

<sup>56</sup> C. Cook and J. Stevenson, *British historical facts, 1760-1830* (Hamden 1980) 48.

<sup>57</sup> Franken, *Coenraad van Beuningen*, 7.

Subsequently, due to Holland's weight in the Estates General, it was likely that Holland's stance would be the one adopted by the generality at large. The importance of the Amsterdam vote is demonstrated by two tropes that continue manifesting throughout the 1648-1795 period, namely Amsterdam's own actions and the reactions of other parties invested in determining foreign policy.

The burgomasters of Amsterdam were generally not shy or subtle about their political power. In 1679, the British envoy extraordinary to the Republic, Henry Sydney<sup>58</sup>, remarked the following on burgomaster Gillis Valckenier (serving nine terms in between 1665 and 1679):

I assure you the Great Turk hath not more absolute dominion and power over any of his countrymen than he hath at Amsterdam; what he saith is ever done without contradiction; he turns out and puts in who he likes, raises what money he pleases, does whatever he has a mind to, and yet he walks about the streets just like an ordinary shopkeeper.<sup>59</sup>

Whenever negotiations on foreign policy decisions threatened to go directions opposing Amsterdam's position, the city magistracy had no qualms about aggressively moving against the dissenting regents in The Hague or even against the Stadtholder himself. The relationship between the House of Orange and Amsterdam had traditionally been problematic (with William II's attack on Amsterdam in 1650 as a painful lowlight<sup>60</sup>). Stadtholder-King William III, who continuously wished to wage war against France, often clashed with generally peace-favoring Amsterdam, which feared the cost of war and the effect it would have on trade.<sup>61</sup> This disagreement nearly resulted in civil war in 1684, during which William declared he was going to 'break these bastards of Amsterdam'.<sup>62</sup> This conflict was solved when Amsterdam employed the most powerful weapon it had at its disposal, namely the economic and financial primacy that had raised its status in the first place. Amsterdam could effectively veto most political decisions by threatening to shut off the money supply to the rest of the Union or to deny any

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<sup>58</sup> Schutte, *Repertorium der buitenlandse vertegenwoordigers*, 76.

<sup>59</sup> R. W. Blencowe (ed.), *Diary of the times of Charles the second by the honourable Henry Sidney (afterwards Earl of Romney) including his correspondence with the Countess of Sunderland and other distinguished persons at the English court; to which are added letters illustrative of the times of James II and William III. Volume I* (London 1843) 66.

<sup>60</sup> M. Prak, *The Dutch Republic in the seventeenth century: the Golden Age* (Cambridge 2005) 193; Rommelse and Onnekink, *The Dutch in the early modern world*, 150.

<sup>61</sup> De Bruin, *Geheimhouding en verraad*, 96, 277; Franken, *Coentraad van Beuningen*, 255.

<sup>62</sup> Frijhoff, Prak and Hell, *Geschiedenis van Amsterdam II-2*, 201; de Bruin, *Geheimhouding en verraad*, 277

loans.<sup>63</sup> These threats were often sufficiently intimidating to force political opponents to react. Sometimes this led to Amsterdam getting its way and having its preferred course accepted, which was also the case in 1684 when it never came to war in France. Though William would continue claiming that ‘merchants know nothing about politics’<sup>64</sup>, the relationship between the Stadtholder-King and Amsterdam evolved into a chilly though generally civil cooperation wherein William first attempted to secure the support (or even indifference) of the Amsterdam magistracy before making large decisions related to foreign policy.<sup>65</sup> For example, the Glorious Revolution was only greenlit after Amsterdam approved it.<sup>66</sup>

When political opponents of Amsterdam were not prepared to give in to the city’s will, they had a couple of options. The most common strategy to bring Amsterdam into the fold was simply to appease it. This could be done by sending special envoys to the city to try and persuade the magistracy anew.<sup>67</sup> A more effective approach was to grant members of the Amsterdam magistracy entrance into inner circles of regents and policy makers that they were not yet a part of. These inner circles (*commissiewezen*) were integral to the working of the Dutch political system. Often, the most important decisions on foreign policy in the Republic were prepared, pre-negotiated or even made entirely behind closed doors by a select(ed) group of regents. This strategy of appeasing Amsterdam was especially favored by Johan de Witt. The relationship between the Grand Pensionary and Amsterdam had been difficult from the start, with Amsterdam being of the opinion that De Witt had grown too powerful too quickly and that he did not take their interests into account enough.<sup>68</sup> De Witt, aware of the importance of appeasing Amsterdam, attempted to prove his goodwill by marrying Wendela Bicker<sup>69</sup> (daughter of burgomaster Jan Gerritsz Bicker) and promising Amsterdam an increased part in the secret negotiations surrounding the 1659 Concert of The Hague, which was the common strategy of England, France and

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<sup>63</sup> Franken, *Coenraad van Beuningen* 36; Frijhoff, Prak and Hell, *Geschiedenis van Amsterdam II-2*, 153; ‘t Hart, ‘Cities and statemaking’, 680.

<sup>64</sup> Frijhoff, Prak and Hell, *Geschiedenis van Amsterdam II-2*, 204.

<sup>65</sup> De Bruin, *Geheimhouding en verraad*, 346.

<sup>66</sup> Fruin, *Geschiedenis der staatsinstellingen*, 300.

<sup>67</sup> M. Carasso-Kok and W. Francissen, *Geschiedenis van Amsterdam II-1. Centrum van de wereld 1578-1650* (Nijmegen 2004) 247.

<sup>68</sup> Frijhoff, Prak and Hell, *Geschiedenis van Amsterdam II-2*, 176; Franken, *Coenraad van Beuningen*, 30.

<sup>69</sup> Rommelse en Onnekink, *The Dutch in the early modern world*, 99.

the Republic against Sweden and Denmark in the Second Northern War (1655-1660).<sup>70</sup> Another example of Amsterdam magistrates being granted exclusive access to small regent committees on foreign policy was found in 1693, which concerned preparatory work for the 1697 Peace of Ryswick.<sup>71</sup> These inclusions of Amsterdam in the inner circles were not always welcomed, especially due to the tendency of the Amsterdam delegates to immediately try and dominate the proceedings. Gaspar Fagel, who had later replaced De Witt as Grand Pensionary, bitterly remarked that Amsterdam was only fond of small committees if these did as Amsterdam desired.<sup>72</sup>

The strategy of bringing Amsterdam into the inner fold increased the city's direct influence on foreign policy. However, another common strategy, namely that of anti-Amsterdam coalitions, actually sought to diminish it. In 1688, sheriff Hans Bontemantel of Amsterdam complained that pensionaries of small cities 'often stuck their heads together' to work against Amsterdam.<sup>73</sup> In the first decades of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, this was the preferred way of keeping Amsterdam's ambitions in check. If enough towns in Holland formed a common alliance against Amsterdam's preferred policy, it generated enough resistance to measure up to Amsterdam's influence. This was successfully accomplished several times in between 1710 and 1728.<sup>74</sup> The economic stagnation that had marked Amsterdam during the late 17<sup>th</sup> century did not do many favors to Amsterdam's political influence.<sup>75</sup> However, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century the city recuperated some of its human and economic capital and most importantly, managed to attract international networks that were slipping away in other cities in Holland that were stagnating or declining.<sup>76</sup> This meant that by the end of the 1720s, the anti-Amsterdam coalition strategy slowly died out.<sup>77</sup>

All in all, there were significant issues when the preferred foreign policies of Amsterdam did not line up with those of the generality. These issues could not be simply ignored, and required a solution

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<sup>70</sup> De Bruin, *Geheimhouding en verraad*, 282.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 348.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 286, 334.

<sup>73</sup> Carasso-Kok and Francissen, *Geschiedenis van Amsterdam II-1*, 247.

<sup>74</sup> Frijhoff, Prak and Hell, *Geschiedenis van Amsterdam II-2*, 207-208.

<sup>75</sup> De Bruin, *Geheimhouding en verraad*, 127.

<sup>76</sup> M. 't Hart, 'The Dutch Republic: the urban impact upon politics', in K. Davids and J. Lucassen, *A miracle mirrored. The Dutch Republic in European perspective* (Cambridge 1995) 57-98: 76.

<sup>77</sup> Frijhoff, Prak and Hell, *Geschiedenis van Amsterdam II-2*, 209.

either in the form of giving into Amsterdam's will or to endeavor to persuade the city. Both options involved attributing more direct influence to Amsterdam in foreign policy than its voting share allowed.

### *I.III. Illegal exercises of foreign policy*

If Amsterdam's preferred foreign policy was not adopted by the generality, there was yet another way for the city to pursue its goals. This meant instigating diplomatic initiatives outside of (the will of) the Estates General: contacting foreign states and sending its own envoys to negotiate. This was not a generally accepted diplomatic practice, because it ignored the existing legislation concerning diplomacy in the Dutch Republic, which (for most of the 1648-1795 period) patently restricted the right to send envoys abroad to the Estates General only.

During the period of the Eighty Year's War, it had been relatively common for provincial or city governments to send their own envoys to foreign parties, and to negotiate in their own interest.<sup>78</sup> In the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, after the new Republic had consolidated for a couple of decades, this practice grew to be regarded as being of dubious legality. It was still accepted in cases when there was no Dutch representation (yet) at the intended destination.<sup>79</sup> However, this gradually changed over the course over the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The network of continuous diplomatic representation at European courts was greatly expanded. Additionally, it was supplemented by an ever increasing amount of consuls and agents representing Dutch interests at non-sovereign governments such as important secondary cities or states under Ottoman Rule.<sup>80</sup> The Estates General attempted to discourage autonomous diplomatic initiatives by provinces and cities. They did this by allowing the 'official' state envoys serving abroad to also negotiate the interests of particular provinces and cities, if these entities had so requested in advance.<sup>81</sup> In his 1984 classic *The rise of modern diplomacy*, Anderson clearly considered this policy to be successful: he states that at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, there was a general agreement that even the most powerful non-sovereign entities were not entitled to initiate diplomacy.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Groenveld, *Verlopend getij*, 71-72.

<sup>79</sup> Vreede, *Inleiding tot eene geschiedenis*, 25.

<sup>80</sup> Pennings and Thomassen, *Archieven van Nederlandse gezanten en consuls*, 20-21.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>82</sup> M. S. Anderson, *The rise of modern diplomacy 1450-1919* (Harlow 1993) 42.

The existence of this general sense of agreement is disproven when considering Amsterdam's record of initiating diplomacy, though affirmed by the outrage that usually followed these initiatives. In Amsterdam's case, there was a strongly detectable tendency towards pragmatism over ideology: if the city's interests were threatened by the agreed upon foreign policy, it had little qualms about stepping away from commonly accepted diplomatic practice and setting out to achieve its goals. Throughout the 1648-1795 period, Amsterdam conducted autonomous war missions in Scandinavia and the Baltics whenever trade was considered to be under threat.<sup>83</sup> These initiatives of war or diplomacy often had serious consequences. The two most famous examples involve Great Britain. The first one of these affairs centered around the English Civil War. In 1650, the Estates General refused to provide accreditation to its resident ambassador in London, Albert Joachimi, because they did not recognize the new Parliamentary government.<sup>84</sup> The province of Holland, with Amsterdam leading the charge, feared for its commercial interests in England. They sent Amsterdam burgomaster Gerrit Pietersz Schaep to London under the guise of special commissary to recognize Cromwell's Parliament and to re-establish diplomatic and commercial relations with Holland and Amsterdam.<sup>85</sup> This outraged entities in The Hague, especially Stadtholder William II, and it even led to civil unrest when William allowed the print of a pamphlet containing a forged treaty titled *Articles, sealed and negotiated between the Republic of England and the city of Amsterdam*, which contained the threat of an English army landing in the Republic to fight on behalf of Holland against the generality. In reality, Schaep never reached an agreement with the English Parliament, but his mission had quickly become (in)famous throughout the Republic.<sup>86</sup>

Over a century later, a famous and very similar second example of Amsterdiplomacy caused comparable unrest. In the late 1770s, amidst the American Revolutionary War, the Estates General had

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<sup>83</sup> Vreede, *Inleiding tot eene geschiedenis*, 29; 't Hart, 'Cities and statemaking', 674.

<sup>84</sup> Schutte, *Repertorium der Nederlandse vertegenwoordigers*, 92; Fruin, *Geschiedenis der staatsinstellingen*, 272-273.

<sup>85</sup> A. J. van der AA, K. J. R. van Harderwijk and G. D. J. Schotel (eds.), *Biographisch woordenboek der Nederlanden, bevattende levensbeschrijvingen van zoodanige personen, die zich op eenigerlei wijze in ons Vaderland hebben vermaard gemaakt. Zeventiende deel* (Haarlem 1874) 199-200.

<sup>86</sup> H. Brugmans, *Geschiedenis van Amsterdam. Deel 3: bloeitijd 1621-1697* (Utrecht 1973) 66-67; Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 605; Carasso-Kok and Francissen, *Geschiedenis van Amsterdam II-1*, 280; S. Groenveld, 'Een Schaep in 't Schapelandt': Het Hollandse gezantschap van Gerard Schaep Pietersz naar Engeland, 1650-1651', *Amstelodamum* 87th yearbook (1995) 179-196: 187-189.

yet to support the American claim to independence of Great Britain. Encouraged by a subtly veiled American threat at Amsterdam's address that the new state would find other commercial partners if the Dutch Republic did not soon reciprocate invitations of friendship, Amsterdam was quick to establish diplomatic connections on their own. The efforts were mostly geared towards the draft of a commercial treaty, led by the banker Jean de Neufville and city pensionary Engelbert François van Berckel.<sup>87</sup> Since these diplomatic efforts were essentially understood to imply the recognition of American statehood, it sparked the ire of Great Britain. The British addressed themselves to the Estates General and demanded that Amsterdam be punished for its initiative. The Estates General were slow and unenthusiastic in their reaction; they never attempted any meaningful disciplinary actions at Amsterdam's address.<sup>88</sup> This, alongside a series of increasingly escalating disputes concerning trade networks involving the United States, France (another state at war with Britain at the time) and Amsterdam merchants, eventually led to the fourth Anglo-Dutch war (1780-1784).<sup>89</sup>

Overall, it is clear that Amsterdam's economic interests were often a prime motivator for the city to step over practical and legal bounds and take up diplomatic initiative. The acceptance by foreign parties of these advances attests to Amsterdam's power, but the heavy domestic and international protests demonstrate that Amsterdam's transgresses were not easily forgiven.

#### *I.IV. A special case: economic diplomacy, the Levant Trade Directory and its consuls*

A variety of diplomacy that has only relatively recently come under scholarly attention is economic diplomacy. Antunes defines this as diplomacy initiated by private interest groups, which thus differs from traditional geopolitical diplomacy, which is state-driven.<sup>90</sup> Since most of the founding treaties and contracts of the Dutch Republic did not account for the management of diplomacy outside of the traditional state-driven variety, the management of economic diplomacy differed significantly from the

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<sup>87</sup> P. J. van Winter, 'Onze eerste diplomatieke betrekkingen met de Vereenigde Staten', *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis* 38 (1923) 68-82: 70-76.

<sup>88</sup> Fruin, *Geschiedenis der staatsinstellingen*, 345-346.

<sup>89</sup> L. van de Pol, 'From doorstep to table. Negotiating space in ceremonies at the Dutch court of the second half of the 18th century', in A. Bähr, P. Burschel and G. Jancke (eds.), *Räume des Selbst. Selbstzeugnisforschung transkulturell* (Cologne 2007) 77-94: 91.

<sup>90</sup> Antunes, 'Dutch-Portuguese diplomatic encounters', 467-468.

scheme as discussed so far. The most relevant example of a prominent network of economic diplomacy is found attached to the Levant Trade Directory, which was based in and managed from Amsterdam.

The Levant Trade Directory was established in 1625 as an advocacy group for Amsterdam merchants with commercial interests in the Levant and the Mediterranean basin.<sup>91</sup> The organization was headed by a selection of these merchants, who were appointed by the burgomasters and met in the City Hall. With the growth of trade to the Levant in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Directory also expanded with the establishment of divisions in other cities such as Rotterdam (1674) and Middelburg (1696), though the Amsterdam office retained its primacy over the others. The Directory is generally regarded as a semi-governmental agency, due to the Estates General assigning it prerogatives and obligations not usually granted to similar organizations.<sup>92</sup>

One of the tasks of the Levant Trade Directory was the management of the consular network in the Levant and (later) the Mediterranean. The dispute concerning whether or not consuls could be regarded as diplomatic envoys was a staple of the early modern era, and remains unresolved at present, though the emergence of new diplomatic history has increased advocacy in favor of consuls as diplomats.<sup>93</sup> Platt described British consuls as ‘a group of individual state servants overseas, whose only common denominator was the name of consul’.<sup>94</sup> The most frequently mentioned characteristics of consular service are a) the representation of foreign nations abroad and b) a relation to trade or commerce. Whilst consuls were indeed primarily occupied with protecting their nation’s commercial interests abroad, the tasks they performed were usually much more varied. Throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, states and princes took an increasing interest in the consular network, and in employing it to gather political news and intelligence, much like regular diplomatic channels already did.<sup>95</sup> *In situ* consuls were the first point of contact for members of their nation, whether they were merchants or not.

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<sup>91</sup> A. E. Kersten and B. van der Zwaan, ‘The Dutch consular service: in the interests of a colonial and commercial nation’, in J. Melissen and A. M. Fernandez, *Consular affairs and diplomacy* (Leiden 2011) 275-302: 277.

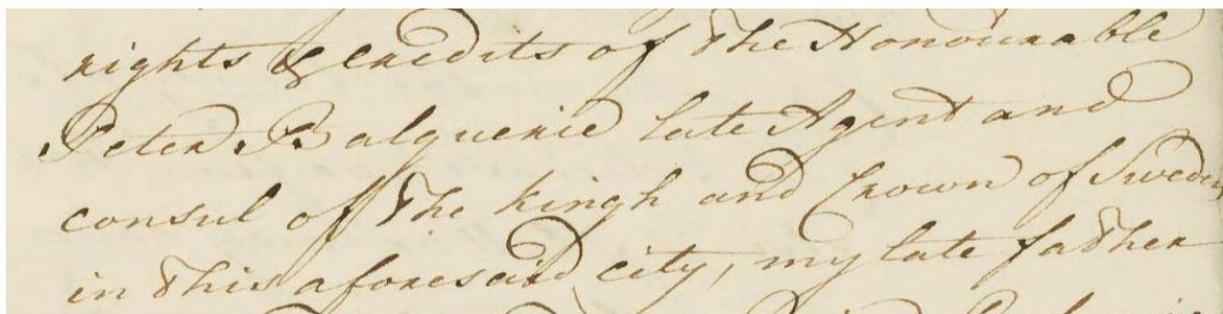
<sup>92</sup> M. A. Ebben, ‘Uwer Hoog Moogenden onderdaenigsten dienaers’, 655.

<sup>93</sup> Ebben, ‘Uwer Hoog Moogenden onderdaenigsten dienaers’, 649-650, 653-654.

<sup>94</sup> D. C. M. Platt, *The Cinderella service. British consuls since 1825* (London 1971) 13.

<sup>95</sup> H. Leira and I. B. Neumann, ‘The many past lives of the consul’, in J. Melissen and A. M. Fernandez, *Consular affairs and diplomacy* (Leiden 2011) 225-246: 238.

They also had judicial powers (for example, to draft notarial deeds or to pass legal verdicts).<sup>96</sup> In this thesis, consuls are indeed considered to be diplomats. The consular network was in many ways a supplement to or extension of the regular diplomatic network: consuls were additional agents stationed in locations of secondary, though nevertheless essential importance. The daily duties of a consul were not so different from regular (lesser) envoys, as we will later on see in the sources. Especially in semi-sovereign regions (such as Northern Africa) or other places where the consul was usually the only foreign representation, his documented endeavors were virtually indistinguishable from those of a regular agent or ambassador. Furthermore, a particularly persuasive argument is found in the identification of lesser envoys in notarial deeds: individual envoys are alternatively introduced as agent, council, resident (all commonly considered diplomats) and *consul*, signifying that consul was considered synonymous to the former designations.<sup>97</sup>



*Image 1. Fragment of an authorization drafted by notary Thierry Daniel de Marolles.<sup>98</sup> Pierre (Peter) Balguerie was officially accredited as Sweden's agent; however, in this deed, 'agent' and 'consul' are employed in a conflated fashion.*

The doubt about whether a consul was a diplomat or not mostly stemmed from accreditation issues. Diplomatic envoys were understood to be accredited by a sovereign government. They were in possession of official documents, and the mutual recognition of an appointment granted them accessory privileges such as diplomatic immunity. The selection, appointment and accreditation process of consuls in the Dutch Republic differed from those of regular envoys. In a somewhat awkward scheme, consuls were formally appointed by the Estates General and given a letter of recommendation to take with them,

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<sup>96</sup> Pennings en Thomassen, *Archieven van Nederlandse gezanten en consuls*, 25, 46; Ebben, 'Uwer Hoog Moogenden onderdaenigsten dienaers', 652-653; J. Ulbert, 'A history of the French consular services', in J. Melissen and A. M. Fernandez, *Consular affairs and diplomacy* (Leiden 2011) 303-324: 309.

<sup>97</sup> For similar examples to the one below, see SAA 5075 12487: Cornelis van Homrigh, authorization July 13th 1787, 11478B: Thierry Daniel de Marolles, authorization September 22nd 1769.

<sup>98</sup> SAA 5075 11393B: Thierry Daniel de Marolles, authorization April 25th 1760.

but were not considered official representants of the generality.<sup>99</sup> For consuls destined to serve in the Levant and the Mediterranean, the Levant Trade Directory stepped in. The Directory (dominated by Amsterdam) usually nominated their preferred candidate(s) and passed them on for appointment to the Estates General.<sup>100</sup>

The Directory continued to manage the consular network throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Republic's commercial stagnation in the 18<sup>th</sup> century did not significantly alter the span of this network, though the amount and importance of the average consul's workload did decrease slightly.<sup>101</sup> The Directorate drafted instructions for consuls, set their salaries and paid them (or at least, attempted to).<sup>102</sup> Consuls with requests or complaints usually addressed their letters to the Directory in Amsterdam before contacting the Estates General.<sup>103</sup> By accepting the notion that consuls could indeed be considered diplomatic envoys, or agents involved in economic diplomacy, the consular network in the Levant and Mediterranean thus was an example of a diplomatic system mostly managed from Amsterdam.

The prominence of economic diplomacy in the Netherlands and Amsterdam's involvement in it is best emphasized and wrapped up by a short comparison with France. The management of France's consular network was attributed to a variety of ministries (mostly Foreign or Naval Affairs) in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>104</sup> Consuls were thus neatly managed by a branch of the central government, much like regular envoys. In the Dutch Republic, ever driven by commercial interests, consuls answered to a corporate entity with its headquarters far from the center of government.

## ***II. Amsterdam and the network of Dutch envoys abroad***

It has been established that Amsterdam was directly or indirectly involved in the making of foreign policy and the direction of diplomatic networks. The city magistracy demanded its share in the engineering of geopolitical diplomacy. Additionally, (semi)-private parties based in Amsterdam

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<sup>99</sup> Ebben, 'Uwer Hoog Moogenden onderdaenigsten dienaers', 655.

<sup>100</sup> N. Steensgaard, 'Consuls and nations in the Levant from 1570 to 1650', *The Scandinavian economic history review* 15 (1967) 13-55: 31, 48; Kersten and van der Zwaan, 'The Dutch consular service', 277.

<sup>101</sup> Kersten and van der Zwaan, 'The Dutch consular service', 277-278.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 277; Steensgaard, 'Consuls and nations in the Levant', 32.

<sup>103</sup> Steensgaard, 'Consuls and nations in the Levant', 32-33.

<sup>104</sup> Ulbert, 'A history of the French consular services', 304-305.

managed one of the most prominent networks of economic diplomacy. It is now time to examine the relationship between Amsterdam and individual diplomatic agents that were dispatched to execute these foreign policies.

Direct contact between cities and envoys abroad through correspondence and instructions was a fairly common occurrence, despite efforts of the Estates General to discourage it. An interdiction proved difficult to maintain in practice.<sup>105</sup> Especially in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, *patria* was generally understood to be one's hometown or occasionally one's province. Only rarely, the term 'fatherland' was employed to refer to the United Provinces at large.<sup>106</sup> This meant that feelings of loyalty of obligation towards a city (such as Amsterdam) tended to prevail over loyalty to entities like the Estates General. It is therefore unsurprising that most Dutch envoys tended to maintain a correspondence with their hometown. Besides the Estates General, which officially employed most envoys, and hometowns, other regular recipients of diplomatic correspondence were the Grand Pensionary, the Estates of Holland, and – if the envoy was not from Holland in the first place - the Estates of their home province.<sup>107</sup> Within this scheme, Amsterdam held a special position in the sense that envoys without any Amsterdam background also maintained a correspondence with the burgomasters. Only after the governmental reforms introduced by the Batavian Revolution in 1795, the number of parties invested in diplomacy was drastically reduced, and correspondence networks simplified.<sup>108</sup>

### *II.I. Envoys with an Amsterdam background*

Special attention must be attributed to envoys who could claim an Amsterdam background. How well were they represented among envoys, and what kinds of men were generally selected?

Diplomacy was generally unfavorably regarded as a career option. Its unpopularity was due to two causes. On the one hand, the costs associated with a diplomatic mission were high. Salaries were meagre and their payment was irregular. Upholding the standard of living expected of an envoy often

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<sup>105</sup> Franken, *Coenraad van Beuningen*, 41

<sup>106</sup> Groenveld, *Verlopend getij*, 65.

<sup>107</sup> Vreede, *Inleiding tot eene geschiedenis*, 34-35; Pennings en Thomassen, *Archieven van Nederlandse gezanten en consuls*, 51.

<sup>108</sup> Pennings en Thomassen, *Archieven van Nederlandse gezanten en consuls*, 19, 47.

required drawing upon personal financial reserves. Many envoys went (repeatedly) bankrupt – in extreme cases, they had to flee or even committed suicide to escape their debtors.<sup>109</sup> On the other hand, diplomatic missions were regarded as deportation or exile.<sup>110</sup> As stated previously, magistrates often felt the strongest political loyalty and investment towards their own town/city. Representing the Estates General abroad was not worth giving up on or pausing a carefully built career in city politics: a years-long mission abroad would surely weaken one's local political influence. The only type of diplomatic mission that could claim some degree of desirability were extraordinary embassies. With higher pay and status, more honors bestowed and a shorter duration, high-ranking regents or aristocrats could usually be successfully recruited.<sup>111</sup>

Both popular and less popular diplomatic missions were considered a school for young city pensionaries to gain international experience in politics, negotiation and networking.<sup>112</sup> They would serve in the train of the main ambassador, or were stationed by themselves in less important loci. This was no different in Amsterdam. Most of the envoys from Amsterdam were future or ex-pensionaries, members of the vroedschap, directors of the East or West India Companies, or in some cases prominent bankers and merchants. It was highly unusual for reigning burgomasters to be dispatched as an envoy during their term.<sup>113</sup> It proved difficult for the Estates General to cultivate absolute obedience in envoys recruited from the Amsterdam city magistracy. The high-ranking ones in particular were used to a degree of political power and self-sufficiency, and were endowed with an interest in advancing Amsterdam's goals over those of the Estates General if the latter's instructions proved conflicting.<sup>114</sup> Below is a table ranking the share of main ambassadors<sup>115</sup> with an Amsterdam background per foreign state during the

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<sup>109</sup> Black, *A history of diplomacy*, 62; Anderson, *The rise of modern diplomacy*, 85. Schutte, *Repertorium der buitenlandse vertegenwoordigers*, 198 details the suicide of Würtemberg minister Johann Christian Friedrich over a fl. 50000 debt.

<sup>110</sup> Pennings and Thomassen, *Archieven van Nederlandse gezanten en consuls*, 27-29; Anderson, *The rise of modern diplomacy*, 80; Franken, *Coenraad van Beuningen*, 37-39; Heringa, *De eer en hoogheid van de staat*, 67, 143.

<sup>111</sup> Franken, *Coenraad van Beuningen*, 39; Heringa, *De eer en hoogheid van de staat*, 73.

<sup>112</sup> Pennings and Thomassen, *Archieven van Nederlandse gezanten en consuls*, 27.

<sup>113</sup> Franken, *Coenraad van Beuningen*, 253.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 41-42.

<sup>115</sup> Schutte, *Repertorium de Nederlandse vertegenwoordigers*, assigns numbers to the highest-ranking ambassadors at any time in any place. These are generally either resident ambassadors or envoys extraordinary. Any subsidiary agents (staff of the main ambassador or lesser agents stationed elsewhere) are also detailed, though not numbered as they are not the main envoy at the time. Due to the brevity of

1648-1795 period. An Amsterdam background is constituted by a career in the city magistracy and/or having Amsterdam as place of birth/residence.

State	Total main envoys	Total Amsterdam	Percentage
<i>Overall</i>	356	67	18,9
Russia	13	6	46,2
France	29	10	34,5
Denmark/Norway	20	6	30
Portugal	19	5	26,3
Great Britain	29	7	24,1
Southern Netherlands	13	3	23,1
Switzerland	9	2	22,2
Germany miscellaneous	64	13	20,3
Holy Roman Emperor	15	3	20
Ottoman Empire	18	3	16,7
Poland	7	1	14,3
Morocco	16	2	12,5
Prussia	22	2	9,1
Spain	24	2	8,3
Sweden	25	2	8
Italy miscellaneous	10	0	0
United States	4	0	0

Table II. Share of envoys with an Amsterdam background, 1648-1795. Based on Schutte.

As can be deduced from the statistics above, there are no distinguishable geographical patterns to be detected. For example, Amsterdam's investment in the *moedernegotie*, or bulk cargo from the Baltics and Scandinavia, is only partially reflected in its share of ambassadors in the states surrounding the Baltic Sea. Whilst Amsterdam envoys constitute a third or even nearly half of all main ambassadors in Denmark and Russia, their share in other Baltic regions such as Poland, Sweden or Prussia is much smaller. An argument based on the prominence or prestigiousness of the destination also falters: Amsterdam ambassadors constitute a third of those in France (the most important diplomatic center), but the percentages dwindle somewhat at the British court and crash in Spain.

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Schutte's biographies of lesser agents, it would be impossible to accurately provide quantitative data on the origins of this group as well. Therefore, only the numbered envoys were taken into account to simplify the data.

## *II.II. Characteristics of diplomatic correspondence to Amsterdam*

Envoys with and without an Amsterdam background wrote diplomatic reports to the burgomasters of Amsterdam. A collection of an estimated 10,000 missives in the burgomasters' archive in the Amsterdam City Archives attests to this.<sup>116</sup> Envoys of all ranks are represented. The inclusion of lesser agents and consuls in this collection significantly increases the geographical spread and density of the letter's origins: besides Europe and the Ottoman heartland, the Maghreb is also well-represented. The majority of preserved letters were written between 1650 and 1750, with collections after 1750 dwindling somewhat. They are primarily organized by country, and secondarily by individual author or diplomatic mission. The first 50 letters of all authors/missions were read for the purpose of this research. Collections by authors who consistently reported data that was particularly interesting or relevant to this thesis were read in its entirety. This resulted in about 4,000-5,000 letters read, and the metadata of the 300 most relevant of those indexed in a database.

There are two distinguishable types of diplomatic correspondence to Amsterdam, usually depending on the writing style of the envoy. The first type are *general letters*. These letters contained only general information, usually pertaining to subjects commonly associated with diplomacy: reports on conducted negotiations, updates and novelties about the local political situation and occasionally court gossip. The missives did not contain any information customized to its recipient. Only the titles invoked in the salutation betrayed to which political body the letter was to be addressed. This implied an envoy's habit or preference to write a single letter and send copies to all authorities requiring report: the Estates General, the Estates of Holland, the Grand Pensionary and, apparently, the burgomasters of Amsterdam too. This elevates Amsterdam to the same level of diplomatic prominence as the other political bodies, and emphasizes the importance of keeping Amsterdam continuously up to date on the latest political news throughout Europe. This implication of Amsterdam's status, though, is the only relevant aspect to this type of letter. They were typically tedious in nature and content-wise betrayed little about Amsterdam's specific diplomatic interests. The second type of correspondence, the *Amsterdam-specific letters*, were much more relevant in this regard. In these cases, the envoy clearly

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<sup>116</sup> SAA 5027 (Archief van burgemeesters: diplomatieke missiven van ambassadeurs, gezanten en residenten in het buitenland aan burgemeesters).

wrote the letter with Amsterdam as a sole recipient in mind. The letter contained information specifically related to Amsterdam: a confirmation that a request from the burgomasters was received, a report on their efforts to meet this request, news that the envoy considered to be of interest to Amsterdam, or updates on locally dwelling Amsterdam citizens. As a whole, these letters attest to common diplomatic interests of Amsterdam and to the services the authors performed on behalf of the burgomasters.

Only rarely, an individual envoy wrote letters of both kinds. Usually, they preferred one over the other. There is some correlation between the preferred style and the rank/origin of the envoy. As can be expected, envoys that ranked higher (such as envoys extraordinary) employed the general style more, with lesser agents and consuls writing more in the Amsterdam-specific style. Envoys with an Amsterdam background also tended to prefer the latter style, while those without more commonly use the former. However, these were not universal tendencies. Coenraad van Beuningen, perhaps the most famous diplomat to come out of Amsterdam in between 1648 and 1795, was among the staunchest employers of the general style. The sizeable collection of missives he left behind ranks among the most uninteresting and useless in the context of this research.

The frequency of an envoy's reports to the burgomasters also varied. De Bruin's assertion that diplomatic reports to city or provincial authorities were not as thorough or consistent as those to the generality is therefore only partly accurate.<sup>117</sup> Concerning frequency, another two styles can be observed. Some envoys only wrote letters when there was something new or relevant to report. This could be once every couple of weeks/months, but instances of less than one letter per year are also found. This clearly caused some unease in Jacob de Bie, resident in Russia, who wrote in 1714:

With extremely humble acknowledgement and joy I learned that through Your Excellencies' favorable trust, I have been permitted to occasionally delay my meagre reports. I must confess that [sending these reports] has been my duty for a long time, knowing how much Your Excellencies and the burghers of Amsterdam are interested in the affairs of this country, and considering that it was your unearned favor and advocacy that got me this office.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> De Bruin, *Geheimhouding en verraad*, 243.

<sup>118</sup> SAA 5027 58: Jacob de Bie to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (St. Petersburg, July 16th 1714).

Other envoys took it upon themselves to consistently compose one letter per week, even when there was absolutely nothing to report – in which case, they would send a short note remarking nothing interesting had occurred during the past week. Gillis Coymans, resident in Denmark, reported around 1728:

The reason that I allowed myself the honor to interrupt Your Excellencies' weighty affairs with this modest report, is not to appear negligent – but there is little matter of note to write about.<sup>119</sup>

This last style in particular emphasizes the importance of diplomatic reports to Amsterdam, with envoys employing little notes such as Coymans' to prove their commitment to it.

### *II.III. Contents of diplomatic correspondence to Amsterdam*

What did Dutch envoys abroad write about in their (often weekly) letters to the burgomasters of Amsterdam? Alongside lively reports on court life, less lively reports on political proceedings and intricate details on daily diplomatic practice that are enough to warrant studies of their own, a few common themes can be distinguished that specifically point towards Amsterdam's diplomatic interests.

The letters abundantly confirm the stereotype that Amsterdam was concerned with trade, merchantry and finance over everything else. Theodore van Marselis, stationed as minister in France between 1748-1750, only made the effort to write a letter beyond half a page in length when he had updates on trade and the economy.<sup>120</sup> The local economic situation, such as new trade legislation or inventories of goods currently trafficked through the area, was near-consistently elucidated. The envoys were aware of Amsterdam's insatiable need for the latest information on global trade. They explicitly referred to both this need and to Amsterdam's reputation as an economic capital.

It will be of much satisfaction to me if I can contribute something to the wellbeing of commerce in my fatherland, and in particular in Your Excellencies' flourishing merchant city.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> SAA 5027 43: Gillis Coymans to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Copenhagen, undated, ca. 1727-1729).

<sup>120</sup> Compare SAA 5027 97: Theodore van Marselis to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Paris, March 31st 1749 & May 28th 1751).

<sup>121</sup> SAA 5027 175: Abraham Corneille de Braconier to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Liege, April 5th 1757).

(...) considering Your Excellencies' worthy souls and mightily powerful merchant city, to whose wisdom the wealth of the United Netherlands is entrusted (...)<sup>122</sup>

Not only the local economic situation was commonly recorded. Envoys also reported on local attitudes towards Amsterdam or Dutch economic enterprises. In 1650, Gerard Schaep notified the burgomasters of consistent gossip around London that Amsterdam trade had significantly halted during the past couple of years, and worriedly added that English officers might therefore consider Amsterdam an easy prey in war.<sup>123</sup> The spectacular bankruptcies of the Amsterdam banker Leendert Pieter de Neufville in 1763 and 1774 rippled through Europe, and Daniel Hogguer reported on the economic fallout in Hamburg, begging Amsterdam to send him materials to help mend the reputation of the Amsterdam exchange.<sup>124</sup> Andries van de Sande spent much of 1733 and 1734 hushing and placating Stockholm authorities, who had banned incoming merchant ships from Amsterdam after an outbreak of wood-eating worms which had supposedly originated from an Amsterdam ship.<sup>125</sup>

As an integral component of Amsterdam's economic empire, ships and the shipping industry were also frequently touched upon. A large part of all missives contained at least one paragraph detailing ships that had arrived since the last letter, ships that had since departed, ships that had been taken or detained, or the last known positions of ships underway.<sup>126</sup> Whilst the majority of reported ships were indeed of Amsterdam origin, envoys also provided data on foreign fleets (mostly in a military context).<sup>127</sup> Detailed lists describing these fleets were occasionally sent as an attachment to the letter: among others, a list of all active English warships in 1651 is found.<sup>128</sup> Testimonies on the support provided to Amsterdam ships are common, and attest to this support being a prominent part of the daily

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<sup>122</sup> SAA 5027 216: Louis Houwens to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Lisbon, December 31st 1719).

<sup>123</sup> SAA 5027 3: Gerard Schaep to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Westminster, October 28th 1650).

<sup>124</sup> SAA 5027 205: Daniel Hogguer to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Hamburg, October 21st 1774 & November 29th 1774).

<sup>125</sup> SAA 5027 52: Andries van de Sande to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Stockholm, December 2nd 1733, February 24th 1734, April 7th 1734 & May 12th 1734).

<sup>126</sup> Among others, see SAA 5027 205: Daniel Hogguer to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Hamburg, November 9th 1779); 216: Jan Rochus van Til to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Lisbon, October 21st 1732 & October 28th 1732); 6: Simon van Hoorn to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Westminster, NS January 6th 1662 & NS February 3rd 1662); 32: Johan Hotton to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Copenhagen, NS May 6th 1681).

<sup>127</sup> SAA 5027 6: Simon van Hoorn to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Westminster, NS January 13th 1662, NS January 27th 1662 & NS February 2nd 1662).

<sup>128</sup> SAA 5027 3: Gerard Schaep to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Westminster, June 16th 1651).

duties of most envoys. Jan Rochus van Til, resident in Portugal, mentioned that the various Dutch consulates in Portugal were so occupied with handling shipping that he, as resident, would try to assist wherever possible to lighten the workload.<sup>129</sup> He proved true to his word: a little later he mentioned his cooperation with a vice consul to free a Dutch sailor who had been detained on false charges.<sup>130</sup>

The efforts on behalf of this Dutch sailor were also representative of the judicial or financial assistance provided to local Dutch by envoys abroad. In letters to the Amsterdam burgomasters, any Amsterdam origin of the people that were being assisted was near-always emphasized – a sign that envoys were keen to demonstrate their efforts on behalf of the burgomasters' subjects. The letters attest to close contacts between Dutch envoys and local nations. Envoys frequently mentioned to have been visited or otherwise contacted by these communities to receive reports on their grievances.<sup>131</sup> The envoys, in turn, passed these reports on to the burgomasters. The required assistance was varied: a compensation for lost goods in a shipwreck at the Kattegat<sup>132</sup>, providing passports<sup>133</sup>, protecting the right to Reformed worship<sup>134</sup>, seeking justice for a sexually abused ship-boy<sup>135</sup> or preventing evictions from one's house.<sup>136</sup> Pieter Battier, envoy extraordinary in Madrid, even had to assist the Dutch consul in Bilbao, who managed to get himself placed under house arrest by Spanish authorities.<sup>137</sup> Judicial support through drafting notarial deeds is also referred to in the correspondence collection as well as in the notarial archives of Amsterdam.<sup>138</sup> A special sort of assistance, namely the freeing of enslaved Dutch along the Barbary Coast (and occasionally Turkey), took up the majority of time of the agents and consuls stationed in the Maghreb and the Levant. An estimated 7000 Dutch men, women and children

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<sup>129</sup> SAA 5027 216: Jan Rochus van Til to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Lisbon, October 21st 1732).

<sup>130</sup> SAA 5027 216: Jan Rochus van Til to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Lisbon, October 28st 1732).

<sup>131</sup> Among others, see SAA 5027 81: Coenraad van Beuningen and Willem Boreel to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Paris, February 18th 1661); 97: Theodore van Marselis to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Paris, August 22nd 1751); 205: Daniel Hogguer to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Hamburg, October 20th 1778); 58: Jacob de Bie to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (St. Petersburg, July 7th 1714); 60: Willem de Wilde to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (St. Petersburg, NS August 18th 1725).

<sup>132</sup> SAA 5027 32: Johan Hotton to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Copenhagen, NS April 19th 1681).

<sup>133</sup> SAA 5027 40: Robert Goes to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Copenhagen, August 2nd 1710).

<sup>134</sup> SAA 5027 211: Coenraad Scholten to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Danzig, July 4th 1696).

<sup>135</sup> SAA 5027 244: Johan Smits Heppendorp to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Salé, March 28th 1686).

<sup>136</sup> SAA 5027 216: Jan Rochus van Til to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Lisbon, July 29th 1732).

<sup>137</sup> SAA 5027 227: Pieter Battier to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Madrid, December 5th 1686).

<sup>138</sup> Among others, see SAA 5075 9212: Jan Ardinois, transport October 28th 1750; 14458: Wessel van Kleef, authorization April 14th 1766; 11468B: Thierry Daniel de Marolles, renunciation May 21st 1768; 14486: Wessel van Kleef, renunciation January 18th, 1772; 5229: Nathanaël Wilthuijzen, insinuation September 28th 1769.

were kept as slaves in these regions.<sup>139</sup> In a heartfelt plea, Algiers consul Thomas Hees called it to the attention of the burgomasters in 1677, writing:

[I wish to] request Your Excellencies most humbly, that through Christian compassion and your great authority hither it would be your desire to help take away all obstacles in this matter. A large number of inhabitants of your city finds itself in this barbarian enslaved state, begging Your Excellencies for relief whilst crying and sighing, because they have been deprived of everything.<sup>140</sup>

The envoys attempted to either negotiate or buy the freedom of this group. A detailed example of these efforts is provided by Cornelis Calkoen, the ambassador with the Ottoman Porte. In 1727, Calkoen was approached by the enslaved Amsterdam carpenter Jan Cornelisse Engel, who had spent eleven years and counting forcibly rowing on Ottoman galleys. The price for Engel's freedom was set at a hundred ducats. Calkoen simultaneously pleaded with Amsterdam and the Estates General to donate to this cause, whilst he himself would attempt to raise money among the local Dutch nation.<sup>141</sup> This plea was eventually recognized and approved, and Engel was freed.<sup>142</sup>

#### *II.IV. Diplomatic duties towards Amsterdam*

Considering the volume and frequency of diplomatic missives to Amsterdam, there evidentially was some kind of benefit to be obtained or obligation to be fulfilled in writing to the burgomasters. Most studies listing the various recipients of diplomatic correspondence in the Dutch Republic do not mention any obligatory nature to writing to various parties outside the Estates General; it is usually presented as an act of common sense and practicality (in case of the Grand Pensionary) or an increased sense of loyalty and attachment (in case of town or provincial magistracies).

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<sup>139</sup> Rommelse and Onnekink, *The Dutch in the early modern world*, 136.

<sup>140</sup> SAA 5027 241: Thomas Hees to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Algiers, May 17th 1677).

<sup>141</sup> SAA 5027 232: Cornelis Calkoen to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Constantinople, November 24th 1727.) Including addendum dated January 12th 1728

<sup>142</sup> *Resolutien van de Heeren Staaten van Holland en Westvriesland, in haar Edele Groot Mog. Vergadering genoomen in den jaare 1728* 126 (February 4th 1728). Accessible at <https://tinyurl.com/yd6dj2vc> [accessed May 29th 2020]

Yet the general tone and the specific vocabulary employed in letters to the burgomasters heavily imply and even outright state that sending diplomatic reports to Amsterdam was a significantly more serious obligation than previously assumed. The word *plicht* or duty was consistently brought up. Several types of duty towards Amsterdam were expressed. The duty to correspond was frequently referred to:

I have let some post days pass without having the honor to fulfill my writing duty to Your Excellencies; I simply couldn't bear to claim your attention with inconsequential novelties.<sup>143</sup>

Whether these rumors are true or false is unknown to me; I nevertheless considered it my duty to notify Your Excellencies of them.<sup>144</sup>

Even more important were expressions of duty concerning direct orders from Amsterdam. As we have seen, much of the content of the letters relates to the efforts envoys undertook to service the needs of Amsterdam's trade, shipping and citizens abroad. Envoys reported on the reception of Amsterdam's most recent requests, on their fulfillment of them, and occasionally asked for more possibilities to serve. Above all, they made their determinism to serve Amsterdam's needs explicitly known.

I find myself prepared to put everything in my ability on the line to serve the needs of Your Excellencies' city, without any excuses or enervations.<sup>145</sup>

It is my greatest pleasure to be of any service to Your Excellencies' desires and to the needs of the most prominent and richest town in the Netherlands.<sup>146</sup>

There are no coherent surviving collections of the missives that Amsterdam sent towards envoys stationed abroad. However, due to the envoys' description of them, combined with some other sources, their contents can be reconstructed fairly well. Incoming requests from Amsterdam at an envoy's address could originate from private parties, the city magistracy or a combination thereof (private parties asking the magistracy to intervene on their behalf). Private parties usually appealed to an envoy through a

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<sup>143</sup> SAA 5027 205: Daniel Hogguer to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Hamburg, April 1st 1777).

<sup>144</sup> SAA 5027 57: Hendrick van Hulst to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Moscow, NS March 22nd 1701).

<sup>145</sup> SAA 5027 74: Willem van Haren to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Brussels, September 23rd 1752).

<sup>146</sup> SAA 5027 74: Willem van Haren to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Brussels, May 14th 1753).

notarial deed. Envoys were commonly authorized by Amsterdam citizens to handle their private matters abroad. Multiple examples are found of envoys getting authorized to reclaim the charges of confiscated or sunken ships.<sup>147</sup> Furthermore, Mattheus Lestevenon, the long-serving ambassador in Paris, was the recipient of an unusual request by Lidia van der Groe in 1764 to track down Lidia's adolescent daughter Cornelia, who had taken all of the jewels in the house and had subsequently fled to France (Lestevenon eventually located Cornelia, and sent her back to her mother).<sup>148</sup> Aside from these private requests, the Amsterdam magistracy also dispatched orders to the envoys. Some specific requests were so frequently required that the magistracy had drawn up forms, ready to send abroad.<sup>149</sup> Commonly found orders include providing assistance to travelling Amsterdam citizens, gathering information on behalf of burghers (a frequent example is tracking down foreign parties in an Amsterdam inheritance<sup>150</sup>), reporting the latest information on trade and shipping, or the order of specific goods: Willem van Haren, minister resident in Brussels in the 1750s, spent months procuring tens of thousands cobble stones destined for the paving of Diemermeer.<sup>151</sup> One thing of particular note throughout the corpus of requests by Amsterdam is the low status of some beneficiaries – the mighty burgomasters of Amsterdam were not above intervening on behalf of a destitute sailor's widow or an enslaved carpenter (like Jan Cornelisse Engel).<sup>152</sup>

Before an envoy would depart on his mission, he would receive instructions from the Estates General. However, the magistracies of provinces and occasionally towns are also attested to providing additional parting instructions for envoys whenever they considered this beneficial to their own interests.<sup>153</sup> This was no different with Amsterdam. In his memoirs, Joachim Rendorp (five times

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<sup>147</sup> Among others, see SAA 5075 11470B: Thierry Daniel de Marolles, authorization September 28th 1768; 10245: Benjamin Phaff, naval testimony July 10th 1748; 10236: Benjamin Phaff, authorization April 22nd 1746; 10256: Benjamin Phaff, authorization May 18th 1751.

<sup>148</sup> SAA 5027 14448: Wessel van Kleef, authorizations July 5th, August 3rd, August 29th 1764.

<sup>149</sup> Examples printed in J. van Royen (ed.), *Amsterdamsche secretary, bestaande in formulieren van schepenkennissen, quytsheldingen, schat-brieven, en andere, die gewoonlyk daar gebruikt worden* (Amsterdam 1714) 106, 225-226.

<sup>150</sup> Among others, see SAA 5027 184: Rudolf Borghesius to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Hamburg, November 11th 1682).

<sup>151</sup> SAA 5027 74: Willem van Haren to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Brussels, September 23rd 1752, October 1st 1752, March 25th 1753, May 14th 1753).

<sup>152</sup> SAA 5027 46: Nicolaas Heinsius to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Stockholm, NS January 17th 1663).

<sup>153</sup> Vreede, *Inleiding tot eene geschiedenis*, 24; Franken, *Coenraad van Beuningen*, 42.

burgomaster between 1781 and 1792) mentions personally composing a draft for instructions for an envoy departing for France. He subsequently passed it on to the Stadtholder and the Grand Pensionary, who expressed their approval, though nevertheless were hesitant to employ the instructions without the endorsement of the Estates General.<sup>154</sup> Henry Sydney, the British extraordinary envoy in 1681, mentioned grumbles in The Hague about ‘Monsieur Boreel [acting] more from his instructions from Amsterdam than from the States-General’, referring to Jacob Boreel, ambassador extraordinary to France and regent in Amsterdam.<sup>155</sup> The right to provide orders or instructions to envoys often caused friction between the Estates General and Amsterdam. The envoys, as well as foreign entities, occasionally expressed uneasiness about this. One instance is found of Danish authorities refusing to meet Amsterdam’s request for shipping toll exemptions because they preferred not to enter into a contract with a city authority as opposed to the Estates General.<sup>156</sup> Three motivations for explicitly requesting orders from Amsterdam over the Estates General were recorded by envoys. The first was simply because the envoy considered Amsterdam to be more invested or expertized in the matter than the Estates General. The second was a reluctance to bother the Estates General with business that they considered to be too mundane in nature. This was the case with Jan Rochus van Til and the scandalous treatment he and his family supposedly endured on the ship taking him to his assignment in Lisbon (among others, ‘brothel language’ by the sailors and the ‘hundred insolences per day’ taking place in the captain’s cabin):

I wish not to interrupt the High Mighty Lords’ important deliberations, passing this matter on to the wise judgement of Your Excellencies, [wondering] to which extent such recalcitrant and presumptuous behavior will evoke Your Excellencies’ disgust.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> J. Rendorp, *Memorien, dienende tot opheldering, van het gebeurde, geduurende den laatsten Engelschen oorlog. Tweede deel* (Amsterdam 1792) 133.

<sup>155</sup> R. W. Blencowe (ed.), *Diary of the times of Charles the second by the honourable Henry Sidney*, 67.

<sup>156</sup> SAA 5027 44: Charles François Bosc de la Calmette to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Copenhagen, January 25th & March 29th 1777).

<sup>157</sup> SAA 5027 216: Jan Rochus van Til to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Lisbon, June 8th 1732).

The third reason to turn to Amsterdam for instructions was constituted by a continued absence of orders from the Estates General. When no instructions from The Hague appeared forthcoming, the envoy could either ask Amsterdam to pass verdict on a matter, or request that Amsterdam would wield its influence to bring the matter to the attention of the Estates General once more.<sup>158</sup> These reasons, especially the second and third, point to the burgomasters of Amsterdam as the Dutch Republic's secondary diplomatic authority, after the Estates General.

The diplomatic authority and influence of Amsterdam alongside the Estates General is further exemplified by a set of curious references by envoys that attest to them not only servicing Amsterdam, but actually being *in service* of Amsterdam. These allusions usually concerned either their appointment as envoy or the payment of their salaries. Concerning diplomatic appointment, envoys wrote to thank Amsterdam for procuring the position for them.<sup>159</sup> However, some of these testimonies imply that Amsterdam did more than just successfully recommend them to the Estates General:

With these modest tidings, I take the liberty to thank Your Excellencies for the unearned honor and favor you have bestowed upon by appointing me as consul of the Dutch nation hither.<sup>160</sup>

Another example of this phenomenon were petitions concerning succession or retirement. Sons or assistants of ailing envoys would address themselves to the burgomasters, and request permission to succeed in the position.<sup>161</sup> Requests for retirement or repatriation are also found.<sup>162</sup> These permissions would nominally be granted by the Estates General, but evidentially this was not always the entity to turn to in practice. Records of envoys who mentioned having received their salary from Amsterdam or

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<sup>158</sup> Among others, see SAA 5027 60: Willem de Wilde to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (St. Petersburg, NS July 28th 1725), 232: Jacob Colyer to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Constantinople, November 28th 1722); 6: Simon van Hoorn to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Westminster, February 17th 1662).

<sup>159</sup> SAA 5027 58: Jacob de Bie to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (St. Petersburg, July 16th 1714); 211: Coenraad Scholten to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Danzig, undated ca. 1682) and Dirk van Domburgh to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Danzig, March 8th 1697)

<sup>160</sup> SAA 5027 218: Willem de Bruyn to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Malaga, November 26th 1693). See also 223: Federico Perez to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Alicante, January 27th 1734).

<sup>161</sup> SAA 5027 23: Arend van Deurs to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Elsinore, March 31st & July 11th 1744) and Jean Christoffer van Deurs to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Elsinore, July 11th 1744); 216: Abraham Heysterman to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Lisbon, June 12th 1731).

<sup>162</sup> SAA 5027 110: Coenraad van Heemskerck to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Graz, October 26th 1673).

due to Amsterdam's intercession are present as well.<sup>163</sup> Jan Carel de Bordes, who served as secretary in Constantinople, extensively enumerated all that he had done in service of Amsterdam, and subsequently asked the burgomasters for a sum of money as a reward.<sup>164</sup> In Tripoli, Zacharias Cousart expressed his fears that he and his family would be enslaved if he did not pay his debts soon, begging Amsterdam for extra funds<sup>165</sup> (Cousart's limited financial understanding is proven when in another letter he happily reported to have spent a small fortune on an expensive Roman coin, which he promised to send to the burgomasters as a present<sup>166</sup>). Among the requests for diplomatic appointments and salaries, envoys stationed in the Levant and the Mediterranean are overrepresented, attesting to the operation of the Amsterdam-centered Levant Trade Directory.

Unsurprisingly, all sorts of expressions of duty and service are most commonly encountered in envoys with an Amsterdam background. This group often refers to an additional duty, namely to their hometown. To further placate the burgomasters, they detail their attachment to the city:

(...) as a loyal citizen of Your Excellencies' city, (...) <sup>167</sup>

I want to demonstrate my duty and veneration towards Your Excellencies, which I as a subject and former citizen of your city have always entertained.<sup>168</sup>

I am obligated to Your Excellencies (...) being the most esteemed regents of the famed city of my birth.<sup>169</sup>

Members of the Amsterdam magistracy were the most eager of all to prove their commitment to Amsterdam, especially while abroad. Alongside expressions of loyalty such as those above and reports on services performed on behalf of the city, they touched upon recent political developments in Amsterdam itself in an attempt to remain involved while away. For example, city pensionary Coenraad

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<sup>163</sup> SAA 5027 205: Daniel Hogguer to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Hamburg, October 20th 1780); 236: Jan Carel des Bordes to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Buyukdare, November 3rd 1748); 23: Silvius Johan van Deurs to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Elsinore, December 31st 1698).

<sup>164</sup> SAA 5027 236: Jan Carel des Bordes to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Constantinople, January 6th 1748).

<sup>165</sup> SAA 5027 246: Zacharias Cousart to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Tripoli, September 23rd 1691).

<sup>166</sup> SAA 5027 246: Zacharias Cousart to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Tripoli, November 8th 1689).

<sup>167</sup> SAA 5027 60: Willem de Wilde to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (St. Petersburg, NS February 24th 1721).

<sup>168</sup> SAA 5027 216: Louis Houwens to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Lisbon, December 31st 1719).

<sup>169</sup> SAA 5027 244: Johan Smits Heppendorp to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (London, NS January 15th 1692).

van Heemskerck, who served as envoy extraordinary at the court of the Holy Roman Emperor, requested repatriation because of his work being completed, and more importantly, because due to the illness of ‘my Lord Hop’ (presumably Cornelis Hop, pensionary of Amsterdam between 1667-1675) his services would be more required in Amsterdam than in Graz.<sup>170</sup> A staple of Amsterdam politics was the annual election of the burgomasters and other magistrates in February or March. Magistrates serving as envoys never neglected to include their well-wishes, blessings and congratulations after the election<sup>171</sup> – perhaps in hopes of one day returning home and resume practicing the most important occupation of all: regent of Amsterdam.

### III. Conclusion

This chapter assessed the relationship between Amsterdam, foreign policy making in the Dutch Republic and the network of Dutch diplomatic envoys abroad. As it turns out, Amsterdam extensively meddled with the foreign policy and diplomatic networks of the Dutch Republic. They largely achieved this by exploiting the conventional channels, namely through their vote in the Estates of Holland and the Estates General. Due to the general recognition of the imbalance between Amsterdam’s nominal share in these assemblies, the concrete economic and demographic power wielded by the city, and effective means to sabotage negotiations (cutting of the supply of funds), Amsterdam’s vote was often the deciding one on foreign policy decisions. This raw political power sometimes led to a sense of entitlement and a willingness to ignore existing legislation on diplomacy, resulting in semi-legal and outright illegal diplomatic missions abroad sent by the Amsterdam magistracy to protect their interests, which were near-always trade-related. Economic diplomacy, managed by semi-private Amsterdam parties such as the Levant Trade Directory, should be considered largely outside of this bureaucratic scheme, though nevertheless of crucial importance to Amsterdam in protecting and exploiting its foreign economic interests. A third way of protecting these interests was by means of the diplomatic networks that

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<sup>170</sup> SAA 5027 110: Coenraad van Heemskerck to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Graz, October 26th 1673).

<sup>171</sup> SAA 5027 60: Daniel de Dieu to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Moscow, March 1st 1731); 87: Willem Buys to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Paris, February 2nd 1714); 43: Gillis Coymans to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Copenhagen, February 7th 1730 & February 6th 1731); 60: Willem de Wilde to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (NS February 24th 1721).

nominally operated in service of the Estates General. The Amsterdam magistracy, but also various private persons or enterprises based in Amsterdam, solicited the services of Dutch envoys abroad with requests concerning (for example) trade or shipping, either with or without the blessing of the Estates General. These requests were often warmly received by the envoys, who either recognized the importance of serving Amsterdam, or, in case of the numerous envoys with Amsterdam origins, cherished a sense of loyalty towards their home town and its needs. The relationship between envoys and Amsterdam would occasionally grow so close, that notions of employment, duty and loyalty would start to muddle.

## Chapter II: Amsterdam and foreign envoys in The Hague

I have always attempted to demonstrate – and everyone who knows me well would attest to this – that I am an affectionate servant of Your Excellencies and this powerful metropolis.<sup>172</sup>

Harald Appelbom was a self-proclaimed double agent. He spread his loyalties over a handful of beneficiaries. Born in the Swedish town of Fellingsbrö in 1612, he spent the majority of his adult life in the diplomatic service of Sweden, and in possession of an ever increasing collection of Swedish noble titles.<sup>173</sup> In 1649, he named his firstborn daughter Christina after the Swedish Queen.<sup>174</sup> Due to his long-term diplomatic appointment in the Dutch Republic, he increasingly integrated himself into Dutch society and started a large family. As a foreign envoy, Appelbom was obliged to the Estates General in The Hague. This relationship eventually transcended the usual arrangements between foreign envoys and the assembly: during the 1660s and 1670s, Appelbom was more than once requested by the Estates General to serve as an intermediary between them and various other European states.<sup>175</sup> Then, whilst serving the needs of both the Swedish Crown and the Estates General, he presented himself to a third party. In a letter dated May 17<sup>th</sup>, 1664, he re-established contact with the burgomasters of Amsterdam under the guise of communicating the feelings of friendship fostered by the Swedish King towards the city. The real aim of his letter, however, appears fairly transparent: to offer his services, and to gain the favor of the burgomasters.

Appelbom was no stranger to Amsterdam. It was there that he had started his diplomatic career in 1642 as a simple correspondent of Sweden, serving for about ten years before earning a promotion to The Hague as the successor of the previous resident, Pieter Spierinck Silfvercrona.<sup>176</sup> Judging from his

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<sup>172</sup> SAA 5026 (Archief van de burgemeesters; missiven aan burgemeesters) 42: Harald Appelbom to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Amsterdam, May 17<sup>th</sup> 1664).

<sup>173</sup> Schutte, *Repertorium der buitenlandse vertegenwoordigers*, 492-494.

<sup>174</sup> SAA 5001 (Archief van de burgerlijke stand: doop-, trouw- en begraafboeken van Amsterdam (retroacta van de burgerlijke stand)) 142: baptismal registration of Christina, daughter of Heral Appelboom (January 20<sup>th</sup>, 1649).

<sup>175</sup> Schutte, *Repertorium der buitenlandse vertegenwoordigers*, 493.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*

letter, Appelbom had deemed that sentimentally elaborating on his time in Amsterdam would be the most efficient way to flatter himself into the burgomasters' service. He noted that he spent the 'best *and* most part of his life' in the city, having been shaped into an intellectual man by 'God's own gifted man, Vossius' and having been married in the City Hall.<sup>177</sup> He even notes that nearly all of his children had been born in Amsterdam; as it turns out, a likely embellished truth as only two out of the six children he had were registered as such in the birth- and baptismal records of Amsterdam.<sup>178</sup> He ended his letter by explicitly extending his loyalties, blessings and hope for a mutually beneficial cooperation.

The flattering tone employed by Appelbom to address the burgomasters of Amsterdam was not unique to him. On the contrary, it was commonly found in all forms of contact between foreign envoys and Amsterdam. These contacts constitute an important component of the Amsterdiplomacy phenomenon. The previous chapter, assessing the relationship between Amsterdam and Dutch entities, mostly featured Amsterdam as the instigator when dealing with foreign parties. This chapter, however, highlights Amsterdam as the recipient of foreign advances. Sometimes, these advances would directly originate from foreign governments, but in most cases, their envoys serving in the Dutch Republic would contact Amsterdam on their behalf. Why were foreign entities and their envoys keen to establish this relationship, and what were their preferred methods of communication? These aspects will demonstrate the strengths and weaknesses of The Hague as the designated diplomatic capital of the Dutch Republic, and illustrate the international allure of Amsterdam as a diplomatic city.

### ***I. Legality of contact between foreign envoys and cities***

The tenth article of the Union of Utrecht stated that none of the provinces or cities that were part of the Union were allowed to enter into treaties with neighboring princes or states without the common consent of the generality.<sup>179</sup> This type of interdiction not only stood at the theoretical base of the protestations

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<sup>177</sup> SAA 5001 945: marriage registration of Haraldus Appelboom and Susanna Rogeau (May 7th, 1645).

<sup>178</sup> SAA 5001 142: baptismal registration of Christina, daughter of Heraldt Appelboom (January 20th, 1649); 141: baptismal registration of Karel, son of Herald Andriesz Appelboom (May 16th, 1647).

<sup>179</sup> P. J. van Winter, 'De ontwerpen van de Unie van Utrecht', *BMHG* 64 (1943) 108-178: 167.

following diplomatic initiative by Amsterdam (as detailed in the previous chapter). Since entering into a treaty with a foreign party usually required negotiations, the article also effectively forbid direct contact between foreign envoys and provincial or city government without the consent of the generality. During the Eighty Year's War, contacts between individual provinces or cities and foreign envoys had been common, with envoys often touring multiple provinces during their stay. During Johan van Oldenbarnevelt's term as Grand Pensionary in the early 1600s, efforts were made to strengthen Union authority and to monopolize contacts with foreign envoys on behalf of the Estates General in The Hague.<sup>180</sup> After 1648, The Hague had been firmly established as the diplomatic capital of the Dutch Republic, and the Estates General as the entity to which foreign envoys were accredited. Nominally, there was little trouble to be had in this arrangement. The Hague had known a long tradition of housing governmental and legal institutions, such as the Court of Holland.<sup>181</sup> Whilst in the late 1570s (when it emerged as the political center of the Dutch Republic) The Hague had been a poor and wall-less town, it proved a sensible choice in the sense that it would constitute a compromise between the 18 other constituent cities of Holland. It was a relatively successful attempt 'avoid all jealousies'.<sup>182</sup> When in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century Amsterdam began flourishing and amassing economic and demographic strength, it appeared more important than ever before to maintain the balance, and to prevent one city from dominating or even subjugating the rest.<sup>183</sup> Maintaining The Hague as the political and diplomatic capital of the generality was only one of many checks built into the Dutch political system to achieve this.

However, on closer inspection, there appears to have been no universal satisfaction surrounding these laws, and the designation of The Hague as the privileged site of diplomatic activity was not without controversy. Some protests against the scheme were attempted through legal channels: in 1679 the vroedschap of Amsterdam drafted a resolution in which they expressed their disappointment over the level of autonomy permitted to them in diplomatic affairs.<sup>184</sup> Some regents went further than drafting

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<sup>180</sup> Groenveld, *Verlopend getij*, 71-72.

<sup>181</sup> C. J. J. Stal and V. L. C. Kersing, 'Ruimtelijke ontwikkeling in de late middeleeuwen', in J. G. Smit (ed.), *Den Haag. Geschiedenis van de stad 1: vroegste tijd tot 1574* (Zwolle 2004) 27-76: 66-67.

<sup>182</sup> 't Hart, 'Cities and statemaking', 668.

<sup>183</sup> Franken, *Coenraad van Beuningen*, 7; E. O. G. Haitsma Mulier, *The myth of Venice and Dutch republican thought in the seventeenth century* (Assen 1980) 61.

<sup>184</sup> SAA 5025 (Archief van de Vroedschap, resoluties met munimenten of bijlagen) 33: 1679 oktober 16-1681 april 14.

paper protests and openly attempted negotiations with foreign envoys. However, at least in the case of the Dordrecht regent Simon van Halewijn, they were faced with disciplinary action. In 1693, van Halewijn had discussed war and peace with the French secret agent Robert de Piles. He attempted to defend his actions by stating he had not acted in his own interest or that of his city, but had done what he did for the benefit of the generality.<sup>185</sup> This defense was not entirely hopeless. Negotiations with foreign envoys by provincial or city entities were considered a lighter shade of legal gray when a) the matter only concerned the affairs of the province or city in question, and b) the goals of the negotiations did not interfere with the generality's interests.<sup>186</sup> However, it did not save van Halewijn, who received a life sentence on charge of high treason.

The system of diplomatic privileges and autonomy awarded to the various stately entities in the Dutch Republic was respected in varying degrees by foreign governments. The large majority of diplomatic relations were conducted normally and according to the protocols and laws in place. The aforementioned refusal in 1777 of Danish authorities to grant toll exemptions to Amsterdam ships on the basis of their reluctance to enter into a contract with a city instead of the generality is an example of this. In that particular case, the Danish demonstrated an awareness of and respect for Dutch diplomatic law. However, opposite examples (involving Amsterdam) are also found. King Charles X Gustav of Sweden supposedly found it 'unbearable to have to abide by laws from The Hague' when Amsterdam was supposedly wielding the most power in the Republic, and had additionally been Sweden's primary point of contact during his reign in the 1650s.<sup>187</sup> Around the same time, Gerard Schaep was clearly known throughout London and accepted by the English court as representing Amsterdam over the generality, judging by the title of the pamphlet Schaep found in his letterbox in October of 1650: *The copy of a letter send by me Thomas Craford to the Ambassador of Amsterdam now residt in London*.<sup>188</sup> Louis XIV of France had the least known respect for the system in place, and instead sought to exploit its weaknesses. He manipulated the diplomatic structure in place by instructing envoys to openly enter

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<sup>185</sup> Rommelse and Onnekink, *The Dutch in the early modern world*, 148 and C. Esseboom, 'Simon van Halewijn', Regionaal Archief Dordrecht (2018): <https://www.regionaalarchiefdordrecht.nl/biografisch-woordenboek/simon-van-halewijn/> [accessed May 5th, 2020]

<sup>186</sup> Vreede, *Inleiding tot eene geschiedenis*, 39; Groenveld, *Verlopend getij*, 67-68.

<sup>187</sup> Vreede, *Inleiding tot eene geschiedenis*, 29.

<sup>188</sup> SAA 5027 3: Gerard Schaep to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Westminster, October 14th 1650).

into negotiations with multiple cities in the Republic – Amsterdam, but also Utrecht were selected as destinations. The explicit aim of this strategy was to encourage these cities to transgress their diplomatic allowances and to nourish feelings of internal distrust in the Republic, ultimately destabilizing it.<sup>189</sup> As we will see, this provoked a large diplomatic scandal in 1684 and caused deep rifts between Amsterdam and advocates of the generality.

## ***II. Receptiveness of Amsterdam towards foreign envoys***

Despite the legal and practical recognition of The Hague as the designated diplomatic center of the Republic, there is widespread proof attesting to foreign envoys reaching out to Amsterdam in various ways. Throughout the 1648-1795 period envoys in The Hague addressed their correspondence to Amsterdam, or travelled to Amsterdam in person. Sometimes, they were motivated by ‘traditional’ diplomatic objectives, such as the preparations for treaty negotiations or trade matters, but the business that drove them to contact Amsterdam could also be of a more personal or familial nature. Envoys are even attested to visiting Amsterdam and conversing with the magistrates as a touristic enterprise.

The attitude of the burgomasters of Amsterdam towards foreign envoys reaching out to them with the explicit purpose to conduct diplomatic negotiations tended to vary. Instances are found of Amsterdam magistrates attempting to brush off these envoys.<sup>190</sup> In his memoirs, burgomaster Joachim Rendorp details various instances of this.

[On meeting Francisco Triqueti, consul of Sardinia in 1781] He asked me whether the magistrates of our city would be intending to make peace with England. (...) When my lord Triqueti pushed me to answer him, I could not say much else than that I did not believe much would be decided here, and that he should address himself to The Hague. He answered me it was not necessary to take one step in The Hague as long as one had not informed himself of the opinion of the lords of Amsterdam.<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> Porta, *Joan en Gerrit Corver*, 19, 44; Black, *A history of diplomacy*, 78-79; Frijhoff, Prak and Hell, *Geschiedenis van Amsterdam II-2*, 207.

<sup>190</sup> Porta, *Joan en Gerrit Corver*, 182.

<sup>191</sup> Rendorp, *Memorien tweede deel*, 7, 20.

[On meeting the British negotiator Wentworth in 1782] I told him he would do better to go to The Hague as soon as possible, to start the negotiations. He said that he had been charged to negotiate in Amsterdam, not in The Hague, and that he came to ask us what we desired. I replied that it would be indecent to handle such a matter in Amsterdam with the magistrates of a mere city, and that it would be much more appropriate to do it in The Hague.<sup>192</sup>

Rendorp's sentiments appear principled and respectful towards the position of The Hague. However, upon closer examination, they exemplify the dual policy that the burgomasters tended to uphold concerning contacts with foreign envoys. Rendorp's memoir was largely written as a defense of his and Amsterdam's actions during the fourth Anglo-Dutch war, and he went out of his way to present himself as adhering to the diplomatic protocols in place. His rather public referral of envoys towards The Hague was a part of this. Outside of his memoir, however, Rendorp and his colleagues are attested to participating in the long tradition of receiving envoys in Amsterdam and accepting their invitations to negotiate. During many of the large peace congresses or critical moments of tension in between 1648-1795, foreign ambassadors found their way to Amsterdam. Usually, they had been charged to collect the thoughts of the most prominent regents in the Republic to improve the efficiency of impending negotiations.<sup>193</sup> As foreign envoys were aware of the essentiality of Amsterdam's approval in policy decisions, their first stop often was Amsterdam.<sup>194</sup> This practice was not necessarily considered atypical or taboo by Dutch authorities. More serious, however, were missions to Amsterdam to actually conduct the negotiations in question. For example, during the War of the Spanish Succession, troupes of French ambassadors were regularly sent to Amsterdam to conduct clandestine negotiations between Louis XIV and burgomaster Johannes Hudde. Officially, these talks served to prepare the official negotiations for peace, but in reality the peace agreement itself was already being drawn up.<sup>195</sup>

All in all, when foreign envoys politically propositioned the burgomasters, the latter's dual policy was to first publicly refer the former to The Hague, and subtly welcome them afterwards. Despite

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<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, 113.

<sup>193</sup> Porta, *Joan en Gerrit Corver*, 88, 109; Vreede, *Inleiding tot eene geschiedenis*, 14; Heringa, *De eer en hoogheid van de staat*, 465.

<sup>194</sup> Vreede, *Inleiding tot eene geschiedenis*, 29.

<sup>195</sup> Porta, *Joan en Gerrit Corver*, 19-44.

Rendorp's claims, the burgomasters generally did little to discourage foreign ambassadors from writing, visiting, or negotiating with them. However, compared to the active and somewhat entitled role taken by Amsterdam in directing Dutch envoys abroad, the magistrates showed themselves noticeably more passive towards foreign envoys. The need to lure them away from The Hague was largely nonexistent, as the envoys would routinely present themselves autonomously, and there was also little will to openly undermine The Hague in this regard.

### *II.I. The dangers of city negotiation: Amsterdam and d'Avaux*

The dangers of the (perceived) extension of an invitation to openly negotiate outside of The Hague and the Estates General are best illustrated by the conflict between Amsterdam and the faction of Stadtholder William III and Gaspar Fagel on the supposed illegal correspondence between the city and the French ambassador d'Avaux in 1684. This dispute was the most high-profile diplomatic affair involving Amsterdam between 1648-1795, and it highlighted the sensibilities surrounding city-run diplomacy.

The affair should be considered in the context of the bad working relationship between Amsterdam and the Stadtholder, as detailed in the previous chapter. In January of 1684, Amsterdam refused to financially contribute to William III's proposal to extend military spending. Around the same time, a letter by d'Avaux to Louis XIV was intercepted. It alluded to an entire network of secret correspondence, visits and negotiations between the French and Amsterdam. William and his ally, Grand Pensionary Fagel, read the letter out loud in the Estates of Holland, accused Amsterdam of high treason and ordered the immediate seizure of Amsterdam's papers to prevent the disappearance of incriminating evidence.<sup>196</sup> Supposedly, William exclaimed that:

The count d'Avaux would not have written as he did, had he not also visited Amsterdam. If an investigation were to be set up, van Beuningen would lose his head!<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> Frijhoff, Prak and Hell, *Geschiedenis van Amsterdam II-2*, 201; de Bruin, *Geheimhouding en verraad*, 369; Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 829-836.

<sup>197</sup> R. M. van Goens, *Politiek vertoog over het waar sistema van de stad Amsterdam, met relatie tot de algemeene belangens der Republiek, zo als hetzelfde uit 's lands historien kan worden opgemaakt* (Amsterdam 1781) 23.

The burgomasters of Amsterdam were quick to launch an extensive defense of their actions, based on many different arguments. Firstly, Their contacts with d’Avaux had not been treasonous at all – this would only have been the case if they had conferred with the minister of a nation the Republic was at war with. Secondly, the conferences with d’Avaux had always been short, and had consistently been reported upon by the generality, so they had not been clandestine in the first place. Thirdly, it shouldn’t have been surprising for Amsterdam to maintain direct contacts with France, a country where so many of their economic interests were located. They closed off with a vague threat: no one would stop them from continuing to pursue these contacts, especially not the Stadtholder and his faction.<sup>198</sup> The squabbles immediately penetrated into the public sphere when both sides started to distribute pamphlets to elaborate on their point of view.<sup>199</sup> In Amsterdam itself, William’s pamphlets persuaded but few, and the populace rallied behind their burgomasters. Amsterdam’s publicity campaign also quickly convinced several powerful anti-Orangist factions in other cities. Murmurs accusing William of being a tyrant and a murderer (of Johan and Cornelis de Witt) arose as a consequence of the public unrest.<sup>200</sup>

The accusations of the Stadtholder and the defense of Amsterdam illustrate the existence of differing points of view on the legality of contacts between non-Hague entities and foreign envoys. The ambiguity surrounding negotiations that only concerned the affairs of one particular city or province was to blame for this. Naturally, Amsterdam purposefully interpreted this in the broadest way possible, to allow for the maximum amount of diplomatic agency and autonomy to negotiate. Entities in The Hague felt the opposite way, and attributed much value to their diplomatic monopoly for the sake of efficiency and secrecy. In the end, both parties were victims of Louis XIV’s strategy to disrupt relations between the various nuclei of power in the Republic: d’Avaux was reportedly delighted about the disputes that had arisen through his letters.<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> Van Goens, *Politiek vertoog*, 26-27; de Bruin, *Geheimhouding en verraad*, 360-361.

<sup>199</sup> Among others, see Koninklijke Bibliotheek, KW Pfl 11982: *Verhael van het geene voorgevallen is tusschen den heer ambassadeur van Vranckrijk in den Hage, ende de heeren gedeputeerden der stad Amsterdam, streckende tot verantwoordingh van dese stad, tegens het ongegrondt nabedencken over onbehoorlijcke correspondentie met gedachte heer ambassadeur* (1684); KW Pfl 11978: *Copie van een missive, door de heeren burgermeesteren en raedt der stad Amsterdam, geschreven aen de andere steden* (February 19th 1648); KW Pfl 12150: *Verantwoording van het beleyd der heeren van Amsterdam* (1684).

<sup>200</sup> Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 833-834; Franken, *Coenraad van Beuningen*, 229.

<sup>201</sup> Vreede, *Inleiding tot eene geschiedenis*, 93.

### *III. Writing and travelling to Amsterdam*

Not all contacts between foreign envoys and cities such as Amsterdam would prove as controversial as direct attempts at diplomatic negotiation. The vast majority of contacts were of a different, less high-profile nature and attracted little interest or reprimands from entities in The Hague. The exact contents of the contact between foreign envoys and Amsterdam can be reconstructed surprisingly well by combining diplomatic correspondence and the notarial records of Amsterdam. Subsequently, a more detailed profile of Amsterdam's diplomatic appeal beyond vague notions of political and economic power can be drafted.

#### *III.I. Writing*

Approximately a hundred letters written by foreign envoys (mostly) stationed in The Hague have survived in the burgomasters' archive in Amsterdam.<sup>202</sup> All of these were read for the purpose of this research. Despite the relatively modest number of missives, envoys of nearly all European states are represented in the collection, with a temporal emphasis on the period between 1650 and 1700. The contents of nearly the entire corpus of correspondence are focused on but two themes, and thus two motives to turn to entities in Amsterdam instead of The Hague.

The first of these were recommendations. Sometimes, these could simply be in favor of themselves, to announce their presence to the burgomasters and to gain a good standing in Amsterdam. Since foreign envoys were generally aware of the prominent position of Amsterdam and its burgomasters within the Dutch constitution, they were also aware of the potential benefits of reputability in Amsterdam. Harald Appelbom's missive at the beginning of this chapter was an example of this sort of letter.<sup>203</sup> More common were recommendations on behalf of others, like other (semi-)diplomatic agents in their circle. Multiple instances were found of ambassadors in The Hague announcing the impending arrival of a newly appointed agent who would be taking up a position in Amsterdam. These recommendations do not only direct us to a motive for writing to Amsterdam, but also attest to the close

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<sup>202</sup> SAA 5026 (Archief van de burgemeesters; missiven aan burgemeesters) 42: Buitenlandse vertegenwoordigers in Amsterdam of Den Haag.

<sup>203</sup> SAA 5026 42: Harald Appelbom to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Amsterdam, May 17th 1664).

cooperation between various envoys of different stations representing the same foreign nation in the Dutch Republic. Aleksander Romanovic Voroncov, the Russian minister plenipotentiary in 1766, informed the burgomasters of the merits of Johan Oldecop, who was soon to become Russia's agent in Amsterdam. Oldecop, 'étant a la suite de la miene ici', was to be accorded all diplomatic regard that would be due to him as an agent of Russia – and if Amsterdam did award Oldecop this respect, Voroncov promised to put in a good word for Amsterdam traders in Russia.<sup>204</sup> Similarly, in 1662, the Spanish ambassador Estevan de Gamarra y Contreras recommended Andreas de Belmonte, who he had appointed as agent of Spain in Amsterdam. De Gamarra had learned that some locals had already maliciously conspired against de Belmonte, and urgently requested the burgomasters to protest and take action against the offenders.<sup>205</sup> De Gamarra would later repeat this request on behalf of Manuel de Belmonte, Andreas' brother and successor.<sup>206</sup> A third and rather interesting example of diplomatic recommendation is found in a letter by Jacques-Auguste de Thou, the French ambassador in 1662. He wrote of his illness and weak constitution, and announced he would send 'Madame l'ambassadrice', his wife Marie Picardet, to Amsterdam to handle some of the affairs he himself intended to discuss with the burgomasters.<sup>207</sup> Recommendations for non-diplomatic compatriots were also written. William Temple explained to the burgomasters why one Dr. Mayo would be the best candidate to serve as reverend of the English congregation in Amsterdam.<sup>208</sup> Harald Appelbom insisted on the good standing of the Swedish major Teering Hendriksen, who had (according to Appelbom) been unlawfully detained by some Amsterdam creditors.<sup>209</sup>

A second motive for foreign envoys to address a letter to the burgomasters was simply the Amsterdam-centered nature of a matter that occupied their duties. Shipping often drew the attention of foreign envoys in The Hague. This was unsurprising given the size and multinational nature of the

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<sup>204</sup> SAA 5026 42: Aleksander Romanovic Voroncov to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (The Hague, February 10th 1766).

<sup>205</sup> SAA 5026 42: Estevan de Gamarra y Contreras to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (The Hague, June 17th 1662)

<sup>206</sup> SAA 5026 42: Estevan de Gamarra y Contreras to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (The Hague, April 10th 1666).

<sup>207</sup> SAA 5026 42: Jacques-Auguste de Thou to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (The Hague, April 12th 1662).

<sup>208</sup> SAA 5026 42: William Temple to to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (The Hague, November 7th & 11th 1668).

<sup>209</sup> SAA 5026 42: Harald Appelbom to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (The Hague, December 5th 1667).

Amsterdam port and shipping industry. On the one hand, the missives concerned ships (and their crew) in the Amsterdam port itself. William Boswell, the British resident, pleaded for the release of two British captains that had been detained by the Admiralty in 1745.<sup>210</sup> Gabriel-Jacques de Salignac, ambassador of France in 1726, asked for permission to dock at the Amsterdam port on behalf of three French ships.<sup>211</sup> Antonio de Sousa de Macedo requested the burgomasters to dispatch a warship to Portuguese waters to help combat piracy, adding that ‘le Roy mon Maistre reconnoit par une grande affection pour la ville d’Amsterdam’.<sup>212</sup> On the other hand, the foreign envoys could provide updates or voice concern on Amsterdam-originated shipping enterprises in the envoy’s respective territories of origin. Johan Rudolf Faesch had been notified of an Amsterdam merchant fleet blocking some important Prussian islands, and urgently requested that the burgomasters would order the dissolution of the blockade.<sup>213</sup> Antoine Brun, the Spanish ambassador, took it upon himself to alert the burgomasters of the hijacking of some Amsterdam ships by Irish pirates near Ostend.<sup>214</sup> Bevil Skelton announced the British confiscation of the Amsterdam ship *Heldenberg* on suspicion of preparing an attack on the kingdom.<sup>215</sup> He meekly requested that the burgomasters would first rationally confer amongst themselves before immediately launching a hostile defense at this accusation. According to him, his letter was proof that the matter could be resolved peacefully:

Though my instructions do not allow me to address cities instead of the Estates General, I nevertheless made effort [illegible] ... knowing your dedication to the continued enjoyment of my master’s friendship and good affections.

Besides shipping, another Amsterdam-centered topic that concerned foreign envoys in The Hague were the members of their respective nations. Between 1658 and 1795, Amsterdam generally exercised a substantial amount of attraction towards migrants from many different parts of Europe, resulting in

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<sup>210</sup> SAA 5026 42: William Boswell to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (The Hague, August 7th 1745).

<sup>211</sup> SAA 5026 42: Gabriel-Jacques de Salignac to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (The Hague, April 25th 1726).

<sup>212</sup> SAA 5026 42: Antonio de Sousa de Macedo to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (The Hague, May 14th 1651).

<sup>213</sup> SAA 5026 42: Johan Rudolf Faesch to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Amsterdam, undated 1740s).

<sup>214</sup> SAA 5026 42: Antoine Brun to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (The Hague, June 7th 1651).

<sup>215</sup> SAA 5026 42: Bevil Skelton to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (The Hague, August 20th 1685).

foreign communities of considerable size.<sup>216</sup> These communities were occasionally in need of political and socio-economic representation. Whilst a tendency to approach the envoy stationed closest to their compatriot in need is observable in the sources (as will be discussed in the next chapter), envoys stationed in The Hague occasionally intervened on behalf of compatriots in Amsterdam as well. Recommendations can be considered positive examples of this. However, just as often foreign envoys assisted in criminal cases involving members of their nation in Amsterdam. Bevil Skelton, in another letter, warns the burgomasters of a man named Foecks. He had reportedly infiltrated the English military ranks, fornicated with some soldiers and had afterwards fled to Amsterdam.<sup>217</sup> Jacques-Auguste de Thou was more convinced of the innocence of one of his compatriots: he requested the fair treatment and protection of the civil rights of Frenchman Gabriel de la Lande, who had been detained in Amsterdam. In a plea ‘de vouloir interposer vostre autorité’, de Thou reminded the burgomasters of a case involving one Jacob Arondeaux, a burgher of Amsterdam who had been imprisoned in Paris but had nevertheless always been treated courteously by the French.<sup>218</sup> Anthon Günther Hannecken, a Danish envoy, even wrote to Amsterdam requesting justice regarding an assault on his own person whilst he was visiting the city. Upon his arrival at the inn where he was to stay, a Jew named Levi Salomon had destroyed some of his suitcases and had attempted to pit the gathered crowd against him. According to Hannecken, this was deeply disgraceful to his status as a diplomatic envoy and as a foreign guest of the city.<sup>219</sup>

On the whole, the two most common motives for sending a letter to Amsterdam – recommendations and Amsterdam-centered business – appear unproblematic with regards to the status of The Hague as diplomatic capital. The recommendations attest to a good working relationship between envoys stationed in The Hague and Amsterdam, with little tension or competition between them. The letters on Amsterdam-centered business are also generally unoffensive to the system in place. As the

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<sup>216</sup> E. Kuijpers, *Migrantenstad. Immigratie en sociale verhoudingen in 17<sup>e</sup>-eeuws Amsterdam* (Hilversum 2005) 9; H. L. M. Obedijn and M. Schrover, *Komen en gaan: immigratie en emigratie in Nederland vanaf 1550* (Amsterdam 2008) 25-30; M. Ponte, ‘Al de swarten die hier ter stede comen’: een Afro-Atlantische gemeenschap in zeventiende-eeuws Amsterdam’, *Tijdschrift voor sociale en economische geschiedenis* 15:4 (2019) 33-62: 34.

<sup>217</sup> SAA 5026 42: Bevil Skelton to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (The Hague, May 25th 1685).

<sup>218</sup> SAA 5026 42: Jacques-Auguste de Thou to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (The Hague, June 6th & 20th 1661).

<sup>219</sup> SAA 5026 42: Anthon Günther Hannecken to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (The Hague, May 30th 1699). In the attachment is a copy of witness testimonies drawn up by notary Hendrik de Wilde on June 1st 1699.

matters up for discussion only concerned affairs within Amsterdam city bounds or involved Amsterdam parties, there would be little to gain from attempting to handle the matter with authorities in The Hague. Nevertheless, occasionally a more risky, politically charged paragraph slipped through. Antonio de Sousa de Macedo's request for a warship was addressed to Amsterdam *because* the Estates General wouldn't grant him one. He even mentioned that his working relationship with the entities in The Hague was unproductive to the degree that he intended to return to Portugal soon.<sup>220</sup> Andrej Artamonovic Matveev, extraordinary minister plenipotentiary on behalf of Russia, voiced a similar sentiment: the Estates General were frustratingly slow and unreceptive to his attempts at contact. In an attempt to remedy it, he requested the burgomasters to intervene with the Estates General on his behalf.<sup>221</sup> Requests or warnings that appeared to concern the generality (as opposed to only Amsterdam) are also found: Estevan de Gamarra sent his warning (including a referral to a clause of the treaties of 1648) on Dutch warships overstepping their naval allowances in Spanish waters to Amsterdam instead of The Hague.<sup>222</sup> These cases match the tendency found in correspondence by Dutch envoys to address Amsterdam as a secondary option when entities in The Hague proved themselves unreceptive: Amsterdam could be asked to intervene with these entities on their behalf, or, taking it one step further, foreign envoys could redirect their business entirely to Amsterdam instead.

### *III.II. Travelling*

Sometimes, just addressing a letter to Amsterdam did not suffice for the business at hand. In those cases, foreign envoys could elect to travel to Amsterdam and conduct their duties in person. There is little historiographical agreement on the attitudes towards diplomatic mobility and domestic travel by foreign envoys. Black discards the notion of foreign envoys travelling within their host nation almost entirely, stating that it was fairly extreme behavior of Dutch envoy Henrick Hop to travel from London to Norfolk in 1739.<sup>223</sup> Heringa, however, deems foreign envoys in the Dutch Republic very much inclined to travel

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<sup>220</sup> SAA 5026 42: Antonio de Sousa de Macedo to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (The Hague, May 14th 1651).

<sup>221</sup> SAA 5026 42: Andrej Artamonovic Matveev to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Den Briel, May 15th 1707).

<sup>222</sup> SAA 5026 42: Estevan de Gamarra y Contreras to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (The Hague, March 3rd 1665).

<sup>223</sup> Black, *A history of diplomacy*, 82.

and visit different cities in Holland, both as a tourist and to gauge the opinion of the magistrates on important matters.<sup>224</sup> In this chapter, we have seen that visits to Amsterdam with the express purpose of political or diplomatic negotiation did occur multiple times, and that these visits were not regarded favorably by entities in The Hague; at worst, they were considered high treason. However, similarly to correspondence, less controversial motives also existed, which allowed foreign envoys to steadily visit Amsterdam and other cities in the Republic throughout the 1648-1795 period. For example, the *Oprechte Haerlemsche courant* of September 2<sup>nd</sup> 1688 reported on the pleasant trip undertaken by the Spanish ambassador Manuel de Coloma y Escolano and his wife, who had sailed to Amsterdam on the Prince of Orange's yacht. They were hosted by Spain's consul-general, Manuel de Belmonte, and had visited the City Hall, the Amsterdam stock exchange and 'all other remarkable' things in the city.<sup>225</sup> Some attempts at controlling this (touristic) practice nevertheless seem to have been instituted: a 1661 law dictates that foreign envoys wishing to travel outside of The Hague had to be accompanied by a court steward.<sup>226</sup> However, no court stewards whatsoever were found in the Amsterdam sources; additionally, near-complete silence and a general lack of reflection on this rule by envoys explicitly discussing potential visits to Amsterdam demonstrate that this law was a dead letter.

Foreign envoys had different opinions on Amsterdam versus The Hague as diplomatic cities. If we are to believe Joachim Rendorp, nearly all envoys he encountered expressed frustration at being referred to The Hague when clearly every decision that mattered was taken in Amsterdam. However, outside of Rendorp's memoir, opposite sentiments are also found. Giovanni Arigoni, Venice's minister consul in Amsterdam, stated in 1708 that

No one hears anything about diplomacy in this *semplice piazza de negozio*. The Hague is the source of all political news.<sup>227</sup>

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<sup>224</sup> Heringa, *De eer en hoogheid van de staat*, 465.

<sup>225</sup> *Oprechte Haerlemsche courant*, September 2<sup>nd</sup> 1688.

<sup>226</sup> NA 1.01.02 (Staten-Generaal) 12547.384: Extract uit de resoluties van de Staten-Generaal waarbij de instructie wordt vastgesteld voor Frederick Hessel van Dinter als hofmeester van de Staten-Generaal. 1661 November 26.; Heringa, *De eer en hoogheid van de staat*, 503-507.

<sup>227</sup> Cited by Porta, *Joan en Gerrit Corver*, 102.

So why did foreign envoys wish to leave The Hague and visit Amsterdam, apart from negotiating with the burgomasters or to tour the city's landmarks? The reasons for these trips can be somewhat reconstructed using Amsterdam's notarial deeds. 167 Individual deeds detailing the activities of 59 foreign envoys based in The Hague between 1648 and 1795 were found.

In these notarial deeds, the involvement of foreign envoys in three main types of activity are detailed: financial, (non-political) diplomatic and familial/social transactions. It is important to note that the large majority of the recorded transactions did in fact *not* move the envoy to actually travel to Amsterdam. They could instead choose to authorize someone to handle the affair, and travel to Amsterdam in their stead: many deeds mention the envoy as the authorizer of the notary's eventual client.<sup>228</sup> However, in other cases it is clear that the envoy indeed did physically appear in the notary's office to complete the transaction, with their signature gracing the bottom of the document.

It is unsurprising that the making of a financial transaction emerges as the most common motive for an envoy stationed in The Hague to travel to Amsterdam. Not only is there an inherent confirmation bias to the source material at hand (as financial transactions constituted a large part of a notary's daily duty), but Amsterdam's prominence in banking and trade also made it an obvious destination for the transfer of funds. It appears that only the bulkiest transactions involving large amounts of capital required an envoy's physical presence in Amsterdam. Four Saxon agents came to Amsterdam in April and May of 1764 and transferred jewels worth fl. 2.35 million to the burgomasters for safekeeping.<sup>229</sup> A couple of years later, in April 1771, Jakob Olivier von Cornet, acting on behalf of various German principalities, made the journey to borrow a sum of fl. 400.000 of some Amsterdam merchants, and to provide jewels and government bonds as collateral to the debt.<sup>230</sup> Envoys did not only conduct financial transactions in Amsterdam on behalf of their respective sovereigns. Transactions concerning their personal finances were also common. In his diary entry of March 25<sup>th</sup> 1680, the British envoy extraordinary Henry Sydney noted that the Spanish consul-general Manuel de Belmonte (who lived in

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<sup>228</sup> Among others, see SAA 5075 9083: Jan Ardinois, obligation April 36th 1720; 8300: George Wetstein, transport July 23rd 1723; 8312: Jan de Vicq jr., obligation January 6th 1717.

<sup>229</sup> SAA 5075 12365: Cornelis van Homrigh, miscellaneous February 28th 1764.

<sup>230</sup> SAA 5075 12396: Cornelis van Homrigh, obligation & miscellaneous April 4th 1771.

Amsterdam) came to visit him in The Hague and provided him with some insider tips on investments on the Amsterdam exchange:

He told me there was more money at Amsterdam now than ever, that one might have it at 5 per cent, and 14 months to the year; actions fixed at 26, obligations at 104.<sup>231</sup>

The popularity of obligations, or government bonds, that Belmonte alluded to is particularly well documented. In the deeds, foreign envoys are universally attested to investing in and subsequently trading Dutch bonds – so much and so often, that multiple instances are recorded of an envoy trading bonds carrying another (otherwise unrelated) envoy’s name.<sup>232</sup> Perhaps partly due to this rabid investment scheme, foreign envoys were often plagued by large amounts of debt, forcing them to handle paperwork surrounding these existing debts and new intended loans. Envoys based in The Hague racked up considerable personal debts with various Amsterdam parties, and had to travel to the city to negotiate the terms. Amounts ranging from fl. 800 (Laurenz von Flohr, envoy extraordinary of Holstein-Gottorp in 1719)<sup>233</sup> to fl. 30.000 (Johan Hallungius, envoy extraordinary of Saxony-Gotha-Altenburg in 1723)<sup>234</sup> are detailed in a deed.

Deeds, like correspondence, can also provide details on the diplomatic cooperation between differing ‘divisions’ of foreign embassies in the Dutch Republic, e.g. an ambassador in The Hague cooperating with a consul in Amsterdam. Again, not all of these cooperative efforts required the party in The Hague to travel to Amsterdam: authorizing the diplomatic party in Amsterdam was enough. The Hague-based Spanish envoy extraordinary Manuel Francisco de Lira y Castillo, together with the aforementioned Amsterdam-based Manuel de Belmonte, coordinated the draft of *asientos* involving Spanish traders in Amsterdam, the West India Company, the Dutch consulate in Seville and the Spanish government, but only de Belmonte appeared in notary Stephanus Pelgrom’s office to represent the Spanish envoys.<sup>235</sup> Whereas this particular example did not necessitate the party in The Hague to travel

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<sup>231</sup> Blencowe (ed.), *Diary of the times of Charles the second by the honourable Henry Sidney*, 47.

<sup>232</sup> Among others, see SAA 5075 9109: Jan Ardinois, transport January 15th 1732; 9133: Jan Ardinois, transport August 21st 1737; 9382: Matthijs Maten de jonge, transport August 25th 1739; 8299: George Wetstein, transport July 23rd 1722.

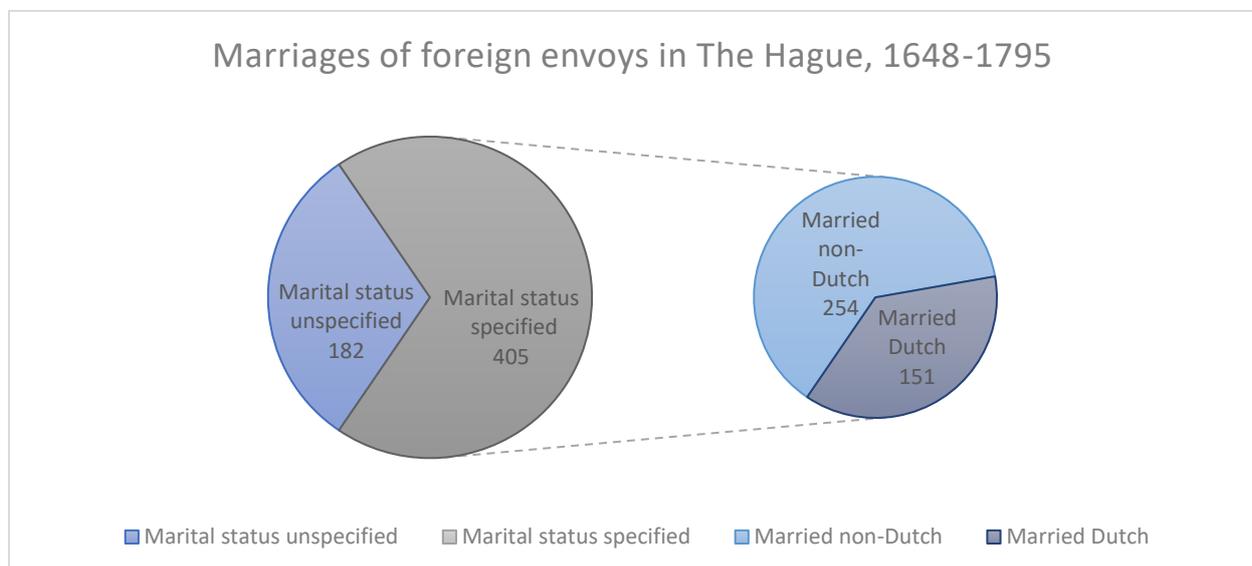
<sup>233</sup> SAA 5075 9082: Jan Ardinois, bail August 7th 1719.

<sup>234</sup> SAA 5075 9086: Jan Ardinois, obligation June 22nd 1723.

<sup>235</sup> SAA 5075 4766: Stephanus Pelgrom, contract ca. early 1677.

to Amsterdam, the deeds do record some instances in which this was evidentially considered necessary for the advancement of the embassy's goals. A notable example involves another group of Spanish delegates, though of a later date. Antonio de la Quadra, secretary to the Spanish embassy in The Hague (and occasional chargé d'affaires), is found several times in Amsterdam in 1759 and 1760 to handle the paperwork surrounding the establishment of an iron factory in Spain. This was a joint enterprise with two of Spain's Amsterdam-based envoys, namely Juan Manuel de Uriondo (consul-general) and Pedro Gil de Olondriz (treasurer), who appeared alongside with him to ratify the business.<sup>236</sup>

The third type of transaction that required an envoy's presence in Amsterdam was family or social business. For example, the Russian ambassador Alexander Golovkin travelled to assist his son Ivan in the draft of a prenuptial agreement upon the latter's marriage to Amsterdam socialite Cornelia van Strijen in 1759.<sup>237</sup> Despite the mostly non-Dutch familial background of foreign envoys in The Hague, as well as the temporal nature of their residence, the occurrence of family-related affairs such as Golovkin's is less puzzling than it would appear. As can be deduced from the graph below, it was relatively common for foreign envoys to contract a marriage with a Dutch (or Dutch-rooted) woman.



Graph I. Marriages of foreign envoys in The Hague, 1648-1795. Based on Schutte.<sup>238</sup>

<sup>236</sup> SAA 5075 11380B: Thierry Daniel de Marolles, contract of society February 17th 1759; 11397: Thierry Daniel de Marolles, authorization October 8th 1760.

<sup>237</sup> SAA 5075 9262: Jan Ardinois, prenuptial agreement March 9th 1759.

<sup>238</sup> Main (numbered) envoys named by Schutte, *Repertorium der buitenlandse vertegenwoordigers*. A 'Dutch' woman was taken to be as either born in the Dutch Republic or naturalized but with a demonstrable family presence in the Dutch Republic.

Out of 587 foreign envoys serving in The Hague between 1648-1795, 151 are known to have married a Dutch woman – and as some widowed envoys married Dutch again, a total of 177 marriages is known to have occurred. Marrying into a Dutch family meant establishing family connections in the Dutch Republic. When an envoy served an extended term (some lasting decades), the subsequent founding of a family was often inevitable, resulting in children who would eventually be contracting marriages with Dutch parties as well, broadening as well as deepening the envoy's Dutch family ties even further. Given the demographic prominence of Amsterdam within the Dutch Republic, a significant amount of foreign envoys in The Hague therefore established familial connections with in-laws in Amsterdam. Cases like Golovkin and the prenuptial agreement of his son demonstrate the existence of these family connections, and the need to physically travel to maintain them. Another envoy whose family connections in Amsterdam are well-attested to in the notarial records was Johan Hallungius (on behalf of Saxony), who was regularly propelled to make a journey on behalf of his family. In 1725 he is found accompanying his son Jacob Daniel, who was to enter into the service of Amsterdam merchant Abraham Scherenberg as an office clerk, and signs the contract on behalf of his son.<sup>239</sup> In 1730, his daughter Marianne would marry Lambert van Notten, who, besides his share in the prominent Van Notten trade firm, also functioned as the Saxon agent in Amsterdam and therefore constituted one of Hallungius' immediate colleagues.<sup>240</sup>

Networks of Dutch acquaintances maintained by foreign envoys in the Dutch Republic did not only consist of family members, but also of friends. Friendships between envoys in The Hague and burghers in Amsterdam also proved grounds for envoys to make the journey. Once again, the draft of a prenuptial agreement inspired the travels in 1738, as Jean Rousset de Missy (agent of Brunswick-Lüneburg) assisted a friend who had not attained a majority age.<sup>241</sup> Sources other than deeds also contain examples of travel on behalf of friends: Henry Sydney wrote in his diary that he went to Amsterdam on May 6<sup>th</sup>, 1681 to dine with his friend 'Mademoiselle de Weelde'.<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>239</sup> SAA 5075 9303: Matthijs Maten de jonge, contract October 6th 1725.

<sup>240</sup> SAA 5075 9103: Jan Ardinois, prenuptial agreement August 30th 1730; SAA 5001 571: Notice of marriage of Lambert van Notten and Mariane Hollungius, October 6th 1730; Schutte, *Repertorium der buitenlandse vertegenwoordigers*, 243-244.

<sup>241</sup> SAA 5075 9138: Jan Ardinois, prenuptial agreement May 28th 1738.

<sup>242</sup> Blencowe (ed.), *Diary of the times of Charles the second by the honourable Henry Sidney*, 196-197.

Like correspondence, the physical presence of a The Hague-based diplomat in Amsterdam appears to have been unproblematic as long as the aim of the venture was not that of political negotiation, which would endanger the status of The Hague as a diplomatic city as well as be a dubious affront to the diplomatic (non-)rights of cities.

#### ***IV. Conclusion***

The contacts between foreign envoys and the city of Amsterdam were mostly initiated by the foreign envoys, who were generally aware of the benefits of maintaining a relationship with the powerful city. These contacts were reciprocated by the burgomasters of Amsterdam with varying degrees of openness. On several occasions, open political negotiation between cities in the Dutch Republic and foreign envoys proved to inspire particularly violent reactions from entities in The Hague, as it undermined many explicit laws and unspoken assumptions about the optimal working of the layered Dutch constitution. The burgomasters were aware of these sensibilities, and therefore attempted to keep public contacts with foreign envoys to a minimum. However, the temptation to negotiate was often considerable, and behind closed doors, many extended political negotiations took place in Amsterdam – those with d’Avaux in 1684 being the most famous due to the scandal that followed them.

However, the high-profile disputes surrounding Amsterdam and its contacts with d’Avaux were more of an exception than the rule when it came to opinions on diplomatic advances towards Amsterdam. In fact, there doesn’t seem to have been much of an opinion on it at all: as the burgomasters generally succeeded in keeping political negotiations out of the spotlight, and non-political reasons to contact Amsterdam were considered essential, straightforward and above all rather menial in nature, not much room for controversy was left. The *need* for envoys to write or travel to Amsterdam was simply objectively present: why contact authorities in The Hague when there was a problem with Amsterdam shipping? Why stay in The Hague when there was a contract in Amsterdam that needed a signature? Why attempt to borrow some money from a trader in The Hague when mountains of gold were housed in the Amsterdam stock exchange? It was not possible for the famed City Hall of Amsterdam – ‘a miracle

beyond the Seven that Antiquity bragg'd so much of<sup>243</sup> - to push itself to The Hague: if one wanted to behold it, the only option was to make a move.

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<sup>243</sup> W. Aglionby, *The present state of the United Provinces of the Low Countries as to the government, laws, forces, riches, manners, customs, revenue, and territory of the Dutch. In three books* (London 1671) 276. Accessible at <https://tinyurl.com/yahe48nk> [accessed May 29th 2020].

### Chapter III: The Amsterdam diplomatic community

Amsterdam, November 23<sup>rd</sup>. Yesterday evening, Francisco Mollo, resident to his Majesty the King of Poland, treated the lords Zen and Justiniani, ambassadors of the Republic of Venice, together with their entire train of over 60 persons, to a delightful concert and banquet.<sup>244</sup>

The headline of the Amsterdam news in the *Oprechte Haerlemsche courant* of November 24<sup>th</sup>, 1685 concerned the sumptuous feast that Francisco Mollo had prepared in honor of two Venetian ambassadors. Any party involving Mollo was bound to be conspicuous: he was a well-known figure in Amsterdam society as well as within the Dutch diplomatic community. He had taken up residence at Keizersgracht no. 706 and spent much of the 1690s buying adjacent plots and houses to create a large city palace, not eschewing any physical fights or legal battles to do so.<sup>245</sup> Upon his marriage to Anna Maria Ooms in 1674, he had even taken on the fashionable artist Romeyn de Hooghe to draw and distribute a dramatic allegoric print celebrating the match.<sup>246</sup> It was an open secret at the courts of Europe that Mollo sold his diplomatic services to the highest bidder. He had attempted to become accredited as the main agent of Poland with the Estates General, but this was rejected on grounds of Mollo's refusal to move to The Hague: according to the Estates General, only foreign ministers residing in The Hague would be entitled to full diplomatic privileges.<sup>247</sup> Mollo thus had to contend with a position as resident to the King of Poland *in Amsterdam*. However, only very rarely Mollo was found laboring on behalf of his Polish master. In the 1690s, he was in Paris and Ryswick, negotiating peace with France on behalf of the Amsterdam burgomasters.<sup>248</sup> In 1702, the French were the highest bidder: now Mollo negotiated

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<sup>244</sup> *Oprechte Haerlemsche courant*, November 24th 1685.

<sup>245</sup> See Schutte, *Repertorium der buitenlandse vertegenwoordigers*, 543-544; SAA 5075 5661: Gerrit Emous ten Berg, attestation July 5th 1691; 8070: Louis van de Graaff, insinuations January 21st 1771 & March 12th 1771

<sup>246</sup> J. Otten, 'Biografie van Romeyn de Hooghe', *De boekenwereld* 5 (1988) 21-33: 26. One of the prints is in the collection of the Rijksmuseum: *Allegorie op het huwelijk van Franciscus Mollo en Anna Maria Ooms* (RP-P-1903-A-23614).

<sup>247</sup> *Register van Holland en Westvriesland van den jaare 1679*, 311 (March 9th, 1679). Accessible at <https://tinyurl.com/yacvfgqz> [accessed May 29th 2020].

<sup>248</sup> Frijhoff, Prak and Hell, *Geschiedenis van Amsterdam II-2*, 204.

on behalf of Louis XIV with the burgomasters. In The Hague, irritation mounted at the disruptive influence of Mollo and the threat he posed to the general secrecy in diplomatic affairs.<sup>249</sup>

Mollo's banquet with the 60 Venetians would potentially constitute another opportunity for the informal exchange of diplomatic secrets: apparently not only in The Hague, but also in Amsterdam large-scale social gatherings of diplomats were organized. However, the one problem with Mollo's banquet as reported by the *Oprechte Haerlemsche courant* was that it probably never took place. The problem was the reported guest list. 'Zen' and 'Justiniani' – also known as Giovanni Zon and Girolamo Giustiniani – had indeed been ambassadors of Venice in the Dutch Republic at one point, namely between 1637 and 1643.<sup>250</sup> Zon had departed the Republic for good in 1643; the last record of him is found in 1648 in Tuscany. Giustiniani left in 1641 and served at some other courts before dying of plague in Rome, during the spurs of the Naples plague epidemic of 1656.<sup>251</sup> The mistakes in the newspaper report are curious. Venice had no known representatives in the Dutch Republic in and around 1685, thus no candidates to confuse Zon and Giustiniani with. The error is therefore so conspicuous that a degree of deliberate intent could have been involved. Nevertheless, it appears impossible to reconstruct the truth behind the editorial blunder now.

Whilst Mollo's Venetian banquet might perhaps have been a ploy of 17<sup>th</sup>-century fake news, other recorded gatherings of diplomats in Amsterdam were not. Besides hosting foreign envoys visiting from The Hague, Amsterdam was also home to a considerable amount of (often low-ranked) envoys that had Amsterdam as their station. In this third and last chapter, this community of Amsterdam-based envoys will be elucidated. What were its characteristics, and how did it function within the larger scheme of diplomacy in the Dutch Republic? This aspect of Amsterdiplomacy is important for multiple reasons. First and foremost, no comprehensive study on Amsterdam-based envoys currently exists, despite the size and prominence of this group – albeit that a couple of individual envoys, such as Mollo, have attracted some scholarly attention. Secondly, by further elucidating the contacts between diplomats in

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<sup>249</sup> Porta, *Joan en Gerrit Corver*, 42; de Bruin, *Geheimhouding en verraad*, 348.

<sup>250</sup> Schutte, *Repertorium der buitenlandse vertegenwoordigers*, 679-680.

<sup>251</sup> S. Scasciamacchia et al., 'Plague epidemic in the Kingdom of Naples, 1656-1658', *Emerging infectious diseases* 18:1 (2012) 186-188.

Amsterdam and The Hague (building onwards from the previous chapter), a more comprehensive understanding of the working of foreign embassies in the Dutch Republic can be achieved. Thirdly, the diplomatic ranks found in Amsterdam are among the most neglected in traditional diplomatic history. Despite significant strides made in recent years through new diplomatic history, a lot about the daily realities and functionality of these lesser diplomats is still unknown. Much of this information can be extracted from a study of the Amsterdam-based envoys, and thus it contributes to one of the main interests of new diplomatic history.

As previously stated, barely any literature except some incidental studies on individual envoys exists on the topic of Amsterdam-based diplomats. Therefore, nearly all data had to be obtained from primary sources. The notarial archives proved exceedingly fruitful in this regard. 387 Deeds detailing the activities of 81 individual Amsterdam envoys were found and used to reconstruct the activities of the community. Additionally, the names of the known Amsterdam envoys were also submitted into the search engine of Delpher, resulting in a set of a couple dozen newspaper items noting their activities. Besides deeds and newspapers, several miscellaneous sources (such as visual imagery) aid the detailed reconstruction of the Amsterdam-based diplomatic community between 1648-1795.

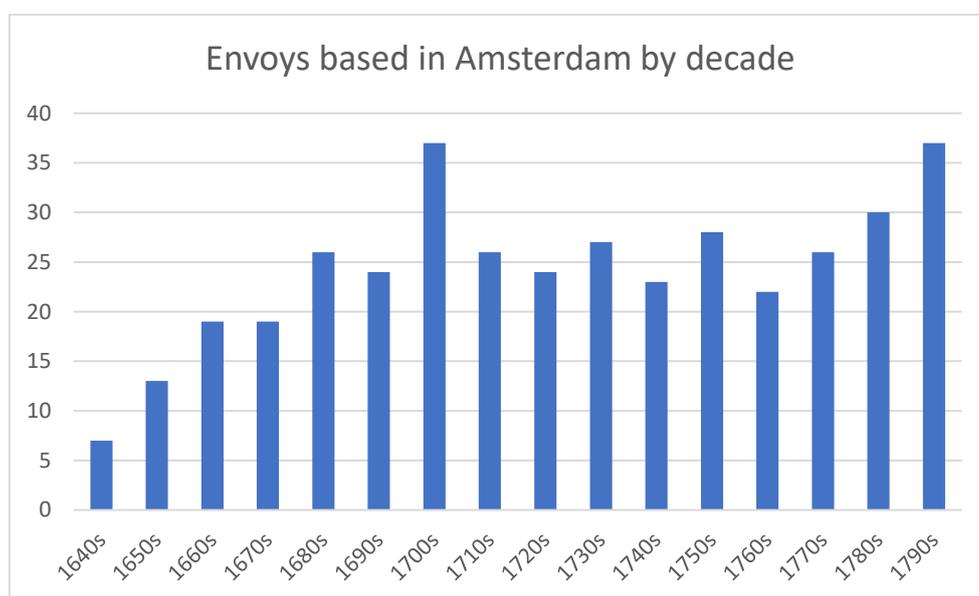
### ***I. Basic characteristics of the Amsterdam diplomatic community***

During the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and especially after 1648, diplomatic networks in Europe expanded in size and density. Due to the increasing volume of inter-European trade, as well as the ongoing strengthening of state apparatuses, the need for representation abroad was greater than ever. Embassies were no longer only established in the capitals and courts of Europe. Representation was also organized in non-capital cities and non-sovereign regions such as Ottoman territories in the Maghreb. Alongside consuls (which had already in some form existed in much of the Mediterranean since the Middle Ages), lesser envoys such as agents, commissaries, residents and correspondents were now installed in these secondary destinations as well.<sup>252</sup> The emergence of widespread diplomatic representation based in Amsterdam

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<sup>252</sup> Leira and Neumann, 'The many past lives of the consul', 8; Pennings and Thomassen, *Archieven van Nederlandse gezanten en consuls*, 20-21.

must be considered in light of this development. Due to Amsterdam's rapidly developing economic primacy, it was one of the most attractive non-capitals and non-courts in Europe to establish a lesser embassy. For example, Amsterdam was chosen as the destination of Sweden's first consulate in 1640.<sup>253</sup> Throughout 1648-1795, other Dutch cities beside Amsterdam and The Hague would also host small diplomatic communities or individual envoys: Rotterdam, Dordrecht and some towns in Zeeland (in that order) also claimed some diplomatic presence.<sup>254</sup> Nevertheless, only Amsterdam could remotely approach The Hague in terms of the number of envoys and countries represented. Below is a graph detailing the number of (confirmed) diplomatic envoys in Amsterdam per decade – about 160 in total would live and work there between 1648 and 1800.



*Graph II. Foreign envoys based in Amsterdam per decade, 1648-1800. Based on Schutte and data found in notarial deeds.*

With the exception of one outlying value, the 1700s peak (caused by an increase in short-lived embassies, perhaps due to the War of the Spanish Succession), the number of envoys steadily rose until the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, subsequently stabilizing during much of this century and rising again after the 1770s. This pattern can presumably be explained by means of the general European pattern of diplomatic expansion during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Amsterdam was likely to be one of the first

<sup>253</sup> L. Müller, *Consuls, corsairs, and commerce. The Swedish consular service and long-distance shipping, 1720-1815* (Stockholm 2004) 37, 42.

<sup>254</sup> Schutte, *Repertorium der buitenlandse vertegenwoordigers*, 53-54, 142-143, 181, 285-287, 325-329.

destinations for states seeking to expand their diplomatic networks in the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries – by 1700, all states seeking to expand would have presumably done so, causing the subsequent stabilization. After the 1770s, the number of envoys per state, as well as the number of represented entities – the United States constituting a prime example – again increased.

Diplomats of several different ranks were to be found in Amsterdam. In contrast to the high-ranking ambassadors and envoys (extra)ordinary that were hosted in The Hague, Amsterdam was home to mostly agents, residents, consuls and factors, with some states even employing two or three of those simultaneously. Barely any envoys of higher rank were found in Amsterdam, except those visiting from The Hague or Amsterdam envoys temporarily endowed as *chargé d'affaires*. Not a lot is known about the recruitment of (non-consular) lesser agents, as most historiographical attention is devoted to the selection of higher ambassadors. The Amsterdam sources contain some hints towards the draft and appointment of the lesser agents stationed hither. In case of foreigners, some are known to have been selected and appointed in their home country, and travelled to Amsterdam to take up their post in a manner similar to envoys ranked higher. For example, the *Leydse Courant* of October 29<sup>th</sup>, 1749 reported that de St. Sauveur had arrived from France to replace the recently deceased baron Laugier de Tassy as marine commissary of France in Amsterdam.<sup>255</sup> Similarly, some years later, Maillet de Clairon is noted by the *Oprechte Haerlemsche courant* to have been appointed by Louis XV in the same capacity, and to have landed in the Dutch Republic on September 6<sup>th</sup>, 1766.<sup>256</sup> In other cases, it appears that the residing ambassador in The Hague would take it upon himself to seek out a local member of his respective nation (usually, at least in Amsterdam's case, a merchant), and appoint him as his subordinate agent. This practice is mentioned several times by the Spanish ambassador Estevan de Gamarra y Contreras, who wrote to the burgomasters that he had personally appointed Andreas and Manuel de Belmonte as successive consuls in Amsterdam.<sup>257</sup> An anonymous British traveler also referred to this type of appointment and dynamic, mentioning that ‘...they act in some measure under the ambassadors,

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<sup>255</sup> *Leydse courant*, October 29th 1749.

<sup>256</sup> *Oprechte Haerlemsche courant*, September 11th 1766.

<sup>257</sup> SAA 5026 42: Estevan de Gamarra y Contreras to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (The Hague, June 17th 1662 & April 10th 1666).

and are employ'd by them in particular affairs'.<sup>258</sup> Besides foreigners, a very large amount of Dutchmen (either born or naturalized) were also employed to serve as the diplomatic representative of a foreign entity in Amsterdam: a third to half of all 'foreign' envoys based in Amsterdam were in fact of Dutch origin. Two (possible) types of selection and appointment are observed within this group in the sources. Firstly, economic connections to the foreign entity could qualify a Dutchman to serve as its diplomatic representative: nearly all of these Dutch envoys were merchants as well. Typical examples include Christoffel van Brants, who traded from Archangelsk to Amsterdam before his appointment as agent and chargé d'affaires of Russia (1716-1732)<sup>259</sup> and Jean Lucas Pels, a banker and large shareholder in the Swedish tar trade, who was agent of Sweden (1705-1712).<sup>260</sup> Secondly, family connections played a role in selection and appointment. This could mean family roots in the represented state: Joseph Kerby, consul of Great Britain (1694-1704), was born in Amsterdam to an English father and a Dutch mother.<sup>261</sup> It could also mean hereditary succession: once a diplomatic position in Amsterdam had been secured, it could sometimes pass on through several generations of male family members. Several families were known for this: among others, the Deutz (factors to the Holy Roman Empire, 1659-1757), Balguerie (agents of Sweden, 1719-1788), and Balde (agents of Denmark, 1700-1770) had monopolized their respective positions. As with Dutch envoys serving abroad, records of sons requesting or arranging their succession to their father's position were found in Amsterdam.<sup>262</sup> This phenomenon appears to have been much more common among the lower ranks of diplomatic appointment, than the higher.

Once selected or recruited, Amsterdam-based envoys were officially appointed or accredited with the Estates-General in The Hague. Newly arrived foreigners usually first passed through The Hague for this purpose before presenting themselves in Amsterdam.<sup>263</sup> For Dutch serving as envoys, the

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<sup>258</sup> Anonymous, *The present state of Holland*, 147-148.

<sup>259</sup> Schutte, *Repertorium der buitenlandse vertegenwoordigers*, 560.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*, 535.

<sup>261</sup> SAA 5001 137: baptismal record of Joseph, son of Edward Kerby (December 23rd, 1646).

<sup>262</sup> SAA 5075 10037: Philip Zweerts, miscellaneous March 3rd 1746; 942: Daniel Bredan, authorizations June 9th 1634.

<sup>263</sup> Among others, see *Avec privilège de nos-seigneurs les Etats de Hollande et de West-Frise*, October 26th 1699 (on accrediting Francisco Mollo); *Amsterdamse courant*, December 25th 1738 (on accrediting Gabriel de Normandie); *Avec privilège de nos-seigneurs les Etats de Hollande et de West-Frise*, January 19th 1706 (on accrediting Francisco Ximenes de Belmonte).

accreditation process included the additional step of confirming (through a resolution in the Estates of Holland) that they were not to be exempt from their civil and financial duties to the United Provinces.<sup>264</sup>

## ***II. Diplomatic duties and activities of Amsterdam envoys***

Once appointed and installed, the envoy could commence his labors. What kind of duties were commonly required of lesser envoys in Amsterdam? The said British traveler wrote:

These gentlemen have not the same denomination. Those of Great Britain, Sweden, Denmark and Poland are called agents; of Spain and Venice, consuls; and of France, commissary of the marine of France. Their employment, however, is the same.<sup>265</sup>

The traveler's observation that titularity did not particularly matter when it came to their duties, is mirrored in the sources: instances of individual envoys alternately introducing themselves as 'agent', 'resident' or simply 'council' in notarial deeds are common<sup>266</sup>, and recorded activities also do not significantly differ per rank. There was, however, a marked difference between high- and low-ranking envoys as groups when it came to the way they were commonly perceived and employed. Low-ranking envoys, such as those found in Amsterdam, were regarded as useful in the sense that they attracted less attention, required less maintenance, were less bound by protocol and all in all were able to work quicker and more efficiently.<sup>267</sup> Whilst the personal inconspicuousness of lesser envoys in Amsterdam was debatable (as will be assessed further on in this chapter), the notion that they were able to consistently and efficiently perform the inconspicuous, practical and somewhat menial diplomatic business is indeed reflected in the sources. Participation in large-scale peace congresses or high-stake covert negotiation with the Amsterdam burgomasters was generally reserved for the envoys stationed in The Hague, whilst

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<sup>264</sup> *Resolutien van de heeren Staten van Hollandt ende West-Vrieslandt, genomen in haer Edele Groot Mog. Vergaderinge, op reces gescheyden zynde, zedert den twaelfden Januarii 1707 tot den twee en twintighsten dito daer aen volgende* 352, 449 (On accrediting Jan Walraven, August 13th 1707 & Anthony Deutz, October 22nd 1707). Accessible at <https://tinyurl.com/ycqc7wcr> [accessed May 29th 2020].

<sup>265</sup> Anonymous, *The present state of Holland*, 147-148.

<sup>266</sup> For deviations on Schutte's known designations, see (among others) SAA 5075 12487: Cornelis van Homrigh, authorization July 13th 1787; 11328A: Thierry Daniel de Marolles, authorization September 9th 1750; 6723: Cornelis Winter, transport March 13th 1704; 4774: Stephanus Pelgrom, transport March 23rd 1695.

<sup>267</sup> Heringa, *De eer en hoogheid van de staat*, 30; de Bruin, *Geheimhouding en verraad*, 65.

the day-to-day business that constituted the backbone of international relations (the majority of it economic) was often delegated to lesser envoys.

### *II.I. Financial and economic services*

As could be expected, Amsterdam envoys spent much of their time engaged in economic diplomacy. This was not economic diplomacy in the sense of negotiating and drafting large-scale trade agreements – instead, it was the practical execution of these trade agreements and the subsequent maintenance of international financial traffic. Amsterdam envoys facilitated financial transactions that directly or indirectly benefited their state or prince. This could require a variety of services. Three of these services or duties are most commonly observed in the sources.

Firstly, envoys could be employed in a capacity similar to that of a modern money mule, though without the criminal connotations. For the most part of the 1648-1795 period, the Amsterdam exchange claimed one of the largest money reserves of the world, with beneficial interest rates. It was an attractive place for Dutch and foreigners alike to deposit capital. Foreign princes wishing to do so could use the local envoy's account to stall the funds. The already established good credit score of many agents (through the merchantry that they had often done before and during their diplomatic appointment) augmented the appeal of this scheme. The deposits were occasionally so substantial that some envoys were nominally among the richest men in Amsterdam: in 1654, the account of Portuguese agent Jeronimo Nunes da Costa entered into the top 50 of the Amsterdam exchange.<sup>268</sup> For the envoys themselves, there was substantial personal benefit to be gained from this practice as well. In case of the Spanish consul Juan Manuel de Uriondo, the agreement included a stipulation that allowed him to keep the interest proceedings of any transaction.<sup>269</sup>

Secondly, envoys assisted the flow of capital towards the respective state treasuries. This was sometimes done through direct loans. As seen in the previous chapter, envoys in The Hague would

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<sup>268</sup> P. Dehing, *Geld in Amsterdam. Wisselbank en wisselkoersen, 1650-1725* (Hilversum 2012) 133-136.

<sup>269</sup> R. Torres Sánchez, *Constructing a fiscal military state in eighteenth century Spain* (Basingstoke 2015) n.p. – accessible at <https://tinyurl.com/ydatggnl> [accessed May 29th 2020]; R. Torres Sánchez, *Military entrepreneurs and the Spanish contractor state in the eighteenth century* (Oxford 2016) n.p. – accessible at <https://tinyurl.com/ybcwnzkc> [accessed May 29th 2020].

occasionally travel to Amsterdam to secure these loans. Amsterdam-based agents contracted similar obligations. For example, three envoys of the prince of Schleswig-Holstein-Gottorp borrowed fl. 64,000 in 1736.<sup>270</sup> A much more common way for an envoy to enrich the state treasury was by selling and trading bonds in the prince's name. An approximate 200 notarial deeds attest to the envoys personally trading these bonds, though they also facilitated others to do so. Amsterdam-based envoys frequently placed advertisements in various newspapers, publicizing this service:

J. Franc van den Corput, agent to his Serene Highness the reigning landgrave of Hessen-Darmstadt, advertises at the order of that court (...), that during the coming months of January and February on Wednesdays and Thursdays between 10 and 12 in the morning interest payments on bonds can be collected at his office.<sup>271</sup>

The third and final financial service performed by envoys in Amsterdam was also the broadest, namely the general assistance and advancement that they offered to the trade between Amsterdam and their respective state. This assistance could be very concrete, simple and direct: an ad placed by the Russian agent Oldecop in the *Amsterdamse courant* offered help to anyone wishing to send goods to Russia.<sup>272</sup> Another notice, placed in various papers by Sylvanus Bourne (the consul-general of the United States), alerted American traders in Amsterdam to a recently imposed interdiction by the U.S. Congress on doing business in France.<sup>273</sup> A different variety of advancing trade was the coordination of shipping enterprises. Juan Manuel de Uriondo, consul of Spain, near single-handedly organized the shipping of wood from the Baltics to Spanish ports by frequenting the office of notary Thierry Daniel de Marolles.<sup>274</sup> Joan Rudolf Faesch did the same, but he directed the shipments to the ports of Prussia, of which he was agent.<sup>275</sup> The involvement of Amsterdam envoys in the international slave trade was also impactful.

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<sup>270</sup> SAA 5075 10126: Philippus Pot, obligations July 11th & August 28th 1736.

<sup>271</sup> *Rotterdamse courant*, December 29th 1792.

<sup>272</sup> *Amsterdamse courant*, October 27th 1796.

<sup>273</sup> *Haagsche courant*, July 25th 1798; *Amsterdamse courant*, July 24th 1798.

<sup>274</sup> Among others, see SAA 5075 11479: Thierry Daniel de Marolles, charters October 7th & 18th 1769; 11482: Thierry Daniel de Marolles, charter March 22nd 1770; 11483: Thierry Daniel de Marolles, charter April 24th 1770.

<sup>275</sup> SAA 5075 11304B: Thierry Daniel de Marolles, charter October 21st 1746; 11322A: Thierry Daniel de Marolles, charter September 9th 1749; 11292A: Thierry Daniel de Marolles, charter June 25th 1744; 9400: Matthijs Maten de jonge, charter August 21st 1743.

Several Amsterdam envoys were complicit as private persons, outside of their diplomatic capacity. For example, the Swedish agent Pierre Balguerie (and his son Daniel after him) owned several plantations in Surinam and Berbice and is attested to frequently buying and selling enslaved persons during the mid-1750s.<sup>276</sup> Others, however, were explicitly called upon in diplomatic capacity to advance the slaving enterprises of their respective states out of Amsterdam. The previous chapter already mentioned the Spanish *asiento* scheme in which consul-general Manuel de Belmonte was deeply involved. This was no small enterprise: several individual contracts stipulating the enslavement of twelve to eighteen thousand persons carried Belmonte's signature as consul-general of Spain.<sup>277</sup> A mixture of the two varieties is found in Laurens de Geer, one of Balguerie's predecessors as agent of Sweden in 1657. He founded the Swedish Africa Company whilst in Amsterdam, and had its charter approved by Queen Christina. Subsequently, contracts are found in which de Geer and Amsterdam shipowners agree to the purchase of 500-600 enslaved persons on the coast of Guinea and their transfer to the Caribbean. In these contracts, de Geer would have himself appear as agent of Sweden instead of a private person, to provide more weight and legitimacy to the venture.<sup>278</sup>

## *II.II. Assisting compatriots*

An essential component of advancing trade was constituted by representing and assisting merchants belonging to the envoy's nation. However, not only merchants would require the envoy's help: other members of early modern Amsterdam's vast migrant communities would occasionally turn to their local agent as well. In the previous chapter, it was established that envoys based in The Hague were occasionally compelled to write or (in extreme cases) visit Amsterdam to intervene on behalf of compatriots that had found themselves in trouble or in need of a recommendation. However, despite the occasional calls upon The Hague-based envoys, it appears that foreigners in Amsterdam were able

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<sup>276</sup> SAA 5075 14427: Wessel van Kleef, authorization October 31st 1760; 9218: Jan Ardinois, contract October 23rd 1751; 9209: Jan Ardinois, authorization April 7th 1750; NA 1.05.11.14 (Suriname: oud notarieel archief) 689: register van inventarissen en prisaties (taxaties), 1743 jan.-1745 feb., scans 375-386.

<sup>277</sup> Among others, see SAA 5075 4771: Stephanus Pelgrom, agreement April 10th 1685; 4772: Stephanus Pelgrom, contract December 13th 1686; 4770B: Stephanus Pelgrom, agreement May 3rd 1683.

<sup>278</sup> G. W. Kernkamp, 'Een contract tot slavenhandel van 1657', *BMGN* 22 (1901) 444-459: 444-451; SAA 5075 904A: Jacob van Swieten, contract August 15th 1657.

to locate their local diplomatic representative fairly well too. This was presumable due to a combination of the envoys' efforts to publicize their services and the close-knit nature of many (smaller) nations.<sup>279</sup> Advertisements or notices in the newspapers would have augmented the envoy's visibility. The appointment of a new diplomat in Amsterdam would usually make the local newspaper<sup>280</sup>, and any subsequent notices advertising their services (such as those related to trade) potentially increased their renown. Another way for envoys to bond with their nation were social gatherings: for example, the British consul Joseph Kerby is recorded to have invited all British merchants in Amsterdam and their wives to a banquet in celebration of the 1695 Siege of Namur, which had ended in a joint Dutch-British victory against France.<sup>281</sup>

Amsterdam envoys were frequently found in a notary's office to directly represent members of their local nation, to arbitrate in conflicts involving them, or to answer their questions. Louis Renard, agent of Great Britain, represented the British party in an Anglo-Dutch inheritance dispute in 1733.<sup>282</sup> Johan van der Burcht, agent of Russia, was twice insinuated in 1717 by a Russian military officer who desired clarity about the status of his employment in the Czar's army.<sup>283</sup> Daniel Balguerie, agent of Sweden, labored on behalf of a Swedish ship crew to collect the insurance on their ship, which had sunk in 1764.<sup>284</sup> Requests for assistance did not only come from members of the *local* nation. Compatriots back home would also occasionally contact the Amsterdam envoy when they had business that required handling in Amsterdam, but were unwilling to travel themselves. Johan Oldecop, another Russian agent, had been authorized by a Russian woman in St. Petersburg to sell some bonds in Amsterdam.<sup>285</sup> Joan Rudolf Faesch, agent of Prussia, was authorized by a Berlin merchant to handle an inheritance in the

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<sup>279</sup> An example of a close-knit migrant group in early modern Amsterdam was the Afro-Atlantic black community, as demonstrated by M. Ponte, "Al de swarten die hier ter stede comen' Een Afro-Atlantische gemeenschap in zeventiende-eeuws Amsterdam", *Tijdschrift voor sociale en economische geschiedenis*, 15:4 (2019) 33-62.

<sup>280</sup> See, among others, *Oprechte Haerlemsche courant*, January 4th 1718 (Charles del Sotto, agent of Spain); *Avec privilège de nos-seigneurs les Etats de Hollande et de West-Frise*, January 19th 1706 (Francisco Ximenes de Belmonte, resident of Spain); 's *Gravenhaegsche courant*, June 20th 1777 (de Lironcourt, commissary of France).

<sup>281</sup> Jacobus Kok (ed.), *Chronyk van Amsterdam eerste deel* (Amsterdam 1760) 542-543; P. Lenihan, 'Namur citadel, 1695: a case study in allied siege tactics', *War in history* 18:3 (2011) 282-303.

<sup>282</sup> SAA 5075 9348: Matthijs Maten de jonge, verdict January 14th 1733.

<sup>283</sup> SAA 5075 8563: Adrian Baars, insinuations November 16th & December 4th 1717.

<sup>284</sup> SAA 5075 12366: Cornelis van Homrigh, proof of receipt July 11th 1764.

<sup>285</sup> SAA 5075 14496: Wessel van Kleef, transports August 19th 1774.

Dutch East Indies.<sup>286</sup> The Spanish consul Philippe Rodrigues pressed a local tradeswoman to travel to Madrid to handle some overdue business there, after complaints from Madrid merchants.<sup>287</sup>

A very special category of foreigners that needed the envoy's guidance whilst in Amsterdam were visiting royalty. These could either be official state visits, or more covert touristic enterprises. As the local representative of the visiting prince(ss), envoys would usually be included in the select party gathered to accompany the esteemed guest during their stay in Amsterdam; other members of this company would of course be the reigning burgomasters and other high-ranking magistrates, and in exceptional cases the main ambassador in The Hague as well. A typical report on such a visit (by the future Czar Paul I of Russia and his consort Sophie) is found in the *Groninger courant* of July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1782:

Amsterdam, July 19<sup>th</sup>. Their Imperial Highnesses, the Grand Duke and Duchess of Russia, who arrived in this city the evening of the day before yesterday whilst using the titles *count and countess of the North*, visited our City Hall yesterday morning around 10 o'clock, together with a select company. After a pleasant visit to that edifice, they inspected two rows of parading soldiers heading for the Nieuwe Kerk, accompanied by the esteemed lords Mr. Abraham Calkoen, main sheriff; Mr. Joachim Rendorp, former burgomaster, and the lord Oldecop, agent to her Imperial Russian Majesty.<sup>288</sup>

Similar reports are found on other royal visits. In 1780, the Swedish King Gustav III (using the alias 'count Haga') passed through Amsterdam on his way to Spa. He stayed at the house of his agent Pierre Balguerie, who was promised a portrait of the King as a reward for his hospitality.<sup>289</sup> In 1689, Manuel de Belmonte, consul of Spain, hosted Maria Anna of Neuburg and her party before she would set off from the port of Amsterdam to Spain to marry King Charles II.<sup>290</sup> Lastly, during his second visit to Amsterdam in 1717, Czar Peter the Great enjoyed the hospitality of two of his envoys there: he spent some weeks sick and bedridden under the care of agent Osip Solov'ev on the *Herengracht*, and otherwise

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<sup>286</sup> SAA 5075 11708: Fredrik Klinkhamer, authorization March 9th 1750.

<sup>287</sup> SAA 5075 11324A: Thierry Daniel de Marolles, insinuation January 15th 1750.

<sup>288</sup> *Groninger courant*, July 23rd 1782.

<sup>289</sup> *Nouvelles extraordinaires de divers endroits*, October 13th 1780; *Diemer- of Watergraafs-meersche courant*, January 16th 1782.

<sup>290</sup> *Oprechte Haerlemsche courant*, October 25th 1689.

attended parties by resident Christoffel van Brants on the Keizersgracht.<sup>291</sup> Apparently, in between these obligations Peter also found time to visit the British agent Louis Renard. Renard, a rabid ichthyologist who published the first book on sea life to be printed in color<sup>292</sup>, mentioned in the foreword of this magnum opus that:

His Majesty the Czar of Muscovy has honored me with a visit to my house; I have taken the chance to show him the book of Mr. Fallours on the fish of the Maluku Islands, in which some drawings are found of a real monster, a siren!<sup>293</sup>

Royal visits to Amsterdam usually included some political or financial negotiation between the guest and the burgomasters<sup>294</sup>: Joachim Rendorp provides a detailed description of a 1781 meeting he had with Joseph II, the Holy Roman Emperor, on the lifting of a blockade on the Scheldt river, which would hurt Amsterdam trade interests.<sup>295</sup> By providing hospitality, guidance and the occasional direct contribution to these negotiations, Amsterdam envoys thus aided diplomatic relations through assisting the most important member of their nation: the prince.

Taking the facilitation of these state visits aside (due to their exceptional nature), it appears there was a difference between the type of assistance required of the local Amsterdam envoys and those further away in The Hague. Amsterdam-based envoys were mostly called upon by members of their nation when it came to practical matters that required a resolution in the relatively short term: the payment of insurance funds, the execution of inheritances and the like. Envoys in The Hague were commonly occupied with less practical problems that did not require their direct presence: writing a plea on behalf of criminal compatriots, or a recommendation for those of good standing. This difference is in line with the aforementioned perceived and actual duties of lower- and higher-level envoys as groups. The lesser, Amsterdam-based diplomats such as agents, residents and consuls mostly handled the day-

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<sup>291</sup> J. F. L. de Balbian Verster, 'Peter de Grote te Amsterdam', *Amstelodamum* 17<sup>th</sup> Yearbook (1919) 31-46: 37-39.

<sup>292</sup> M. Q. Reitmeyer, 'Louis Renard and his book of extraordinary creatures', in T. Baione, *Natural histories: extraordinary rare book selections from the American museum of natural history library* (New York 2012) 33-34.

<sup>293</sup> L. Renard, *Poissons, ecrevisses et crabes, de diverses coulurs et figures extraordinaires, que l'on trouve autour des Isles Moluques, et sur les côtes des Terres Australes* (Amsterdam 1754) n.p. – accessible at <https://tinyurl.com/y9xhc9d4> [accessed May 29th 2020].

<sup>294</sup> L. van de Pol, 'From doorstep to table', 87-89.

<sup>295</sup> Rendorp, *Memorien eerste deel*, 228-235.

to-day, practical aspects of international relations, so that high-ranking diplomats such as the ambassadors and envoys extraordinary in The Hague could devote more of their time to the engineering of those relations.

### *II.III. Cooperative embassies*

Collaboration between the multiple 'locations' of embassies within the Dutch Republic, or cooperation between high- and low-ranking agents of the same state but in different cities, was necessary for the successful and coherent conduction of diplomatic relations. In the previous chapter, it had been established that envoys stationed in The Hague would authorize Amsterdam envoys to act on their behalf, or travel to Amsterdam to cooperate in person. For Amsterdam envoys, this cooperation constituted an important part of their duties. They could be observed as working in three capacities opposite of envoys in The Hague: a partner, an authorized representative, or a temporary replacement.

As a partner, Amsterdam envoys were in regular contact with colleagues in The Hague to discuss their mutual aims and the execution thereof. For example, there is widespread proof of intense contacts between the various Portuguese representatives in the Dutch Republic during the 1660s, wherein the Amsterdam party often gave advice on the business aspects of the undertakings.<sup>296</sup> Similarly, Andrej Matveev, Russia's minister plenipotentiary, mentions conferring with Amsterdam agent Johannes van den Burgh in one of his missives to the burgomasters of Amsterdam.<sup>297</sup> Many other letters contained in the collection missives by envoys in The Hague to the burgomasters of Amsterdam heavily imply the existence of a steady correspondence between the embassies. In some cases, Amsterdam envoys could be invited to The Hague to help negotiate matters of interest in person alongside their colleague(s) stationed there. The *Oprechte Haerlemsche courant* of January 15<sup>th</sup>, 1688 notes that Manuel de Belmonte, together with envoy extraordinary de Coloma y Escolano, appeared in front of the Estates General and, sometime later, met with the Stadtholder.<sup>298</sup> Manuel de Belmonte, as well as some other Amsterdam envoys such as Francisco Mollo, were relatively frequently mentioned in the newspapers as

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<sup>296</sup> Antunes, 'Dutch-Portuguese diplomatic encounters', 471-473.

<sup>297</sup> SAA 5026 42: Andrej Artamonovic Matveev to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Den Briel, May 15th 1707).

<sup>298</sup> *Oprechte Haerlemsche courant*, January 15th 1688.

having travelled between Amsterdam and The Hague.<sup>299</sup> Whilst no further specifications are made, it can be presumed that at least some of these trips would have been made for similar meetings with colleagues in The Hague.

As an authorized representative of the main ambassador in The Hague, Amsterdam envoys similarly had obligations both in Amsterdam and in The Hague. The notarial deeds of Amsterdam typically contain the aforementioned authorizations that allowed an envoy in The Hague to avoid travelling to Amsterdam, and instead granting full or limited judicial powers to their Amsterdam colleague to handle their business there. However, sometimes the Amsterdam envoy was authorized to handle affairs in The Hague as well. In 1689, the *Oprechte Haerlemsche courant* advertised that Manuel de Belmonte had travelled to The Hague to welcome ‘the Imperial ambassador, the Earl of Mansvelt’ on behalf of the Spanish party.<sup>300</sup>

As a temporary replacement of the main ambassador, Amsterdam envoys often served as the second-in-command of foreign embassies in the Dutch Republic. In case the main resident ambassador was temporarily absent, or the embassy was left vacant in between two appointments, one of the most prominent candidates besides embassy secretaries to act as chargé d’affaires was the envoy based in Amsterdam. This matches the other, already established tendencies towards Amsterdam as a secondary diplomatic center in case entities in The Hague could not provide the necessary assets: in this case, a main ambassador. In practice, this could mean that during the duration of the term of the Amsterdam replacement, the effective embassy of a foreign state would be found in Amsterdam. An example is Christoffel van Brants, normally agent and resident of Russia in Amsterdam, who served as chargé d’affaires in 1722, 1723-1725 and 1728-1731 and continuously resided at Keizersgracht 317.<sup>301</sup> Also on the Keizersgracht was the temporary Spanish embassy in 1761, when the hither residing consul Juan Manuel de Uriondo was acting ambassador.<sup>302</sup> An official designation as chargé d’affaires was not always necessary for the Amsterdam envoy to temporarily act as the replacement of the main

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<sup>299</sup> For de Belmonte, see (among others) *Oprechte Haerlemsche courant*, August 21st 1692, October 20th 1691, February 10th 1699 & July 29th 1700; For Mollo, see (among others), *Oprechte Haerlemsche courant*, May 11th 1683, December 23rd 1700 & May 20th 1700.

<sup>300</sup> *Oprechte Haerlemsche courant*, June 16th 1689.

<sup>301</sup> Schutte, *Repertorium der buitenlandse vertegenwoordigers*, 560.

<sup>302</sup> *Ibid.*, 596.

ambassador. Bernardino Sala, the Spanish consul, was never accredited as such after the death of the Spanish ambassador Vincente de Balaccar y Sanna; nevertheless it was he who arrived in The Hague from Amsterdam in 1726 to officially announce the ambassador's death to the Estates General, and to take charge of the burial.<sup>303</sup>

All three of these cooperative exercises between the embassies in Amsterdam and The Hague involved some degree of diplomatic mobility from Amsterdam in the direction of The Hague – thus, diplomatic traffic in both directions was a relatively common and normalized practice between 1648 and 1795, and an essential part of the duties of both high-ranking ambassadors and lesser agents alike.

### *III. Diplomacy and Amsterdam society*

The varying duties as described above made lesser envoys into public figures. They were recognizable members of Amsterdam society, and were incorporated into economic, social and cultural circles. When assessing this group of envoys in the light of new diplomatic history, it is important to determine the degree to which they interacted with their surroundings. Was there a notable interplay between diplomacy and the urban environment (in this case, Amsterdam)? To what extent, as Tremml-Werner and Goetze have termed the phenomenon, can we speak of 'societal agents'<sup>304</sup>?

Two notes have to be made before making a more detailed assessment. To start, a large part of the envoys representing foreign entities in Amsterdam were natural or naturalized Dutchmen. This meant that they were likely already incorporated into Amsterdam society – they *were* simply locals, with a part-time occupation as a diplomatic envoy on the side. The other point of note concerns the aforementioned practice of diplomacy as a part-time occupation. For many – and perhaps the majority – of the Amsterdam envoys, Dutch and foreign alike, diplomacy was not their primary profession. In many cases, it was a secondary or even tertiary career. As will be demonstrated, diplomatic assignments were often consciously employed and exploited to advance a parallel career in another sector, ultimately augmenting the public visibility and societal participation of the envoy.

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<sup>303</sup> *Leydse courant*, June 14th 1726.

<sup>304</sup> Tremml-Werner and Goetze, 'A multitude of actors', 419.

### *III.I. Economic participation*

It had been determined that, in order to emerge as a suitable candidate for a diplomatic appointment as an envoy in Amsterdam, an already established career could work as an advantage. For example, prominent merchants were often chosen to serve as the representative of a state where much of their trade interests were located. These merchants were not always Dutch: many foreigners had migrated to Amsterdam due to the attractive economic prospects, and had already spent years or even decades building a trade firm, shipping enterprise, banking agglomerate or a career in a sector of the labor market outside of trade and finance. The breakdown of these secondary careers can be observed in the table further on. Whilst government was a popular choice, and other surprising occupations (such as painters) were also found, merchantry was by far the most common ancillary career for the lesser envoys of Amsterdam, especially among foreigners. The phenomenon of ‘merchant-diplomat’ has been scholarly established<sup>305</sup>, and seems to have been especially prominent in Amsterdam – again, unsurprising given Amsterdam’s position as a global center of trade and the numerous economic duties of the envoys themselves. Many of the most prominent tradesmen and directors of leading trade firms in early modern Amsterdam held a diplomatic assignment at some point during their career; for those identifying as merchants first, the added prestige and privilege of attaining a diplomatic appointment would have augmented their competitive edge in trade. Individuals such as Andries Pels (the richest and most prominent banker around 1700 in the Dutch Republic, perhaps in Europe)<sup>306</sup>, Willem Gideon Deutz (five times burgomaster of Amsterdam, as well as a high-profile banker in the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century)<sup>307</sup> and many others were among the most visible participants in the Amsterdam economy, while serving as envoys on the side. Sometimes, a diplomatic position was even attached to a firm as opposed to an individual. It was, for example, the *firm* Abraham van Notten & sons which was bestowed with the agency of Saxony and Hessen-Kassel (1753-1796), though its diplomatic duties were executed by its

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<sup>305</sup> G. van Meersbergen, ‘The merchant-diplomat in comparative perspective: Dutch and other embassies to the court of Aurangzeb, 1660-1666’, in T. A. Sowerby and J. Hennings (eds.), *Practices of diplomacy in the early modern world c. 1410-1800* (New York 2017) 147-165: 148.

<sup>306</sup> A. M. Carlos and L. Neal, ‘Amsterdam and London as financial centers in the eighteenth century’, *Financial history review* 18:1 (2011) 21-46: 31.

<sup>307</sup> Schutte, *Repertorium der buitenlandse vertegenwoordigers*, 180.

Sector	No. envoys employed
Merchantry - Ownership of private trade firm - Investors - Slavers	61
Government - Civil service - Militia captains - Directors of Reformed churches - Directors of charitable organizations	19
Government (economic) - Directors of semi-governmental trade companies: VOC, WIC, Levant Trade, Society of Suriname	10
Banking	14
Law - Lawyers - Notaries	4
Crafts - Painters - Jewellers	4
Academic	2
Publishing	2
Accountancy	1

*Table III. Ancillary careers of Amsterdam envoys. Based on Schutte and notarial deeds.*

individual firm members, in this case Lambert van Notten, succeeded by his son Johan Carel and grandson Abraham Pieter.<sup>308</sup> The firms Jacob Dull & sons, and widow Jean Balde & son are found in similar constructions representing Denmark.<sup>309</sup> Many other envoys were partners in trade firms, or traded as a private person. Notarial deeds elucidate this economic activity well, as they do not only record envoys engaged in financial transactions on behalf of the foreign entity they represented, but also private financial business. Several types of deed aid this reconstruction. Special attention must be given to the bond trade. We have previously seen that Amsterdam envoys were often engaged in selling and trading bonds on behalf of their prince; however, the same envoys also privately invested in Dutch bonds. This was a universal tendency: Amsterdam envoys of nearly all origins, of all ranks, and at any point during the 1648-1795 period, are recorded as having

engaged in the private bond trade, either to support their business ventures, or as a steady investment opportunity.<sup>310</sup> Other types of deeds, such as promissory notes, (shipping) contracts, bails and debt records further reveal the depth and spread of economic activity by envoys. Goods found traded are ships, ship parts, gold and silver thread, horses, cannons, wool, tobacco, quicksilver, wood, sugar, grain

<sup>308</sup> *Ibid.*, 243-245.

<sup>309</sup> *Ibid.*, 475-477.

<sup>310</sup> See, among many others, SAA 5075 4774: Stephanus Pelgrom, transport March 23rd 1695; 8299: George Wetstein, transport July 23rd 1722; 9109: Jan Ardinois, transport January 15th 1732; 11509C: Godefridus Schaak, transport October 5th 1747; 10802: Salomon Dorper, transport March 12th 1763.

and wine: a wide variety of staple as well as refined goods.<sup>311</sup> The geographical spread of the trade network of Amsterdam envoys as a group was also considerable: from Tangiers to Archangelsk, and with significant additional ties to the colonial world through either dealings in slavery or colonial goods. Besides participation in the processes of import and export, envoys also aided the further transfer of goods within Amsterdam. For example, merchant-diplomats such as the Spanish consul-general Juan Manuel de Uriondo were often found to have made their house available for the viewing, sale or auction of newly arrived goods:

P. Calkoen Willemsz., J. J. de Bruyn, H. du Gondi à Beit, J. van Haamstede, H. van den Heuvel, A. Calkoen and D. de Bruyn, brokers, will sell a batch of 24 indigo mats on Friday, November 2<sup>nd</sup> 1764 at 5 o'clock in the evening, in Amsterdam in the Nes at the Brakke Grond; on the day of the sale, it can be previewed at the house of Mr. Juan Manuel de Uriondo on the Prinsengracht between the Utrechtsestraat and the Binnen-Amstel.<sup>312</sup>

There are some recorded tendencies of envoys making a conscious effort to marry their multiple careers together to mutual benefit. This went further than simply focusing their private trade on their country of origin. Cátia Antunes, for example, elucidates the vast private economic interests maintained by Portuguese envoys both in Amsterdam in The Hague during official diplomatic proceedings. The negotiators Rouze and Santarém were partnered with the Amsterdam regent family Trip, which had significant interests in the arms manufacturing industry; it was these interests that substantially influenced the directions taken by Rouze and Santarém when negotiating war and peace.<sup>313</sup> A different form of attempted conjunction between trade and diplomacy was tax evasion. The position of diplomatic envoy often came with legal economic privileges such as tax exemptions or beneficial interest rates on import and export, which made trading 'on the side' an attractive prospect, especially considering the

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<sup>311</sup> See, among others, SAA 5075 12479: Cornelis van Homrigh, company contract October 25th 1785; 14458: Wessel van Kleef, insinuation March 4th 1766; 10750: Salomon Dorper, attestation June 28th 1753; 12329: Cornelis van Homrigh, attestation March 31st 1752; 10746: Benjamin Phaff, transport June 27th 1752.

<sup>312</sup> *Oprechte Haerlemsche courant*, October 30th 1764. Similar announcements are found in, among others, the *Oprechte Haerlemsche courant* of November 8th, 1763 and February 28th, 1765, and the *Amsterdamse courant* of August 3rd, 1762 and June 26th, 1728.

<sup>313</sup> Antunes, 'Dutch-Portuguese diplomatic encounters', 467-468.

expected financial strain of the diplomatic profession.<sup>314</sup> The potential for abuse and exploitation within this system was fairly high, and thus part of the reason why Dutchmen serving as representatives were refused these privileges altogether. Foreigners, however, were still free to pursue these benefits, and openly did so to facilitate the private trade that they did. Some letters to the burgomasters, written by Amsterdam envoys, attest to the importance the envoys attached to these economic privileges. William Davidson, the British commissary in 1665, clearly frowned upon a municipal tax bill he had received:

I feel obliged to express my surprise at the summation (...); I consider myself exempt and free of all such payments.<sup>315</sup>

Similarly, the Spanish consul Gerbrand Barthout de Hollande wrote to the burgomasters in 1700 about his perceived right to tax cuts on batches of coffee and tea he had recently imported, even providing all the necessary bills and documentation to support his claim.<sup>316</sup> In 1752, Pierre Balguerie, agent of Sweden, was so offended at the call to pay tax (and to perform militia duties) that he even went to notary Jan Ardinois to draft an official protest against the civil servants that had insinuated him.<sup>317</sup>

Besides claiming the beneficial tax tariffs that were due to them as diplomats, envoys could also employ the perceived prestigiousness of diplomatic assignment to advance their commercial goals. Multiple instances of envoys explicitly using their title to gain economic legitimacy or visibility within the Amsterdam economy are found. The aforementioned Pierre Balguerie, as well as Laurens de Geer, representing Sweden between 1719-1759 and 1654-1666 respectively, chose to identify themselves by their diplomatic titles instead of simply appearing as private merchants when drafting slaving contracts.<sup>318</sup> Especially Balguerie, who shared ownership of the Surinamese plantation Bokkesteyn with the formidable burgomaster and land magnate Nicolaas Geelvinck, had to tap into any possible source of prestigiousness to appear as an equal business partner to Geelvinck. In other sectors, diplomatic titles

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<sup>314</sup> Black, *A history of diplomacy*, 62; Anderson, *The rise of modern diplomacy*, 55; Rommelse and Onnekink, *The Dutch in the early modern world*, 146.

<sup>315</sup> SAA 5026 42: William Davidson to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Amsterdam, June 30th 1665).

<sup>316</sup> SAA 5026 42: Gerbrand Barthout de Hollande to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (Amsterdam, August 1700).

<sup>317</sup> SAA 5075 9222: Jan Ardinois, protest May 31st 1752.

<sup>318</sup> Kernkamp, 'Een contract tot slavenhandel van 1657', 444-451; SAA 5075 904A: Jacob van Swieten, contract August 15th 1657; NA 1.05.11.14 (Suriname: oud notarieel archief) 689: register van inventarissen en prisaties (taxaties), 1743 jan.-1745 feb., scans 375-386.

were also used for commercial gain. Louis Renard, the publisher, advertised his monograph on fish through consistent mentioning of his status as agent to the King of Great Britain, and dedicated the book to his master.<sup>319</sup>

On the whole, foreign and Dutch envoys alike actively participated in various sectors of the Amsterdam labor market and were often near-completely incorporated into Amsterdam's economy through commercial activity. In some cases, diplomatic assignment was even consciously subjugated to advance these commercial goals: titles were used to increase visibility or legitimacy. This ultimately demonstrates that among lesser envoys (such as those commonly found in Amsterdam), it was not uncommon to be a participant in the regular work force first, and an outsider envoy second.

### *III.II. Social status and integration*

In a trading city such as Amsterdam, the accumulation of economic capital was a prominent way to gain social and cultural capital as well. The close-knit regent class of Amsterdam, as well as the sizeable upper middle class under it, was originally built on wealth instead of (noble) birth. As a group, the Amsterdam-based envoys were generally found in upper middle class circles; something that is confirmed by the level of wealth indicated through several wills, inventories and the level of disposable income implied by their economic activity.<sup>320</sup> A diplomatic position – even a lesser one as agent, resident or consul – was commonly regarded as a respectable, gentlemanly asset. For example, William Montague, a British traveler at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, for example describes consul Joseph Kerby in the following way:

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<sup>319</sup> Reitmeyer, 'Louis Renard and his book of extraordinary creatures', 33-34; L. Renard, *Poissons, ecrevisses et crabes, de diverses coulers et figures extraordinaires, que l'on trouve autour des Isles Moluques, et sur les côtes des Terres Australes* (Amsterdam 1754) n.p.

<sup>320</sup> Several concrete figures on the personal finances of Amsterdam envoys are recorded. SAA 5075 9207: Jan Ardinois, inventory November 18th 1749 appraised the furniture, jewelry and cash of French marine commissary Jacques Philippe Laugier de Tassy at approximately fl. 26000 (excluding liquid assets and real estate worth several tens of thousands of guilders); 12435: Cornelis van Homrigh, will May 29th 1777 details fl. 55000 to be distributed to the heirs of Danish agent Anthony Dull; 9268: Jan Ardinois, inventory March 18th 1760 details the estate of Swedish agent Pierre Balguerie, which does not contain a monetary appraisal, though its length and contents match those of the upper-middle class; SAA 5046 (Archief van de secretaris: stukken betreffende de ontvangst van de twintigste penning op de collaterale successie) 12 details Manuel de Belmonte's estate, worth fl. 85417. These figures place the envoys firmly in upper-middle class categories of wealth.

The King of England has a consul here, who makes some small figure, and fits in an eminent pew in the church, and has some respect paid him.<sup>321</sup>

The ancillary careers found among Amsterdam envoys claimed an equal or greater level of respectability: mid- to large-scale merchants, publishers, bankers and directors of municipal or economic agencies could all expect to count themselves among polite society. To what extent did envoys – especially those with a non-Dutch background – integrate themselves into this society?

A variety of sources demonstrate that (foreign) envoys in Amsterdam were indeed highly integrated into Amsterdam society. Notarial deeds related to inheritance bear witness to the depth of the relationships envoys formed with locals (non-members of their own nation). Envoys were not only beneficiaries to local inheritances, but were also frequently appointed as executors of local estates and guardians to children.<sup>322</sup> The envoys themselves returned the favors: they named local heirs, executors and guardians.<sup>323</sup> All three of these designations imply a considerable degree of mutual affection and trust between the parties involved. In a variety of other deeds, more concrete and specific cases are recorded of social interaction between envoys and locals. A more straightforward example than pieces of witness testimony taken by notary Thierry Daniel de Marolles in 1754 and 1757 cannot be found: in these deeds, so-called *attestations de vita*, Prussian agent Philip Anthony d’Erberfeld testified that he was well acquainted with the regent families Homoet, Commelin, Coeymans and Stael.<sup>324</sup> Further anecdotes on social interaction abound: among others, Francisco Mollo fought with carpenters working on his house and with two local men who contested the ownership of the premises<sup>325</sup>, and Louis Renard hired notary Jan Ardinois to intimidate an acquaintance who supposedly had repeatedly lied to him about a variety of subjects.<sup>326</sup>

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<sup>321</sup> W. Montague, *The delights of Holland: or, a three months travel about that and the other provinces. With observations and reflections on their trade, wealth, strength, beauty, policy &c.* (London 1696) 144.

<sup>322</sup> See, among others, SAA 5075 11241A: Thierry Daniel de Marolles, will November 8th 1738; 12376: Cornelis van Homrigh, proof of receipt March 26th 1767; 11314A: Thierry Daniel de Marolles, proof of receipt May 16th 1748; 9269: Jan Ardinois, deliberation December 11th 1760.

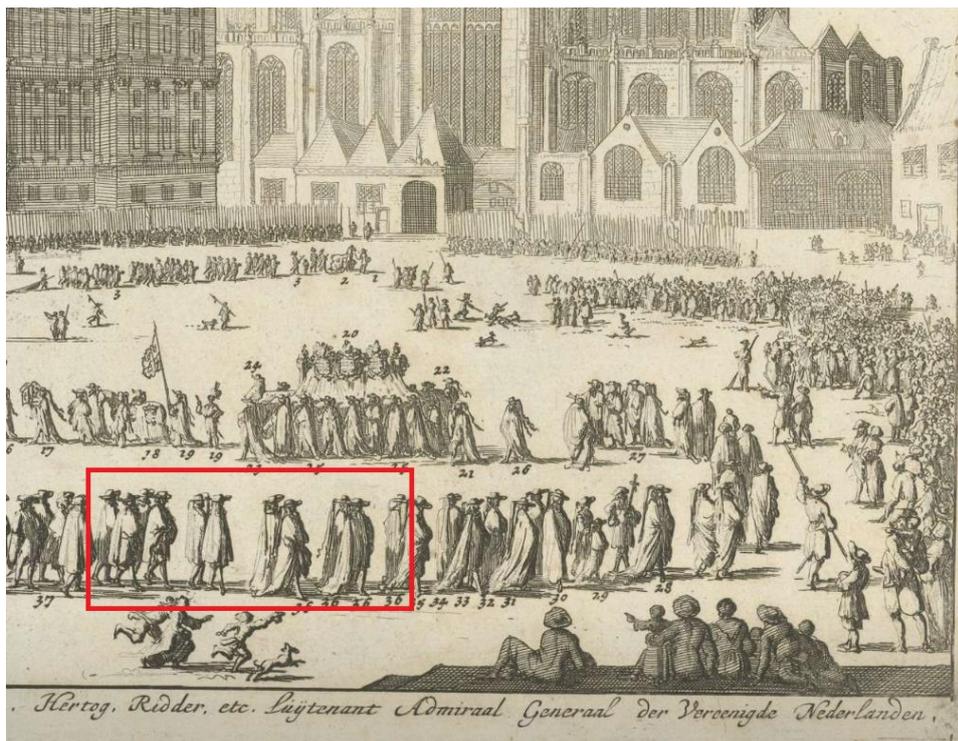
<sup>323</sup> SAA 5075 12435: Cornelis van Homrigh, will May 29th 1777; 10038: Philip Zweerts, will January 14th 1748.

<sup>324</sup> SAA 11346B: Thierry Daniel de Marolles, attestation February 9th 1754; 11364A: Thierry Daniel de Marolles, attestation March 24th 1757; 11364B: Thierry Daniel de Marolles, attestation April 4th 1757.

<sup>325</sup> SAA 5075 5661: Gerrit Emous ten Bergh, attestation July 5th 1691; 8070: Louis van de Graaff, insinuations January 21st & March 12th 1711.

<sup>326</sup> SAA 5075 9086: Jan Ardinois, insinuation November 18th 1723.

Newspapers and visual sources help illustrate the public dimension of diplomatic appointment in Amsterdam, and feature envoys as members of note in local society. Not only Dutch-born envoys with multiple ancillary careers gained enough notoriety to warrant a mention or an artistic depiction; full-time envoys who had come from abroad were represented in equal measure. Notices on their appointments, activities (such as travelling to The Hague or showing around a visiting monarch) are steadily found, as are in memoriams, announcing the death of an envoy.<sup>327</sup> If an envoy's passing warranted a notice in newspapers distributed throughout Amsterdam or Holland, it is reasonable to assume he had been a notable member of local society. Some visual sources further confirm the social prominence of individual diplomats. Spanish consul-general Manuel de Belmonte, as well as the Danish commissary Frans Müller, are pictured walking in the high-profile funeral procession of admiral Michiel de Ruyter on Dam Square, March 18<sup>th</sup> 1677. They were in the group of 'close friends of the deceased'.



*Image II. Detail of 'Lykstatie van den beroemden Zee-Held Michiel de Ruyter, Hertog, Ridder etc. Luytenant Admiraal Generaal der Vereenigde Nederlanden' by Jan Luyken, 1685. Rijksmuseum Amsterdam.<sup>328</sup> The group containing Belmonte and Müller is highlighted.*

<sup>327</sup> Among others, see *Amsterdamse courant*, February 24th 1746 (death notice of Louis Renard); *Oprechte Haerlemsche courant*, April 19th 1766 (death notice of Daniel Renard); *Amsterdamse courant*, April 6th 1799 (death notice of Jan Hendrik van Oldecop); *Amsterdamse courant*, March 24th 1744 (death notice of Hendrik Ernst de Bertry); *Oprechte Haerlemsche courant*, June 2nd 1759 (death notice of Pierre Balguerie); *Amsterdamse courant*, March 27th 1788 (death notice of Daniel Balguerie).

<sup>328</sup> Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, object number RP-P-OB-44.178.

Manuel de Belmonte, together with his contemporary the Portuguese agent Jeronimo Nunes da Costa, is also featured in a series of prints on the life of prominent members of the Portuguese-Jewish nation in Amsterdam, manufactured by Romeyn de Hooghe in the 1690s.<sup>329</sup> The print of Belmonte, depicted in front of his house, is one of the best visual sources portraying a ‘societal envoy’.



Image III. 'Hof van den baron Belmonte' by Romeyn de Hooghe, ca. 1693-1695. Rijksmuseum Amsterdam.<sup>330</sup>

The ‘Court of baron Belmonte’, the current Heerengracht No. 586, was the residence of the consuls-generals of Spain as early as 1686 until 1729 (when third-generation consul Manuel Levy Ximenes Belmonte died).<sup>331</sup> The print depicts de Belmonte as a highly prominent member of Amsterdam society. He stands on the doorstep of his grand house in a fashionable district of town, distributing alms to the

<sup>329</sup> J. F. K. de Balbian Verster, ‘Waar was het hof van Baron de Belmonte? Heerengracht 586’, *Amstelodamum* 25th yearbook (1928) 176-190: 177.

<sup>330</sup> Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, object number RP-P-A0-25-74-2.

<sup>331</sup> Schutte, *Repertorium der buitenlandse vertegenwoordigers*, 610-611.

poor, while a crowd of spectators looks on and pays homage. The inclusion of the pleasure barge, and especially of the carriage that Belmonte has seemingly just descended out of, points to very high social status. The use of carriages was highly restricted in early modern Amsterdam, due to the relatively weak soil and the dangers the vibrations would pose to the edifices. A British tourist noted that The Hague wasn't plagued by this problem, and that that town was much more suited to riding carriages<sup>332</sup> – a favorite pastime of many a diplomat. In Amsterdam, only the most privileged were allowed carriages, with an added heavy tax. It appears that at least some (foreign) Amsterdam envoys possessed high enough socio-economic status to claim this privilege. Evidentially, Belmonte was one; Joan Nicolaes Abo (consul of Denmark 1683-1707) was another, judging from a 1686 letter by Frederik Krag, Denmark's envoy in The Hague, which had been written to the burgomasters in protest of a carriage tax bill that had been presented to Abo.<sup>333</sup> All in all, the alms-distributing, carriage-riding consul de Belmonte appears as a diplomatic envoy who had built a social empire on the streets of his long-time host nation.

The high level of integration into local society found in Amsterdam envoys – and presumably of lesser envoys as a group in general - was likely due to two factors. To start, lower-ranked envoys served on average longer terms than envoys ranked higher. Whilst ambassadors extraordinary would spend a couple years *at most* at their host court, it was not unusual for consuls or agents to keep a posting for decades: Pierre Balguerie represented Sweden in Amsterdam for over 50 years. This long-term residency would unavoidably result in the envoy settling socially, economically and culturally. Settling often included marriage to a local woman and the founding of a family as well, further strengthening social ties to Amsterdam. Next to these lengthy terms, a second factor at play was presumably the nature of the duties expected of lesser envoys such as those in Amsterdam. They were not confined to the audience chambers of monarchs, assemblies or colleagues. Instead, they visited local notaries to draw up deeds, hired ship crews to transport goods, placed advertisements in the newspapers, issued passports<sup>334</sup> and arbitrated in conflicts between compatriots and locals. Most importantly, they had

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<sup>332</sup> Anonymous, *The present state of Holland*, 159.

<sup>333</sup> SAA 5026 42: Frederik Krag to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (The Hague, May 20th 1686).

<sup>334</sup> SAA 30579 (Inventaris van de collectie Stadsarchief Amsterdam: personalia) 92: Balguerie, Daniel, ca. 1761-1787.

enough freedom to pursue a variety of other careers on the side, which ultimately enlarged their social network via other sectors of the Amsterdam labor market.

### *III.III. A diplomatic community?*

It has been established that Amsterdam envoys built a variety of networks. They upheld a steady diplomatic relationship with embassies in The Hague, contracted business with Amsterdam trade partners, and were integrated as respectable members of the Amsterdam upper middle class. However, what of their relationship to each other? Was a diplomatic appointment (even a lesser one) grounds for socio-cultural bonding?

Some acquaintances or friendships between individual pairs/groups of Amsterdam envoys are recorded in the sources. Jacques Philippe Laugier de Tassy, the French Marine commissary, was closely connected to the Swedish agent Pierre Balguerie, as the latter was named executor of the former's estate and guardian to his children.<sup>335</sup> Louis Renard and Johan van den Burcht, respective agents of Britain and Russia, are found testifying that they attended a funeral together in 1734.<sup>336</sup> Henry Pye Rich of Britain was involved in a trade dispute against Johan Hendrik Frederik Oldecop of Russia in 1775.<sup>337</sup> However, none of these small-scale instances prove beyond doubt that the envoys in question had connected via their diplomatic appointment – it could easily be attributed to their secondary careers, mutual cultural background, or simply coincidence.

A useful tool to demonstrate at least the *possibility* of more widespread acquaintances between Amsterdam envoys is the plotting of all known addresses of Amsterdam envoys throughout the 1648-1800 period. An interactive version of the map<sup>338</sup> (see footnote for URL) attests to some individual buildings transferring from one diplomat to another.

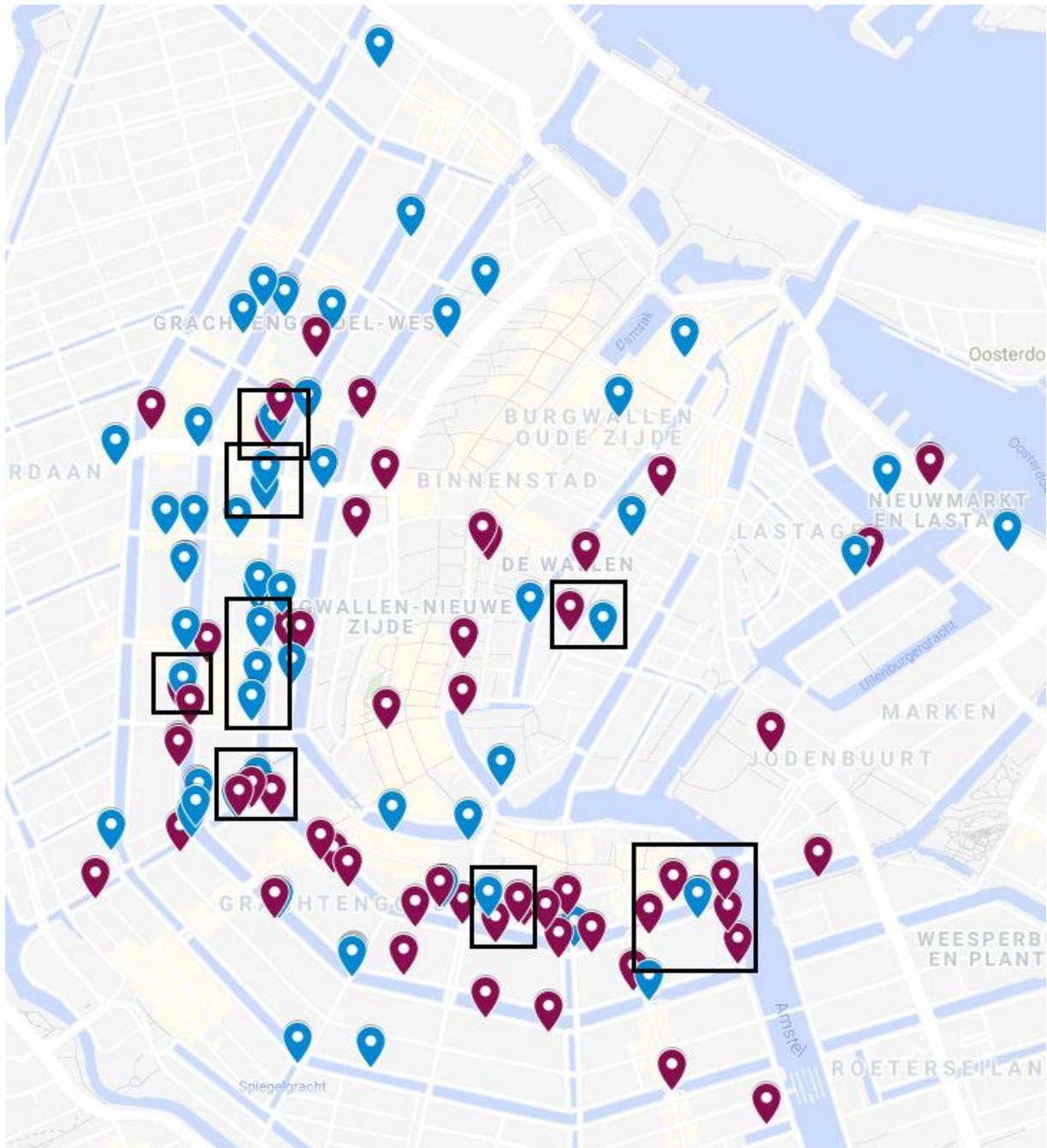
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<sup>335</sup> SAA 5075 11261: Thierry Daniel de Marolles, guardianship November 23rd 1740; 9207: Jan Ardinois, inventory November 18th 1749.

<sup>336</sup> SAA 5075 9119: Jan Ardinois, attestation October 10th 1734.

<sup>337</sup> SAA 5075 12425: Cornelis van Homrigh, protest to promissory note September 9th 1775; 12426: Cornelis van Homrigh, protests to promissory notes October 10th 1775

<sup>338</sup> [https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?hl=nl&mid=1dQKdmqLcWlu-eWe9OkIAUW-gU\\_mfPUsD&ll=52.37124267081219%2C4.895356199999924&z=15](https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?hl=nl&mid=1dQKdmqLcWlu-eWe9OkIAUW-gU_mfPUsD&ll=52.37124267081219%2C4.895356199999924&z=15) ['Adressen van vroegmoderne diplomaten'; created with data found in Schutte and notarial deeds]



*Image IV. Screenshot of an interactive map displaying all known exact or approximate addresses of diplomatic envoys in Amsterdam, 1648-1800. Burgundy indicates an envoy who has as of yet surfaced in notarial deeds, blue indicates an envoy who has not. The squares represent clusters of contemporary close neighbors.*

Whilst instances in the fashion of the ‘Belmonte court’ (successive generations inheriting the family home as well as the diplomatic title) are found, the transfer of residences between seemingly unrelated envoys occurred as well, perhaps fueled by word-of-mouth within the potential diplomatic community. Furthermore, the spread of diplomatic residences through Amsterdam shows that many lived in the same

districts, with some even being practically neighbors. This geographical spread would unavoidably have facilitated meetings between these neighboring envoys.

An important tool in the establishment of so-called diplomatic communities, and in the public visibility of diplomatic agents in general, was culture. During the 17<sup>th</sup> century, but especially in the 18<sup>th</sup> century after the Peace of Utrecht, diplomacy assumed a more public position than it had done before, and this was largely achieved through cultural means. In addition to the already established public ceremonial and parties at embassies, other forms such as books, plays, coffee house discussions and large public events aided the increase in diplomatic visibility in urban environments.<sup>339</sup> Did the lesser envoys of Amsterdam propagate a so-called ‘diplomatic culture’ in the public sphere through the organization of public or semi-private events, as the high-ranking ambassadors in The Hague were known to do? Differently put, was there a notable diplomatic culture in Amsterdam, and was this a way for envoys stationed in Amsterdam to meet and bond?

It turns out that many of staples of diplomatic culture – ceremonial, parties, banquets – did indeed occur in Amsterdam from time to time. Tourist William Montague put it bluntly: ‘[The envoys] receive and entertain foreign princes and ambassadors, and perform all the publick ceremonies’<sup>340</sup> – a sentence that one would thoroughly expect to refer to The Hague, but did in fact discuss Amsterdam. The archetypical celebrations organized by envoys in honor of royal births, birthdays or marriages certainly occurred in Amsterdam. In 1717, Louis Renard celebrated the birthday of George I of Great Britain with a concert by famous musicians, a fireworks display, a banquet and a ball which lasted all night.<sup>341</sup> French marine commissary de Lironcourt ordered a *Te Deum* sung at the French Catholic Church in honor of the birth of dauphin Louis Joseph, son of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette in 1781; the event was even attended by the ambassadors of France and Spain, who had come from The Hague.<sup>342</sup> Spain’s consul had organized a similar event in 1727:

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<sup>339</sup> Heringa, *De eer en hoogheid van de staat*, 94; Rommelse and Onnekink, *The Dutch in the early modern world*, 184, 221.

<sup>340</sup> Montague, *The delights of Holland*, 168.

<sup>341</sup> *Oprechte Haerlemsche courant*, June 10th 1717.

<sup>342</sup> *Nouvelles extraordinaires de divers endroits*, November 27th 1781.

Last Friday, on Assumption Day, don Bernardino Sala, consul-general of his Catholic Majesty and the Spanish nation in the United Provinces, residing in Amsterdam, had a magnificent *Te Deum* sung at the Carmelite Chapel on the occasion of the birth of the third infante, don Louis Antoine Jaques. There was a large crowd of distinguished guests at the church, which was entirely illuminated.<sup>343</sup>

Events in celebration of newly concluded peace treaties or victories in war were even larger in scale. They were often either entirely organized by envoys representing the involved states, or featured the envoys as prominent guests in the proceedings. An example of the former kind is found in 1721. In September that year, Peace of Nystad had ended the Great Northern War between Russia and Sweden, which ended in a Russian victory and the permanent inclusion of Russia in the European balance of power. In celebration of the victory, the Russian agent Christoffel van Brants organized a large public fireworks display in the area of the current lower end of the Kloveniersburgwal. Several temporary wooden constructions, ‘Temples of peace’ containing allegories on Nystad, were erected at his command; several prints survive depicting the ostentatious monuments and the heavy fireworks that were eventually lit on December 9<sup>th</sup>.<sup>344</sup> A celebration of the second kind, with envoys publicly participating in wider celebrations, is found after the concluding of the Peace of Ryswick. After a report on the chaotic celebrations in Rotterdam, the *Oprechte Haerlemsche courant* turns to an account of the parties in Amsterdam on November 8th:

The gun salutes, the ringing of the bells, the firepits and the delightful fireworks continued until deep into the night throughout the entire city. Every regent attended several parties, and in front of the house of one of the burgomasters on the Burgwal fireworks were successfully lit from two pedestals, one carrying the arms of Holland and the other those of Amsterdam; there were also delightful displays by the lords Belmonte and de Hollander, ministers of Spain; the lord Dacosta,

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<sup>343</sup> *Avec privilège de nos-seigneurs les Etats de Hollande et de West-Frise*, August 19th 1727.

<sup>344</sup> See <https://tinyurl.com/y6ucpuxp> [Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, object number RP-P-A0-28-61-2: ‘Tweede afbeelding van de stellage voor het vuurwerk in opdracht van Christoffel van Brants, 1721’]; <https://tinyurl.com/yaynlhk4> [Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, object number BI-B-FM-090-220: ‘Tempel der Vrede voor het vuurwerk van 30 augustus 1721’]; <https://tinyurl.com/yd7evxcj> [Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, object number RP-P-0B-84.223: Vuurwerk afgestoken op 9 december 1721 ter viering van de Vrede van Nystad].

of Portugal; the lord Pels, of Sweden; the lord Abo, of Denmark; and the lord Kuffeler, of Brandenburg.<sup>345</sup>

All things considered, several clues point towards the existence of a diplomatic network or community among the Amsterdam envoys. Individual interactions are recorded, as are their neighboring residences and their common participation into exercises of diplomatic culture. However, more proof is needed to further concretize this network. The progress of indexation on the notarial deeds of Amsterdam (which as of mid-2020 stands at an approximate 5%) will unquestionably unearth more connections.

#### *IV. Conclusion*

One of the most important components of the Amsterdiplomacy phenomenon was the presence of a considerable amount of mostly lower-ranked envoys that lived, worked and socialized within Amsterdam, with a degree of community formation as a result. There was a smooth mutual socio-economic exchange between these envoys and the urban environment. Lesser envoys were able to integrate well, due to their longer residencies and broader networks (built through their participation in the wider labor market); this integration, in turn, allowed them to perform their diplomatic duties more efficiently, because they were able to navigate Amsterdam society well. The duties performed by Amsterdam envoys, which were often practical in nature, were essential in the day-to-day functioning of international economic and political relations. The cooperation between these Amsterdam envoys and their colleagues in The Hague constituted a dual-city axis of sorts through which most, if not all diplomatic activity in the Dutch Republic was conducted.

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<sup>345</sup> *Oprechte Haerlemsche courant*, October 1st 1697.

## Conclusion

This thesis assessed how Amsterdam functioned as a diplomatic city between 1648 and 1795. Instead of providing a chronological analysis, it strived to present a thematical survey of the Amsterdiplomacy phenomenon. On the one hand, this was due to the obscurity of the subject, with a survey-like base approach being more beneficial to the current historiography. On the other hand, the relative stability within Amsterdiplomatic practices was an interesting occurrence in itself. Amsterdiplomacy was multifaceted, with the three most prominent manifestations of it elucidated in this thesis: Amsterdam's influence on Dutch diplomacy, Amsterdam's relationship with foreign diplomats in The Hague, and the community of foreign diplomats based in Amsterdam itself.

All three of these aspects demonstrated that Amsterdiplomacy was a phenomenon of substantial scale. Firstly, the Amsterdam burgomasters took an active interest in steering the foreign policies of the generality in directions beneficial to the city, and frequently succeeded in persuading or pressuring other components of the generality to serve Amsterdam's needs. On the executive level, various parties from within Amsterdam – the magistracy, semi-governmental enterprises and private persons alike – successfully employed and even manipulated networks of Dutch envoys abroad to do their bidding, meaning that a share of the labors of these envoys (officially in service of the Estates General) was made up of directly executing orders from Amsterdam. Amsterdam's grip on the consular network, which functioned as an extension of regular channels, was even stronger due to the city hosting and dominating the Levant Trade Directory. Secondly, the political and economic influence of Amsterdam did not go unnoticed with foreign envoys stationed in The Hague. This resulted in blatant groveling at Amsterdam's address, often by favorably comparing Amsterdam to (entities in) The Hague. However, it also caused a steady stream of missives or visits concerning legitimate petitions, as well as controversial attempts to conduct political and diplomatic negotiations in and with Amsterdam. Thirdly, Amsterdam was home to an entire network of subsidiary envoys in itself; at its height, dozens of these envoys – of Dutch and foreign origin alike - simultaneously resided in Amsterdam. This meant that diplomatic transactions within Amsterdam were a daily occurrence. Additionally, they succeeded in integrating in Amsterdam society, and had a notable presence within the economic and cultural scene of

the city: various staples of early modern diplomatic culture (the type for which The Hague was famed) were recorded in Amsterdam.

However, Amsterdiplomacy and its networks were *generally not* a threat to the socio-political position of The Hague as the diplomatic capital of the Dutch Republic. Amsterdiplomacy initiatives made up a significant share of all diplomatic activity centered around the Dutch Republic, but they mostly were either unrelated to the business of the generality at large (ex. envoys abroad reporting to Amsterdam on the impending arrival of an Amsterdam ship), or were actively cooperative efforts with diplomatic entities in The Hague (ex. Spanish diplomats of different ranks and stations establishing an iron factory). This can partly be explained through the heavy economic emphasis found in Amsterdiplomacy. The stereotype of The Hague as the political/diplomatic center and Amsterdam as the economic motor of the Dutch Republic is both subverted and confirmed through this thesis – whilst Amsterdam did take an active interest in politics and diplomacy, this was usually to protect and advance its economic interests. With much of the national and global trade centered in Amsterdam, it is unsurprising that many diplomatic activity touching on the economy (especially the executive end) was delegated to Amsterdam. Still, an underlying current of intercity conflict surrounding diplomacy remained. In the Dutch Republic, there was a constant fear of Amsterdam dominating or subjugating the other members of the generality. Whilst the economic supremacy of the city seems to have attracted little contention, the more brusque politically charged diplomatic initiatives (received) by Amsterdam could count on hostile and defensive reactions from The Hague. The position of Amsterdam as a secondary diplomatic city, and a secondary stately entity to turn to in the Dutch Republic, was therefore not only born out of basic political-economic weight, but also out of intercity spite. Dutch envoys abroad, as well as foreign envoys in The Hague, had a tendency to turn to Amsterdam when they found their working relationship with The Hague unproductive, illogical or outright unbearable. With foreign envoys, their knowledge and understanding of the potential to exploit these sensibilities and destabilize the constitution of the Dutch Republic added an additional layer of conscious malice. Nevertheless, open hostility and competition between Amsterdam and The Hague as diplomatic cities remained episodic. The complementary axis of diplomacy within the Dutch Republic, with *very roughly* The Hague on the political-legislative and Amsterdam on the economic-executive end, generally functioned well.

The study of the Amsterdiplomacy phenomenon does not only inform us of a considerable and previously overlooked component of the history of diplomacy in the Dutch Republic. It has also proven to be an excellent case study on the networks, employment and duties of subsidiary/lesser envoys. Whereas traditional diplomatic history tended to focus on the main ambassadors, the current-day new diplomatic history recognizes the importance of lower-ranked diplomats such as agents, residents and consuls. This thesis has assessed two different groups of these, namely Dutch envoys abroad and foreign envoys based in Amsterdam. Various aspects about their functioning were demonstrated. Firstly, in most cases consuls functioned indistinctively from other lower-ranked envoys, and on top of that self-identified as diplomats, therefore arguing in favor of the consul as a ‘diplomatic envoy’. The practical employment of the consul vastly outweighs the obscure legal definitions brought forward to argue against consuls as diplomats. Secondly, the duties of lesser envoys were mostly practical in nature. Thirdly, there was a regular cooperation between the different divisions of embassies within (in this case) the Dutch Republic. Envoys ranked high and low worked together, either through correspondence or physical meetings, to fulfill the more ambitious and complex goals of their respective embassies. Fourthly, lesser envoys displayed high levels of integration within their host society through longer terms, the nature of their duties (‘forcing’ them to interact with locals) and their ability to maintain secondary careers. Fifthly and lastly, like their more prominent and high-ranking colleagues, lesser envoys were similarly able to promulgate diplomatic culture – ceremonies, public events, distributing alms etc. – and, perhaps, form communities based on their diplomatic status. Partly due to these lesser envoys that called Amsterdam home, The Hague was ostensibly not the monopolistic diplomatic town that is presented to us in the literature: Amsterdiplomacy loomed to cast a modest shadow over its edifices. It is only through a thorough understanding of Amsterdiplomacy that we can begin to understand why Henri Brassset, a diplomat employed by *France* and accredited to the *Estates General* in *The Hague*, wrote to the burgomasters of *Amsterdam* in 1748:

Je me tiendray heureux de travailler pour vous.<sup>346</sup>

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<sup>346</sup> SAA 5026 42: Henri Brassset to the burgomasters of Amsterdam (The Hague, August 1748).

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[https://velehanden.nl/projecten/bekijk/details/project/amsterdam\\_notarieel\\_2](https://velehanden.nl/projecten/bekijk/details/project/amsterdam_notarieel_2)

Notice on diplomacy on the Alle Amsterdamse Akten project forum. Velehanden (2019):

[https://velehanden.nl/messages/questions/view/project/amsterdam\\_notarieel\\_2/id/110495/page/1](https://velehanden.nl/messages/questions/view/project/amsterdam_notarieel_2/id/110495/page/1)