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THE DUTCH REPUBLIC IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

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THE DUTCH REPUBLIC IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

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PREFACE

In writing a work of this sort an author inevitably relies more on the work of other historians than he or she can easily acknowledge. In my own case, I am somewhat uncomfortably aware of the extent to which my understanding of almost all aspects of Dutch history has been built on the foundations laid by others. However, a full scholarly apparatus and comprehensive bibliography would be out of place in this introductory work, and I have kept the notes to a minimum and restricted the references in Further Reading to the most useful and accessible books and articles in English. This practice, although justifiable, does no justice to my scholarly debts. Perhaps I can restrict myself here to expressing my gratitude to Professor E.H. Kossmann, whose teaching first introduced me to the history of the Dutch Republic and who guided my first tentative steps in historical research, and let that stand as a substitute for a longer list of acknowledgements which would be unavoidably arbitrary and necessarily incomplete.

One person who deserves to be singled out for thanks is my friend and colleague Louis Billington, who read the penultimate version of the book in full and made a number of both acute and useful comments. I acted on most but, perhaps unfortunately, not all of his recommendations.

This also seems a good opportunity to register my appreciation for the generations of students in the History department at the University of Hull who have responded to my attempts to teach them about the Dutch Republic with patience and good humour. I have learnt a lot from having to try to make myself clear to students for whom the subject was almost invariably completely new; my own experience suggests that undergraduate teaching is a valuable discipline for the academic, and one which is now becoming sadly underrated.

Recent years have been particularly stressful at British universities for a variety of reasons; and my sincere thanks for helping me to retain

my sanity in these unpleasant circumstances go to Michael, Jonathan and, not least, Cassie.

Hull
13 January 1998



The Dutch Republic in the Seventeenth Century
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