

PREFACE

When Anne of Hanover, Princess Royal of Great Britain, left England in 1734 on her marriage to William, Prince of Orange, she was, as Lord Hervey admitted in his memoirs 'as much forgotten after three weeks as if she had been buried three years'. English princesses who marry abroad always suffer this fate unless, like the Empress Matilda or Queen Mary II, their place in the English succession draws them back. Such an insular outlook has led to total obscurity for a woman who richly deserves historical recognition—intelligent, arrogant and ambitious, pupil and lifelong friend of Handel, confidante of Frederick the Great, an important figure in the courts of George I and George II, but also that almost unique phenomenon, an English princess who exercised power in her own right in a foreign country.

Anne's name was mentioned to me as a subject worthy of biography by Dr. G.W. van der Meiden of the Algemeen Rijksarchief in The Hague, and my first thanks are due to him for his continuing interest and encouragement. I am grateful to Her Majesty, Queen Beatrix, for permission to work on the vast amount of material held by the Koninklijk Huisarchief at The Hague. The most useful part of this for my purposes has been the correspondence, some of which appeared in *Archives de la Maison Orange-Nassau*; the editors chose not to give any original references which has been a problem, although it has enabled me to distinguish between their mainly political and familiar material with an *Archives* reference and the previously unpublished private and family letters with a Huisarchief reference. The helpfulness of Drs. B. Woelderink and his staff at the Koninklijk Huisarchief has been much appreciated. I should also thank the staff of the Rijksarchief in Friesland at Leeuwarden.

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I dedicate this book to Giles, Hugh and Susannah whose incredulity was a challenge, and to my husband whose confidence was indispensable.