

PREFACE

Now that in despite of the misgivings which I expressed in the Preface to Part VII of this work, I have succeeded in completing Part VIII, a further step has been taken by way of fulfilling the task which, I must again confess in the light of hindsight, I somewhat rashly set myself some thirty years ago.

This is an unsought opportunity to offer my readers my sincere regret that, to my own great amazement, I have discovered two quite inexplicable errors which have somehow escaped me, in spite of all my care. I still cannot imagine how this could have happened or how they could have successfully eluded even my final control of the proofs of Part VII. The first is my assertion at page 281 of that Part that the Netherlands have emerged from a Hundred Years' War with Spain whereas, as was perfectly well known to me already as a schoolboy at the end of the 19th century, we had only been at war for eighty years. And equally unexplainable is my remark, loosely inserted at p. 288, that the old Duchy of Limburg has later become the Belgian province of Limburg whereas it was in fact incorporated into the Belgian province of Liège. I trust, however, that no one's sleep will have been seriously disturbed by two such glaring mistakes which, I hope, will have been put down to a pardonable slip in the onerous task of proof-reading.

Finally I must once again express my warm gratitude to all my collaborators none of whom, truth to tell, have yet fallen by the wayside. I salute them, not only for their loyalty, but also for their endurance.

Utrecht, December 1975.

J. H. W. Verzijl