

FOREWORD

From the correspondence of Matthew Slade, the rector of a gymnasium in Amsterdam in the first decades of the seventeenth century, 133 letters have so far been recorded. Apart from three separate undated letters—to the English divine Thomas Morton (a copy),¹ to the archbishop of Canterbury, George Abbot,² and to a former pupil, Samuel Naeranus³—all are addressed to two correspondents. Ninety-one are to Sibrandus Lubbertus, professor in Franeker, and thirty-nine are to the English ambassador in the Netherlands (one to Ralph Winwood and thirty-eight to Dudley Carleton). Unfortunately only Slade's own letters have survived. Those of his correspondents have not yet come to light.

The letters to Lubbertus cover the period from 5 April 1611 to 20 August 1620. They are kept in the British Library in London⁴ as a part of Lubbertus' correspondence, but copies are to be found in the Provincial Library of Friesland in Leeuwarden.⁵ A certain amount is known about their contents since C. van der Woude made good use of them in his extensive study on Lubbertus.⁶ Although he only quotes those passages relevant to his subject he gives the reader a clear impression of Slade's role in the Dutch ecclesiastical and political disputes during the Twelve Years' Truce, and above all of his significance as an intermediary between the English establishment and the Counter-Remonstrants in the Netherlands.

Then comes Slade's correspondence with the English ambassador(s) covering the period from 29 May 1614 to 4 June 1624. These letters, fewer in number than the others, are in State Papers 84 in the Public Record Office in London.⁷ S. van der Woude, former director of the University Library of Amsterdam and naturally interested in one of his earliest predecessors, had a complete set of xerocopies made which is now to be found in the Amsterdam library. This part of Slade's correspondence is all but unknown. Surprisingly enough Lubbertus' biographer makes no mention of it in his piece on Slade in the *Biografisch Lexicon voor de Geschiedenis van het Nederlandse Protestantisme*,⁸ while the *Dictionary of National Biography* only refers to the existence of four letters in State Papers 84.⁹ Although every historian dealing with Anglo-Dutch relations in the seventeenth century does indeed come across these documents, the only author who appears to be acquainted with the contents of this correspondence is J. den Tex, who mentions it in his great biography of Oldenbarnevelt.¹⁰

This edition with notes is an attempt to make Slade's diplomatic correspondence better known. It is preceded by a short biographical sketch of the man who played a more important part in the cultural life of Amsterdam in the first quarter of the seventeenth century than has hitherto emerged from the few publications devoted to him.

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In this edition I have observed the original spelling of the letters, correcting only a few obvious errors. I have provided punctuation where it facilitates the comprehensibility of the text. References to, or quotations from, the correspondence with Lubbertus have only been included when they add to our knowledge of Matthew Slade's biography.

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Willem Nijenhuis

1 BL. Add. MS 22962, f. 39.

2 *Ibid.*, f. 38.

3 UBA. MS Rem. Kerk., A 85.

4 In the second and third volumes: BL. Add. MS 22961 and 22962.

- 5 *Provinciale Bibliotheek van Friesland Leeuwarden. Catalogus der briefverzameling van S. A. Gabbema*, Leeuwarden, 1930, 186-95.
- 6 C. van der Woude, *Sibrandus Lubbertus*, Kampen, 1963.
- 7 PRO. SP 84.
- 8 *BLGNP*, I, 343 f.
- 9 *DNB*, XVIII, 365.
- 10 Jan den Tex, *Oldenbarnevelt*, 5 vols, Haarlem/Groningen, 1960-72.