

# Russia, Britain and the House of Nassau

The Re-Establishment of the Orange Dynasty in the Netherlands,  
March-November 1813<sup>1</sup>

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MARK EDWARD HAY

On 15 March 1813, Tsar Alexander I, in pursuit of the retreating *Grande Armée*, passed through the Prussian city of Breslau. The Prince of Orange, William VI, who was residing in exile on his private estates nearby, seized the opportunity to meet the Tsar to request his assistance in retaking the Netherlands for the House of Orange. The Tsar was quick to pledge his support, and he accepted Orange into the anti-Napoleonic coalition that would defeat Napoleon in 1814.<sup>2</sup> This anecdote raises several questions about the return of the House of Orange to the Netherlands. How could a stateless, destitute, and exiled dynasty convince the Tsar to support its plans for a return to the Netherlands? Why did the other great powers follow suit? And why was the Prince of Orange in London at the outbreak of the uprising in the Netherlands in 1813, rather than with the allied armies in Central Europe? The aim of this article is to explore how the House of Orange navigated the tumultuous diplomatic environment in March through November 1813 to re-establish itself as the ruling dynasty of the Netherlands.

Op 15 maart 1813 arriveerde Tsaar Alexander I in de Pruisische stad Breslau, tijdens de achtervolging van de zich terugtrekkende *Grande Armée*. Willem VI, Prins van Oranje, die zich op dat moment als banneling op zijn privé-landgoed in de buurt van Breslau bevond, haastte zich een ontmoeting te regelen met de tsaar teneinde hem om ondersteuning te vragen bij zijn pogingen om Nederland terug te winnen voor de Oranjes. De tsaar zegde zijn steun onmiddellijk toe en nam Oranje op in de coalitie die Napoleon in 1814 zou verslaan. Deze anekdote werpt verschillende

vragen op over de terugkeer van het Huis van Oranje naar Nederland. Hoe was het mogelijk dat een staatloze, onvermogen, in exil levende dynastie de Tsaar zover kon krijgen dat hij haar plannen voor een terugkeer naar Nederland steunde? Waarom volgden de andere grootmachten zijn voorbeeld? En waarom bevond de Prins van Oranje zich in 1813, aan het begin van de opstand, in Londen, in plaats van bij de geallieerde strijdkrachten in Midden-Europa? In dit artikel wordt nagegaan hoe het Huis van Oranje zich tussen maart en december 1813 door de tumultueuze diplomatieke betrekkingen laveerde en zich opnieuw als het regerende vorstenhuis van Nederland installeerde.

## Introduction

In the Dutch historiography, the return of the House of Orange is often presented as a logical outcome of the uprising in the Netherlands. In November 1813, a triumvirate of Dutch notables – Gijsbert Karel van Hogendorp, Leopold van Limburg Stirum and Frans Adam van der Duyn van Maasdam – seized on the crumbling of Napoleonic rule in the Netherlands to proclaim a new Dutch government in The Hague, before appealing to their countrymen to join the regime. The political elite of Amsterdam, most prominent amongst whom were Joan Melchior Kemper, Anton Reinhard Falck, Samuel Wiselius, and Johan Valckenaer, initially resisted the call to submit to the triumvirate's direction of the revolution, fearing a return to the politics of before 1795. However, sensing that Amsterdam popular opinion was shifting in favour of the direction set out by the triumvirate, thus raising the spectre of the Amsterdam elite being marginalised in establishing the new regime, they abandoned their resistance. In a few places across the Netherlands the Napoleonic regime held out, but thereafter by and large the cities and municipalities of the Netherlands were brought into the fold. With momentum on their side, the provisional Dutch regime dispatched a mission to the Prince of Orange to offer him the ill-defined title of Sovereign Prince of the Netherlands. The Prince of Orange accepted. He arrived in the Netherlands on 30 November 1813, marking the return of the House of Orange to the Netherlands.<sup>3</sup> This portrayal is not incorrect, but it is one-sided.

1 I would like to thank Dr. Matthijs Lok for reflecting on a first draft of this paper, and the two anonymous reviewers for their scrupulous assessment. It has become the better article for it.

2 'Prince of Orange to Hardenberg, 19 March 1813', in: H.T. Colenbrander (ed.), *Gedenkstukken der Algemeene Geschiedenis van Nederland van 1795 tot 1840*, 10 vols. (The Hague 1905-1922) vi: 1864; 'Prince of Orange to Wilhelmina, 19 March 1813',

in: J.W.A. Naber (ed.), *Correspondentie van de Stadhouderlijke Familie, 1777-1820*, 5 vols. (The Hague 1931-1936) v: 198-199.

3 I. de Haan. 'Een Nieuwe Staat', in: I. de Haan, P. den Hoed and H. te Velde (eds.), *Een nieuwe staat: Het begin van het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden* (Amsterdam 2013) 12-17; W. Uitterhoeve, *1813–Haagse bluf: De korte chaos van vrijwording* (Nijmegen 2013); J. Koch, *Koning Willem I*,

It views the restoration of the House of Orange from the perspective of the geopolitical actor that is the Netherlands, but it ignores the agency of the House of Orange. This reflects the tendency in Dutch historiography to superimpose the history of the Netherlands onto the history of the House of Orange.

Additionally, often in conjunction with the above, the return of the Orange dynasty to the Netherlands is attributed to British intervention.<sup>4</sup> For several reasons this is understandable. For British security, it was crucial that the continental North Sea coast remained in the hands of a friendly power that was sufficiently robust to ward off incursions. The Southern Low Countries were generally dominated by great powers, who, due to the frequency of diplomatic reversals in European politics, could not be counted upon to act in the interest of Britain. Therefore, Britain relied on the Dutch Republic to neutralise any threat.<sup>5</sup> In 1795 the Anglo-Dutch security agreement broke down, when France conquered the Dutch Republic in a lightning campaign. But Britain was quick to develop a Dutch policy, which it pursued with vigour. In 1797-1799, Lord Grenville, the British foreign secretary, proposed a European concert whereby the Low Countries would be united and placed under the House of Orange.<sup>6</sup> In August 1799, an Anglo-Russian-Orange military force was dispatched to liberate the Netherlands, but the expedition failed in its objective.<sup>7</sup> In his memorandum of 1805, Prime Minister Pitt the Younger likewise called for the restoration of an independent Dutch state, but he proposed to annex only Antwerp and its surroundings to this Dutch state, with the rest of the Southern Low Countries allocated to Prussia to ensure that both states had a stake in containing French ambitions in the Low Countries.<sup>8</sup> In 1809 a second British expedition was landed in the Netherlands with the limited aim of securing the strategic port of Antwerp, but this expedition

1772-1843 (Amsterdam 2013) 224-226; P.J. Blok, 'Staatkundige geschiedenis van de omwenteling', in: G.J.W. Koolemans Beijnen (ed.), *Historische gedenkboek der herstelling van Neêrlands onafhankelijkheid in 1813* (Haarlem 1912-1913) 1: 1-33; H.T. Colenbrander, *Inlijving en opstand* (Amsterdam 1941) 171-318; C.H.E. de Wit, *De strijd tussen aristocratie en democratie in Nederland, 1780-1848. Herwaardering van een periode* (Heerlen 1965) 312-336.

4 N.C.F. van Sas, *Onze natuurlijkste bondgenoot: Nederland, Engeland en Europa, 1813-1831* (Groningen 1985); E. Lamberts, 'Het Verenigd Koninkrijk als Europese creatie', in: De Haan, Den Hoed and Te Velde (eds.), *Een nieuwe staat*, 113-133; Koch, *Willem I*, 215-224, 228-230; L.A. Struik,

*Oranje in ballingschap 1795-1813: Een Odyssee* (Amsterdam 2006) 343-365.

5 A.W. Ward and G.P. Gooch (eds.), *The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy 1783-1919*, 3 vols. (Cambridge 1922-1923) 1: 54-57.

6 J.M. Sherwig, 'Lord Grenville's Plan for a Concert of Europe, 1797-1799', *The Journal of Modern History* 34:3 (Sep. 1962) 291.

7 J. Zuurbier, et al. (eds.), *De lange herfst van 1799: De Russisch-Engelse invasie in polder en duin* (Castricum 1998); P. Mackesy, *Statesmen at War: The Strategy of Overthrow, 1789-1799* (London 1974).

8 C.K. Webster (ed.) *British Diplomacy, 1813-1815* (London 1921) 389-394; Ward and Gooch, *British Foreign Policy*, 1: 331-342.

too failed.<sup>9</sup> In addition to British security interests in the Low Countries, the relations between the British Royal Family and the House of Orange were good due to intermarriage and common dynastic linkages to other protestant houses. When the House of Orange was driven from the Netherlands in January 1795, it sought exile in Britain. William Frederick George Louis, the future King William II, was given a British upbringing, in part to strengthen the British connection. In 1809, he was sent to study at Oxford. After graduation in 1811, William joined the British forces in the Peninsula under Wellington, where he rose to the rank of Major-General by late 1813. Inquiries were also made into the possibility of his marriage to Princess Charlotte, the daughter of the Prince of Wales and later King George IV.<sup>10</sup> Finally, the idea that the return of the House of Orange to the Netherlands is due to British intervention is given credence by the fact that the Prince of Orange had been in Britain for some months before the outbreak of the Dutch uprising against Napoleonic rule, that the Prince of Orange was transported from Britain to the Netherlands by the Royal Navy, and that he received British financial and material support in his endeavours.<sup>11</sup>

But caution is needed in seeing Britain's hand behind the restoration of the Orange dynasty. Whilst British security still depended on a friendly power in the Netherlands, after several failed attempts at securing British interests in the Low Countries, by early 1813 the focus of British foreign policy had shifted away from the Low Countries and onto maintaining maritime superiority and the military operations in the Iberian Peninsula. Moreover, by mid-1813 the military successes of the continental allies induced Britain to provide diplomatic and financial support for the anti-Napoleonic war effort. This served Britain's broader aims of defeating Napoleonic France, but it did mean that Britain's interests, including those in the Low Countries, became entangled with those of the allies. It remained to be seen whether British interests in the Low Countries would be accepted by the allies, and at what diplomatic cost.<sup>12</sup> So, in 1813, the Low Countries were not a priority for Britain. Furthermore, it is important to emphasise that British interests in the Low Countries did not equate to support for a restoration of the House of Orange. In 1813 Anglo-Orange relations were not bad, but British opinions of some members of the family were better than of others. The opinion of the last Stadtholder William V, who had spent much of his exile in Britain,

9 G.C. Bond, *The Grand Expedition: The British Invasion of Holland in 1809* (Athens, GA 1979).

10 J. van Zanten, *Koning Willem II, 1792-1849* (Amsterdam 2013) 59-165; A. Hallema, *Oranjevorsten in ballingschap: Van Dilleburg en Londen uit voor vrijheid en recht* (Maastricht 1947) 180-182, 240-242; J. Rudersdorf, 'Die Teilnahme des Erbprinzen Wilhelm von Oranien-Nassau am

Spanischen Unabhängigkeitskrieg (1808-1814),' *Nassauische Annalen* 118 (2007), 392-408.

11 G.J. Renier, *Great Britain and the Establishment of the Kingdom of the Netherlands 1813-1815: A Study in British Foreign Policy* (The Hague 1930) 66-93, 120-124.

12 Ward and Gooch, *British Foreign Policy*, I: 397-398.

was generally favourable, as was the opinion of his grandson, William, but British opinion was less favourable of the Prince of Orange (at this point: Hereditary Prince). To start, the Prince had spent most of his days in exile on the continent rather than in Britain, and so he was not well known in British circles. More importantly, there were doubts as to the Prince's suitability as future leader of the Netherlands, mainly as the result of his flexible approach to politics and his cavalier regard for traditional Orange loyalties. In contrast to his father, the Prince of Orange had no qualms about dealing with Britain's archenemy Napoleon in his pursuit of compensation for his losses in the Netherlands. And when the decision to deal with Napoleon disappointed, the Prince of Orange's quest for compensation led him to seek Prussian and Habsburg support, rather than British support.<sup>13</sup>

Finally, the idea that, in 1813, Britain readily supported the restoration of the House of Orange is not supported by the available evidence. The Prince of Orange first attempted to re-establish contact with the British government on 20 February 1813, but the overture was ignored by Viscount Castlereagh, who had taken over the foreign office in March 1812.<sup>14</sup> A second attempt, submitted via Hendrik Fagel, the *de facto* Orange ambassador to the Court of St James's, did elicit a response. The retired Lord Malmesbury, who counselled the British government on Dutch affairs, was instructed to update Orange on the British position. The note is revealing:

I [...] perceive the Prince of Orange still has a hankering to come here [London], [which] would be liable to many grave objections, and above all be attended with no possible advantage and a great useless expense; he had much better turn his whole thoughts to Austria and endeavour thro' [sic] the means of that Court to recover (when the time comes) his German Territories.<sup>15</sup>

The Prince then tried to force the British government into taking a decision on whether to support the House of Orange by traveling to London in person.<sup>16</sup> After this became known in London, Malmesbury restated the British position to the Orange ambassador: 'I really and truly can *do* nothing: to offer advice and counsel is of no use', and: 'The sooner he [the Prince of Orange] returns the better [...]', elaborating by pointing out that the Prince of Orange ought to be at the frontline at such crucial times.<sup>17</sup> But Malmesbury's discouragement was too late. The Prince of Orange had already boarded a ship for Britain.<sup>18</sup>

13 Renier, *Great Britain*, 57-58, 65; Koch, *Willem 1*, 219.

14 'Prince of Orange to Castlereagh, 20 February 1813', Colenbrander, *Gedenkstukken*, vi: 1857-1858; Naber, *Correspondentie*, v: 198.

15 'Malmesbury to Fagel, 11 March 1813', Colenbrander, *Gedenkstukken*, vi: 1860.

16 'Prince of Orange to Castlereagh, 9 April 1813', Netherlands, Nationaal Archief [hereafter NL-NA], 2.02.01, 6082.

17 'Malmesbury to Fagel, 23 April 1813', Colenbrander, *Gedenkstukken*, vi: 1873-1874.

18 'Prince of Orange to Wilhelmina, 18 April 1813', Naber, *Correspondentie*, v: 201.



Drawing of the arrival of Prince William Frederick of Orange in Scheveningen, 30 November 1813. Nicolaas Lodewijk Penning (1764 -1818), 1813 (after Reinier Vinkeles and a drawing of Jan Willem Pieneman). Wikimedia Commons.

It was only after the Prince of Orange arrived in London on 25 April 1813 that the House of Orange once again became a consideration in British foreign policy. On 27 April 1813, the Prince met with Castlereagh to argue his case, but Castlereagh was unwilling to commit Britain to supporting a restoration of the House of Orange.<sup>19</sup> On 18 May 1813, a second meeting followed with the Prince Regent, Castlereagh and Malmesbury. The Prince of Orange was informed that Britain was willing to assist in restoring the House of Orange to the Netherlands, but that the degree of assistance depended on Orange's desire to renew the friendship with Britain – which was interpreted to mean the acceptance of British security interests in the Low Countries and Britain's retaining of some of the Dutch colonies it had conquered during the war. Furthermore, British support for an Orange restoration was made conditional on consultations with the continental allies.<sup>20</sup> Whilst awaiting the allies' response, Castlereagh suggested that the Prince of Orange remain in London. There are no clear indications that the Prince was held in London against his will, but what is certain, is that he would have preferred to return to the continent to participate in the military campaign to overthrow Napoleon.<sup>21</sup> On several occasions the Prince of Orange can be found complaining about having to remain in London.<sup>22</sup> It was not until 22 November 1813, after the British government was informed of the outbreak of the uprising in the Netherlands, that the Prince of Orange was allowed to return to the Netherlands. So, whilst Britain undeniably played a role in the restoration of the House of Orange, the evidence does not support early and enthusiastic backing for an Orange restoration.

Reflecting on the historiographical representation of the return of the House of Orange to the Netherlands in general, one could conclude that the role played by Dutch domestic actors is understood and that the role played by Britain is understood – though not British motivations – but that the role played by the House of Orange is ignored. The unawareness of the agency of arguably the most important actor significantly inhibits a full understanding of this crucial episode in the history of the House of Orange, and by extension the history of the Netherlands.

19 'Minutes of meeting of Prince of Orange and Castlereagh, 23 April 1813', England, National Archives [hereafter EN-NA], FO 37/64; 'Notes by B.P. van Lelyveld 25 April–30 November 1813', Colenbrander, *Gedenkstukken*, vi: 1874-1876.

20 'Castlereagh to Cathcartt, 20 May 1813', EN-NA, FO 65/83; 'Minutes by Fagel, 18 May 1813', Colenbrander, *Gedenkstukken*, vi: 1881-1882;

'Prince of Orange to Wilhelmina, 21 May 1813', *ibidem*, vi: 1883-1884.

21 'Prince of Orange to Wilhelmina, 7 October 1813', Naber, *Correspondentie*, v: 223-227; Koch, *Willem I*, 221.

22 'Prince of Orange to Van Suchtelen, 7 October 1813', NL-NA, 2.02.01, 6211.

## The Ottonian Nassaus

Part of the reason for the lack of understanding of the historical agency of the House of Orange is that the dynasty is perceived to be but a small family that was marginalised from European affairs after its ouster in 1795. Nothing was further from the truth. The key to understanding the historical agency of the House of Orange is to view it as a component part of the House of Nassau. On the eve of the French Revolution the House of Nassau was divided into two branches: the Walramian Nassaus and the Ottonian Nassaus. The Walramian Nassaus were subdivided into three branches: Nassau-Saarbrücken, Nassau-Weilburg and Nassau-Usingen. The Nassau-Saarbrücken branch died out in 1797, and its territory, on the left bank of the Rhine, was inherited by Nassau-Usingen, but fell to France after the Imperial Recess of 1803. Territorially, Nassau-Weilburg and Nassau-Usingen were within the Holy Roman Empire. The territories were fragmented and, despite lying between the Rhine, the Main and the Lahn rivers, the territories were landlocked. Politically, the Walramian Nassaus were loyal to the *Reich* and the Habsburg Monarchy.<sup>23</sup> The territory of the Ottonian Nassaus is referred to as Nassau-Dietz, which was an amalgamation of four previously separate counties, Dietz, Hadamar, Dillenburg and Siegen. Nassau-Dietz also lay entirely within the Holy Roman Empire, but in addition to these lands, the Ottonian Nassaus possessed extensive territories in the Netherlands, and traditionally they were the principal contenders for the stadtholdership.<sup>24</sup>

The Ottonian Nassaus, of course, are commonly known as the House of Orange-Nassau, or simply the House of Orange. Where the political loyalties of the Walramian Nassaus lay with the *Reich* and the Habsburgs, Orange had a long tradition of strong ties with Britain and Prussia. In 1780s the House of Orange was unseated by Dutch revolutionaries, the Patriots. Only Prussian military intervention, a personal request from the Princess Consort Wilhelmina to her brother Frederick William II of Prussia, and British political scheming, helped restore the House of Orange. Upon return, the Stadtholder set about strengthening his position. In 1788, he concluded a treaty with Prussia and Britain, in which Berlin and London were committed

23 B.C.D. Anderson, *Ernst Marschall von Bieberstein and the Foundation of Modern Nassau (1770-1814)* (Ann Arbor, MI 1987), 23, 28-30; W. Schüler, *Das Herzogtum Nassau 1806-1866: Deutsche Geschichte im Kleinformat* (Wiesbaden 2006), 3; B.C.D. Anderson, 'State-Building and Bureaucracy in Early-Nineteenth-Century Nassau,' *Central European History* 24:3 (1991) 223-225.

24 E. Treichel, *Der Primat der Bürokratie: Bürokratischer Staat und bürokratische Elite im Herzogtum Nassau, 1806-1866* (Stuttgart 1991) 37-45; H.P.H. Jansen, 'De Bredase Nassaus,' in: C.A. Tamse (ed.), *Nassau en Oranje in de Nederlandse Geschiedenis* (Alphen a/d Rijn 1979) 13-44; B. Woelderink, 'Oranje tussen Nassau en Nederland, 1795-1802', in: *Jaarboek Oranje-Nassau Museum* (1996), 93; Struik, *Oranje in Ballingschap*, 77.

to military intervention if the House of Orange was again threatened.<sup>25</sup> As Princes of Nassau, Orange was also tied to the *Reich* and the Habsburg Monarchy, but due to tensions arising from Habsburg possession of the Southern Low Countries, the relations never became as important as relations with Britain and Prussia.<sup>26</sup>

The relationship between the various branches of the House of Nassau was generally good. The Princes of Orange were always sent on a tour of Nassau and the surrounding states to meet local rulers and notables, and the Princesses of Orange frequently married into the other branches. But with the signing of the 'Nassauischer Erbverein', the Union of Inheritance of 1783, the intra-dynastic ties took on a new meaning. The act guaranteed that the Nassau lands remained an undivided entity and that alienation of Nassau lands was forbidden. Moreover, it established a clear line of succession within the dynasty.<sup>27</sup> The Prince of Orange-Nassau-Dietz, who was already *de facto primus inter pares* became President of the House of Nassau. But the act was not merely aimed at pre-empting potential intra-dynastic disputes over succession and territory.<sup>28</sup> It was also a commitment to collaborate in international politics. In the multipolar international order of the 1780s, this dynastic alliance makes much sense. As small geopolitical actors, the Netherlands and the Nassaus risked being dominated by the larger international powers. By allying into a dynastic network there was a greater chance of cancelling out these risks. Moreover, for small geopolitical actors, it was challenging and expensive to maintain relations with all key international powers. Conducting international politics through dynastic networks allowed for one component part of the dynasty to focus on maintaining ties with one or two actors, whilst the other actors remained accessible through its partners. Ideally, a dynastic network would have members with ties to all key actors. The House of Nassau, in which Orange had strong ties with Britain and Prussia and the Walramians had strong ties to the Habsburgs and the *Reich*, closely approached this ideal.

25 'Traité d'Alliance défensive entra le Roi de la Grand-Bretagne et L.H.P. les Etats-Généraux D.P.U., 23 April 1788', in: G.F. de Martens (ed.), *Recueil de Traits d'Alliance [...] (Gottingen 1818)* IV: 372-377; 'Traité d'Alliance défensive entra le Roi de Prusse et L.H.P. les Etats-Généraux D.P.U., Berlin. 15 April 1788', Martens, *Recueil de Traits*, IV: 377-382; 'Traité provisionel d'alliance défesive entre le Roi de Prusse et le Roi de la Grenade-Brétagne. Loo, 13 Juin 1788', *ibidem*, IV: 382-385.

26 P. Schroeder, *The Transformation of European Politics 1763-1848* (Oxford 1994) 31-32; K. Vetter, 'Oranien-Nassau und die Hohenzollern im 17./18.

Jahrhundert', in: H. Lademacher (ed.), *Oranien-Nassau, die Niederlande und das Reich* (Münster 1995) 98.

27 'Kirberger Conferenz Protocoll, 7-24 January 1783', Netherlands, Koninklijk Huisarchief [hereafter NL-KHA], B6, 381.

28 B. Woelderink, 'De erfprins in Nassau in 1789. Het bezoek van prins Willem Frederik aan de Nassause erflanden als onderdeel van zijn Duitse studietijd,' *Jaarboek Oranje-Nassau Museum* (1994) 7-24; Struik, *Oranje in Ballingschap*, 17, 77; Anderson, 'State-Building', 223-224; Anderson, *Bieberstein*, 23-28.

## A German Dynasty?

The ascendancy of France on the eve of the nineteenth century posed a grave challenge to the House of Nassau, though particularly to Orange. In 1795, French armies conquered the Netherlands and forced the House of Orange to flee. In exile, the House of Orange hoped to invoke the 1788 treaty, and compel Britain and Prussia to intervene to restore them to the Netherlands. For Prussia, however, the dangers of a continued conflict with France weighed heavier on the balance of foreign policy than did their commitments to Orange. On 5 April 1795 Prussia concluded a peace with France that forced her to withdraw from the First Coalition and recognise French occupation of the left bank of the Rhine. This treaty was a severe blow to Orange's hopes of being restored to the Netherlands, but it was not a complete abandonment of the House of Orange. Prussia had not yet officially recognised the new regime in the Netherlands and therefore suitable compensation for Orange could still be negotiated. Moreover, the Franco-Prussian peace guaranteed that Nassau-Dietz remained safely inside a neutral zone separating the French influence sphere from the Prussian one.<sup>29</sup> Britain remained at war with France, but undertook no direct action in support of Orange until the aforementioned invasion of 1799. Its failure caused a rift in Anglo-Orange relations, but the definitive break did not come until 1 October 1801, when Britain and France signed the preliminary articles of peace in London. This prompted the Stadtholder to leave Britain to settle in Dietz in November 1801.<sup>30</sup> The Habsburg Monarchy was the most determined adversary of France, and briefly the Stadtholder, in his capacity of President of the House of Nassau, pinned his hopes of restoration to the Netherlands on the Habsburgs. However, periodic Habsburg defeats soon dashed Orange hopes. The Peace of Campo Formio, of 17 October 1797, ended the War of the First Coalition and confirmed French possession of the left bank of the Rhine. Article 20 of the Treaty of Campo Formio stipulated that those sovereigns who had lost territory on the left bank of the Rhine would be compensated with territory elsewhere in the Holy Roman Empire, and that a congress would be held at Rastatt to hammer out these issues. The resumption of war between the Habsburgs and France in 1798 proved only temporary. On 9 February 1801, the Habsburgs and France signed the Peace of Lunéville, once again

29 'Réflexions du 3 d'Août 1795', Colenbrander, *Gedenkstukken*, II: 851-855; 'Der Sonderfrieden von Basel, 5. April 1795', in: U. Hufeld (ed.), *Der Reichsdeputationshauptschluß von 1803: Eine Dokumentation zum Untergang des Alten Reiches*. (Köln 2003) 37-39; Anderson, *Bieberstein*, 49; Struik, *Oranje in Ballingschap*, 80-81; M. Bernath,

'Die auswärtige Politik Nassaus 1805-1812. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Rheinbundes und der politischen Ideen am Mittelrhein zur Zeit Napoleons,' *Nassauische Annalen* (1952) 108.  
30 Koch, *Willem I*, 88-118; Struik, *Oranje in Ballingschap*, 164-166.

confirming French occupation of the left bank of the Rhine, and the need to compensate displaced sovereigns.<sup>31</sup>

With the arrival of a general European cessation of hostilities the process of territorial reorganisation of Europe could begin. The House of Orange was in a difficult position. The Rastatter Congress dealt only with compensation claims of sovereigns who had lost territory within the Holy Roman Empire, and the territorial losses of the House of Orange in the Netherlands lay outside the Holy Roman Empire. But the Stadtholder circumvented this legality by reverting to his role as President of the House of Nassau and dispatching a single delegation to pursue the interests of the entire house, including Orange's interests in the Netherlands. The ploy paid off. In return for renouncing all claims to the Netherlands, per treaty of Amiens, Orange was offered compensation consisting of the enlargement of Orange's Nassau territory with the bishopric of Fulda, Dortmund, several abbeys, Corvey, Weingarten, the towns of Isny and Buchhorn, as well as several other small tracts of land. The territory comprised about 120,000 inhabitants, and in terms of revenue it was about a quarter of what the Stadtholder had received in the Netherlands.<sup>32</sup>

This offer caused a schism within the House of Orange. Stadtholder William v refused to accept secularised territory out of principle, but the Prince of Orange was not burdened by such moralities. He feared that if his father persisted in his refusal to accept compensation, Orange would be left empty-handed.<sup>33</sup> After much debate a compromise was reached whereby William v remained ruler of Nassau-Dietz, but abdicated as Stadtholder of the Netherlands in favour of his son. The Prince of Orange, now formally Stadtholder William vi, could then decide to accept the French offer. As expected, William vi took up the offer and thus became Prince of Fulda. Henceforth, there were two Princes of Orange: William v of Orange-Nassau-Dietz, and William vi of Orange-Nassau-Fulda.<sup>34</sup> A more important consequence was that the links between Orange and the Netherlands were severed, and Orange became an exclusively German dynasty. The Walramian Nassaus has lost some territory around Saarbrücken and could thus claim compensation at Rastatt, but the opportunity for connecting the fragmented Nassau lands was lost, as most of the territory was awarded to Hesse-Darmstadt.

31 'Der Sonderfrieden von Campo Formio, 17 October 1797', Hufeld, *Reichsdeputationshauptschluß*, 54-56; 'Der Frieden von Lunéville, 9 February 1801', *ibidem*, 57-64.

32 Koch, *Willem I*, 119-134; Struik, *Oranje in Ballingschap*, 108-120, 138-182; J.A. Bornewasser, 'Koning Willem I,' in: Tamse (ed.), *Nassau en*

*Oranje*, 236; Woelderink, 'Oranje tussen Nassau en Nederland', 98-108.

33 'William v to Prince of Orange, 12 June 1801-18 September 1801', Naber, *Correspondentie*, IV: 44-46; 'William v to Prince of Orange, 29 May 1802', Colenbrander, *Gedenkstukken*, VI: 703-706.

34 "'Dossier Fulda'", NL-KHA, A35, XV2; Struik, *Oranje in Ballingschap*, 183-213; Koch, *Willem I*, 134-139.

However, the translocation of Orange to Nassau did contribute to the consolidation of the territory of the House.<sup>35</sup>

### Confrontation and isolation

William VI was not wholly satisfied with the compensation he received for the family losses in the Netherlands, and he set out on a quest for additional compensation that would have dire consequences for the House of Orange. The Prince had taken the liberty to interpret the compensation that he had accepted as the result of a deal between himself and France only, and he reserved the right to obtain additional compensation from the new Dutch regime. In 1804, together with the arch-schemer Charles-Maurice Talleyrand, the Prince secured another 5 million guilders of compensation. However, when Napoleon got word of this impending transaction, he intervened to appropriate the money for his war effort. The Prince was furious and, in his reaction, he dragged along his father. In September 1804 Napoleon held an audience for the lesser German princes in Mainz. Both Princes of Orange were invited, but both refused to attend.<sup>36</sup> Napoleon responded by occupying Nassau-Dietz in anticipation of the outbreak of war with Prussia, forcing William V to flee to Brunswick, where he died on 9 April 1806. Formally, Nassau-Dietz now passed to William VI, but *de facto* Dietz was under French control.<sup>37</sup>

The Nassau lands of the House of Orange subsequently became bargaining chips in Napoleon's efforts to reorganise Central Europe. Habsburg's defeat in the War of the Third Coalition presented Napoleon with the opportunity to disband the Holy Roman Empire. On 12 July 1806, Napoleon prompted sixteen German states to sign the Confederation of the Rhine Act, with which the signatories organised themselves into the Confederation of the Rhine under protection of the French Emperor. The House of Nassau was one of the original signatories, but the Nassau delegate represented only Nassau-Weilburg and Nassau-Usingen.<sup>38</sup> The Walramians were greatly rewarded for joining the Confederation. Usingen and Weilburg

35 U. Ziegler (ed.), *Quellen zu den Reformen in den Rheinbundstaaten. Volume 5: Regierungakten des Herzogtums Nassau, 1803-1814* (München 2001) 6-10; Anderson, *Bieberstein*, 61-100; Treichel, *Primat der Bürokratie*, 46-50. The Walramians were content with the result: 'Frederick William of Weilburg to Prince of Orange, Weilburg, 14 February 1803', NL-KHA, A32, 102.

36 Struik, *Oranje in ballingschap*, 208-210, 220-225.

37 French troop movements: 'De Heerdt d'Eversberg to William V, 10 March 1806', NL-KHA, A35, XIV14; 'Charles de Dalwijk to William V, 12 March 1806', NL-KHA, A35, XIV14; Hallema, *Oranjevorsten*, 148.

38 'Convention relative à la Confédération du Rhin [...]', in: *Collection des Actes, Reglemens, Ordonnances et Autres Pièces Officielles Relatives à la Confédération du Rhin* (Paris 1808), I: 11-22.

were united into a single duchy, and Frederick William of Nassau-Weilburg was elevated to Prince of Nassau. His cousin, Prince Frederick Augustus of Nassau-Usingen, remained Duke of Nassau. In 1816, the Walramian branches were united, when both Frederick William and Frederick Augustus died in quick succession. Frederick William's son, William, became sole ruler of the Walramian Nassaus. Territorially, the Walramians also benefitted from joining the Confederation of the Rhine. The lands of three princes, three imperial counts and eight imperial knights were added to the united Duchy of Nassau.<sup>39</sup>

For the House of Orange, the creation of the Confederation of the Rhine meant disaster. Nassau-Dietz was divided up. The county of Dietz and its surroundings were allocated to the Duchy of Nassau. The remaining territories, Dillenburg, Hadamar, and Siegen, were incorporated into the Duchy of Berg. The territorial integrity of Fulda also seemed to crumble as Napoleon stripped off tracts of territory to hand out to his dependants. The abbey of Weingarten and the town of Isny, for instance, were awarded to the King of Württemberg.<sup>40</sup> Napoleon did inform the Prince of Orange that he would be allowed to retain the remainder of Fulda if he joined the Confederation of the Rhine, but if the Prince refused, Fulda would be incorporated into Hessen. For the Prince, however, things had gone too far already, and rather than join the Confederation of the Rhine, he entered the Prussian army. In hindsight, this was an unfortunate decision. The Prince commanded a Prussian division in the War of the Fourth Coalition, but was captured at Erfurt on 16 October 1806.<sup>41</sup> Napoleon now seized the principality of Fulda, which was later awarded to the new state of Westphalia.<sup>42</sup> Affairs continued to go downhill for Orange thereafter. Initially the Prince of Orange hoped to receive compensation for the loss of Fulda, and he made three desperate attempts to re-establish relations with Napoleon, but Napoleon held Orange responsible for their misfortune and dismissed the overtures. Defeated and resigned, Orange retired to the Niederländische Palais in Berlin.<sup>43</sup> The outbreak of the War of the Fifth Coalition offered The Prince of Orange a new opportunity to regain his losses. He entered Habsburg service

39 'Proklamation zur Errichtung des Herzogtums 1806', Schüler, *Herzogtum Nassau*, 306-307. Territorial mutations: Articles 15, 20, 24 of 'Convention relative à la Confédération du Rhin [...]', *Collection des Actes*; Anderson, *Bieberstein*, 152-191; Bernath, 'Die auswärtige Politik Nassaus', 130-147; Anderson, 'State-Building', 233.

40 '[Unclear, in name of Napoleon] to Prince of Orange, 22 July 1806', NL-KHA, A35, XIV15. See also note 38.

41 'Prince of Orange to Wilhelmina, 24 July 1806', Naber, *Correspondentie*, IV: 244-245; in: Schoenmaker and C.M. Schulten (eds.), *Oranje op de Bres: Vorstenhuis en Leger in de Nederlandse Geschiedenis* (Amsterdam 1989), 40; Koch, *Willem I*, 167-172; Struik, *Oranje in ballingschap*, 245-263.

42 *Ibidem*, 269-288.

43 Colenbrander, *Gedenkstukken*, Nos. 533, 534, 537, 538, 540, v: 761-762, 764-767.

as a Major-General, but he was wounded at Wagram and forced to retire from active service.<sup>44</sup> The Prince now retreated to his private estates in Silesia.<sup>45</sup>

### **Oranje Boven!**

It was at this low ebb in the fortunes of the House of Orange that Tsar Alexander passed by the Orange estates, allowing the Prince to offer his services to the Tsar. The Tsar's accepting Orange into the alliance might seem puzzling, because, superficially, the House of Orange had nothing to contribute to the anti-Napoleonic war effort. But the Prince of Orange had several things going for him. To start, he had luck. The Prince caught the Tsar at a time when, after a long and exhausting military campaign in Russia, he was in dire need of allies, both to continue the war and to assert his position as leader of the soon-to-be Sixth Coalition. And so one may expect the Tsar to have been receptive to offers of alliance, in particular if it came from a House that had opposed Napoleon uninterrupted since 1804. But Orange had more to offer. To start, since Napoleon's intervention had collapsed the compensation deal with the Dutch regime, the House of Orange retained an outstanding claim to the Netherlands. This could be utilised to reinforce the allied legitimacy of challenging Napoleon. More importantly, despite their expulsion from their dynastic territories, Orange remained the President of the House of Nassau, which meant that the Prince of Orange could be useful in restoring allied influence with the broader dynastic network. Of course, in March 1813, Orange's contribution to the anti-Napoleonic alliance was very much hypothetical. It remained to be seen whether the Prince could live up to the role he assigned for himself. But in the months to come, Orange showed himself up to the task.

A first thing he did was to use his position as member of the alliance to organise a military force. After the Dutch Republic came into French orbit in 1795, Dutch soldiers had participated in French military campaigns, including Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812. The historiography has it that the Dutch contingent of the Grande Armée was lost in Russia. This is true, but it does not mean that all Dutch troops perished in Russia, but rather that the Dutch contingent ceased to function as a coherent fighting force. A good many Dutch soldiers were captured by the allies, or deserted and were rounded up. These were given the opportunity of taking service in the allied armies, which many did.<sup>46</sup> The Prince of Orange gathered these seasoned

44 Schoenmaker and Schulten, *Oranje op de Bres*, 40.

45 J.A. van Hamel, 's Erfprinsen toevluchtsoord. De latere koning Willem I als landheer op het Posensche riddersgoed Raçot, gedurende zijn verdrijving uit het vaderland', *BVG O* (1932) 231-232.

46 'Wilhelmina to Constant Rebecque, 2 December 1813', *NL-NA*, 2.21.008.01, 34; 'Louise to Prince of Orange, 10 March 1813', Naber, *Correspondentie*, v: 187; G. Venzky, *Die russisch-deutsche Legion in den Jahren 1811-1815* (Wiesbaden 1966), 86; J.W.A.

Dutch troops and organised them into a military force, the Dutch Legion of Orange.<sup>47</sup>

A second thing Orange did was to reinforce his position as President of the House of Nassau.<sup>48</sup> This was relatively easy because the ties with the Walramian Nassaus were never severed.<sup>49</sup> Besides, in the light of unfolding events in Central Europe, the Walramians recognised the benefits of establishing relations with the allies. So, rather than Orange taking charge of Nassau affairs, the re-establishing of relations between Orange and Nassau may be characterised as a restoration of Nassau's dynastic politics of the late eighteenth century, which benefitted all those involved.

As President of the House of Nassau, the Prince of Orange gained command over Nassau's troops, which he intended to use in the struggle against France. The problem was, however, that, as a member of the Confederation of the Rhine, Nassau had been forced to place its troops at the disposal of France. In early 1813, Nassau's troops were serving in the Iberian Peninsula.<sup>50</sup> But rather than resign themselves to the seemingly inevitable loss of their army, the Prince of Orange and his Walramian cousins designed a ploy to retrieve their troops from the Peninsula. The Walramians would instruct their troops to defect to the British army under Wellington.<sup>51</sup> To avoid the risk of the troops being imprisoned or employed in the British army, the Prince of Orange, who by this time had arrived in London, would notify the British government that *his* troops were willing to defect to Wellington, and request for their transportation to the frontline in Germany.<sup>52</sup> Bathurst, the British secretary of state for war and the colonies, was keen to assist in the repatriating of the *Dutch* contingent of the Napoleonic army in the Peninsula, and he drew up instructions for Wellington to assist in the defection. The Prince of Orange was then presented with these instructions and signed off on them.<sup>53</sup> It was only a few days later that the Prince felt the need to rectify a misunderstanding that hitherto had gone supposedly unnoticed to him: he had not requested for *Dutch* troops to be repatriated, but for *Nassau* troops,

Naber, *Prinses Wilhelmina, gemalin van Willem v, Prins van Oranje* (Amsterdam 1908), 280-281.

47 M.E. Hay, 'The Dutch Experience and Memory of the Campaign of 1812', *Napoleonic Scholarship Journal* 1:5 (Dec., 2013).

48 'Prince of Orange to Gagern, 20 March 1813', Colenbrander, *Gedenkstukken*, VI: 1865; 'Gagern to Prince of Orange, 29 March 1813', *ibidem*, VI: 1865-1867; 'Prince of Orange to Stein, 13 April 1813', NL-NA, 2.02.01, 6082; 'Prince of Orange to Gagern, 18 April 1813', Colenbrander, *Gedenkstukken*, VI: 1871-1872.

49 B. de Graaf, 'Second-tier Diplomacy. Hans von Gagern and William I in their Quest for an Alternative European Order, 1813-1818', *Journal of Modern European History* 12:4 (2014) 547-552.

50 Schüler, *Herzogtum Nassau*, 41-45.

51 '[Walramian Nassaus] to Prince of Orange, 13 October 1813', NL-NA, 2.02.01, 6564; 'Gagern to Nassau officers', October 1813, *ibidem*.

52 'Prince of Orange to Bathurst, 2 October 1813', NL-NA, 2.02.01, 6564.

53 'Prince of Orange to Bathurst, 3 October 1813', *ibidem*; 'Bathurst to [Prince of Orange], 6 October 1813', *ibidem*.

of which he had only recently gained command.<sup>54</sup> By now, of course, the instructions to Wellington had already been sent off and the wheels for the transfer of the Nassau troops had been set in motion.<sup>55</sup> The Nassau troops were to arrive at Plymouth on 12 January 1814, but before their arrival, Orange redirected their destination to the Netherlands to join his forces.<sup>56</sup>

So, the Prince of Orange's joining the alliance in March 1813 brought the allies the tangible benefit of adding troops to the allied ranks. Of course, the military contribution of these troops must not be overstated. The Dutch Legion of Orange only re-entered the fighting gradually and the Nassau troops only joined the fighting in early 1814. But even if Orange's troops were not at the forefront of the fight, Dutch troops did battle their way back from Russia, through Central Europe, to the Low Countries, where, together with the Nassau troops, they helped drive out the French. Furthermore, Orange's troops constituted the nucleus of the new armed forces of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands that participated in defeating Napoleon at Waterloo.<sup>57</sup> Additionally, Orange's restoration as the President of the House of Nassau considerably facilitated Nassau's defection to the allies on 23 November 1813, thereby weakening Napoleon's grip on Central Europe.<sup>58</sup> In sum, one could conclude that, whilst the Prince of Orange may not have played a major role in the defeat of Napoleon, he certainly played a role commensurate to his status as minor prince.

The House of Nassau also benefitted from the Prince of Orange joining the alliance at an early stage. The connection with Orange facilitated a difficult defection and it saved Nassau from a considerable burden. In their aim to defeat Napoleon, the allies demanded that all defectors contribute manpower to the war effort.<sup>59</sup> This was a considerable strain for many states because, like

54 'Prince of Orange to Bathurst, 8 October 1813', ibidem.

55 'Bathurst to Wellington, 6 October 1813', ibidem.

56 'Bathurst to Clancarty, 12 January 1814', EN-NA, FO 238/2; 'Bathurst to Clancarty, 18 January 1814', ibidem.; 'Fagel to [William I], 30 December 1813', NL-NA, 2.02.01, 6564; 'William I to Fagel, 8 January 1814', ibidem.

57 'Willhardt to William I, 8 January 1814' NL-NA, 2.02.01, 6566; '11 January 1814, London', NL-NA, 2.21.008.01, 25; 'Nota', NL-NA, 2.21.008.66, 3; 'Constant Rebecque to Ritmeester Heskuzius [?], 12 January 1814, NL-NA, 2.02.01, 6579, 8; 'William I to Bentinck tot Buckhorst', 24 January 1814, NL-NA, 2.13.67, 1; 'William I to Bentinck tot Buckhorst, 28 February 1814', ibidem; 'Nassau Officers to William I, 12 February 1814', NL-NA,

2.02.01, 6564; 'Generale Staat, 29 April 1814', NL-NA, 2.02.01, 6620; F.H.A. Sabron, *De vesting Gorinchem van November 1813 tot Maart 1814* (Breda 1902), 98-99, 102, 107; F.H.A. Sabron, *In en om Coevorden in 1813-'14* (Breda 1913) 74; F.H.A. Sabron, *De blokkade van Delfzijl in 1813-14* (Breda 1906), 101-102, note 3; Naber, *Prinses Wilhelmina*, 288-289.

58 G.F. de Martens, *Nouveau Recueil de Traités [...] des Puissances et états de l'Europe*, 16 vols. (Göttingen 1817-1842) IV: 99-103.

59 'Protokoll über die zur Regulierung des Verteidigungssystems von Deutschland abgehaltene Kommission, 24. November 1813', in: E. Botzenhart and W. Hubatsch (eds.), *Freiherr vom Stein, Briefe und amtliche Schriften* 5 (Stuttgart 1957-1964), IV: 338-340; A. von Janson, *Geschichte*

Nassau, their troops were integrated into the Napoleonic armed forces, which meant that they would have to recruit new units. But because Nassau and Orange had arranged the defection of Nassau's troops to Wellington, which were employed in the Low Countries, Nassau could claim to have fulfilled its military obligations already.<sup>60</sup>

Not least was the joining of the anti-Napoleonic alliance in March 1813 of benefit to Orange and their aim to return to the Netherlands. Orange was the second power, only after Prussia, to join the alliance that would become the Sixth Coalition. This is important because all other powers that joined the alliance thereafter, such as Sweden, the Habsburg Monarchy, Britain and the lesser powers were forced to accept the alliance's *acquis communautaire* regarding Orange, that is: support for the return of the House of Orange to a liberated Netherlands. Sweden was quick to endorse the *acquis communautaire*, and neither the Habsburgs nor the lesser powers raised objections.<sup>61</sup> Britain was a different matter. Britain had vested interests in the Low Countries, and it could not rely on a sovereign whom they hardly knew and whose previous conduct had given rise to suspicion, to take British interests into account. But the fact that the Prince of Orange arrived in London in March 1813, not as an isolated and stateless prince, but as head of a House that was a member of the anti-Napoleonic coalition with a stake in the fight, presented the British government with an *fait accompli* that could be challenged only at considerable diplomatic cost. Therefore, the British chose for the next best option, which was to keep the Prince in London to discover his politics and the extent to which he would accept British interests.<sup>62</sup> So rather than that the British government actively supported the return of the House of Orange to the Netherlands from an early date, Britain was in fact the last major power to endorse the restoration of the House of Orange, and it did so only after affairs in the Netherlands had progressed beyond the point of return. Being a member of the anti-Napoleonic coalition benefitted Orange in another way too. Orange's participation in the military campaign to liberate the Netherlands offered the Dutch the opportunity to portray themselves as liberators rather than as liberated. Orange's participation in the military campaign to defeat Napoleon furthermore allowed the Dutch to present themselves as victors in the Napoleonic Wars. This was valuable political capital, in the era of the reconstruction of the post-Napoleonic international order. The clearest sign of the success of the agency of the House of Orange is perhaps that no 'Dutch Question' arose at the Congress of Vienna. This was because Dutch affairs had been settled already.

*des Feldzuges 1814 in Frankreich*, 2 vols. (Berlin 1903), I: 16, II: annex 13, 7\*-8\*.

60 H.C. von Gagern, *Mein Anteil an der Politik* 5, vols. (Stuttgart 1823-1845) II: 163-165; Anderson, *Bieberstein*, 292-294.

61 'Prince of Orange to Wilhelmina, 8 April 1813', Naber, *Correspondentie*, v: 200.

62 'Minutes by Fagel, 18 May 1813', Colenbrander, *Gedenkstukken*, VI: 1881-1882.

## Conclusion

This article explores the re-establishment of the Orange dynasty in the Netherlands in 1813. The Dutch historiography presents the return of the House of Orange to the Netherlands as a logical outcome of the uprising in the Netherlands, and Britain, due to her strategic interests in the Low Countries and her traditional support for Orange, is attributed a prominent role in facilitating the restoration of the House of Orange. Whilst the current historiographical representation is not incorrect, it largely ignores the historical agency of the House of Orange. Rather than view the historical experience of the House of Orange through the prism of the geopolitical actor that was the Netherlands, this article argues that the agency of the House of Orange should be understood in the context of the agency of the wider dynastic network of the House of Nassau.

In 1783 the House of Nassau concluded a dynastic alliance that committed the various branches to collaborate in international politics. In the multipolar international order of the late eighteenth century this made sense, but within a decade after the alliance was signed, France started its ascendancy that would lead to the creation of a Napoleonic international order, dominated by France. The changing of the international order, from a multipolar order to a unipolar order, significantly undermined the effectiveness of the dynastic alliance of Nassau, forcing the component parts of the dynasty to scramble for a policy for dealing with France. The Walramians followed the path of states of Central Europe, which was the path of acceptance of French supremacy and collaboration.<sup>63</sup> This policy paid off. The united Duchy of Nassau grew in territory, population, and status. Orange's loss of their seat of power in the Netherlands got Franco-Orange relations off to a bad start. The subsequent inability to accept his losses led the Prince of Orange, often rash, to seize any opportunity to challenge Napoleon. The Prince's confrontational politics cost him dearly. Orange was stripped of its territories and marginalised to the fringes of civilised Europe.

But the dynastic relations of the House of Nassau were never fully severed. When Napoleon's unsuccessful Russian campaign allowed for the great powers to reclaim a position of importance in the European order, multipolarity returned to international relations. And with the return of multipolarity, dynastic networking once again became a viable means for pursuing foreign policy aims for the House of Nassau. In March 1813, at Breslau, the Prince of Orange and President of the House of Nassau, was quick to seize the moment to join a budding alliance of Russia and Prussia. This affair is too often ignored. In fact, it was a turning point in the history of the House of Nassau and the House of Orange, and by extension the history of the

63 Schroeder, *The Transformation of European Politics*,

Netherlands. Joining the alliance offered all branches of the House of Nassau a timely opportunity to switch allegiances in a conflict that was changing the face of Europe. And by offering the Prince of Orange the opportunity to play a role befitting his station in the campaign to defeat Napoleon, the alliance was the perfect vehicle for returning the House of Orange to an independent, liberated Netherlands. The uprising in the Netherlands in November 1813 only served to nudge a reluctant Britain into endorsing what had already been set in motion, the restoration of the Orange dynasty.

**Mark Edward Hay** read history in Amsterdam (vU), Leiden, Paris, and Oxford. He obtained his AHRC-funded doctorate in history from King's College London. His doctoral research, entitled *Calculated Risk. Collaboration and Resistance in the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Netherlands, 1780-1806*, explores Dutch strategies of international conflict resolution in the Revolutionary and Napoleonic era. His present research examines the construction of the Napoleonic fiscal-military state and its success as compared to the British fiscal-military state, 1803-1815. He currently teaches history and international relations at King's College London. Email: mark.hay@kcl.ac.uk.