The prize of neutrality
Welling, George Maria

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The Prize of Neutrality
Trade relations between Amsterdam and North America 1771-1817
a study in computational history

Proefschrift

ter verkrijging van het doctoraat in de
Letteren
aan de Rijksuniversiteit Groningen
op gezag van de
Rector Magnificus, dr. F. van der Woude
in het openbaar te verdedigen op
donderdag 25 juni 1998
des namiddags te 2.45 uur

door

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geboren op 25 augustus 1953
te Utrecht
Promotoren: prof. dr. ir. J. Nerbonne
            prof. dr. L. Noordegraaf
Preface

“First things first”, my father used to say. He was right. At the start of this research project in 1984 I never thought it would take me so long to get this job done. There are good reasons for this, but still it has been a burden on our family life. So I think it is only proper that I should express my gratitude towards my wife, Nelleke, and our children, Wouter, Ella, and Sophie first.

When I started this project I worked in a regular history department of the University of Amsterdam, but in 1987 I was invited to come to the Alfa-informatica department (computing in the Humanities) of the University of Groningen. There I was able to give form to my ideas about history and computing and slowly became a computational historian. This transformation left its traces in this book.

There are many people who deserve to be mentioned here. I owe a lot to Wim Heeres, who has been a great teacher and fine colleague to me. He discovered the Paalgeld portbooks and has advised me many times during these years. Professor Faber convinced me that this project was made for me. John Nerbonne and Leo Noordegraaf, my promotors, have been inspirational, critical, patient, and have managed to keep the faith that I would bring this to a good end.

Jos Rooijers opened my eyes for the possibilities of the computer for historical research some time around 1980 when we fooled around with his 16 Kb computer. It changed my views and it changed my career: I owe a lot to him. I thank Clé Lesger for his sharp remarks about the general historical chapters of this book. I tested out some of my ideas in conversations with Geurt Colenteur, Annemieke Galema, Marja Roholl, and Bert Jan Flim, and their remarks have been clarifying. Bert Bos and Erik Tjong Kim Sang helped me solve some of the programming problems I encountered.

Over the years numerous students have worked on parts of this research, but I would like to mention Pim Sturm and Antonie Reichenbach, who contributed many good ideas.

Three fine musicians have helped me input all the data: Hans van Straten, Flip de Regt and Kim Middel. We now know for sure that making music is much more fun than historical research. Also I would like to thank all the musicians of the bands I played in during this period: Small Change, de Kofferband, the Bits, and Heavy Klepto. They provided the necessary counterweight to science.

I also would like to thank all the colleagues of the departments I worked in: the department of Social and Economic History, and the department of Economic History of the University of Amsterdam, and the department of Alfa-informatica of the University of Groningen. Many members of the Association for History and Computing and of the Vereniging voor Geschiedenis en Informatica have helped me shape my views on History and Computing.

I would like to thank professor Johannes Postma for sharing some of his unpublished data with me and for being on the reading committee. I also would like to thank the other members of the reading committee professor Pim Kooij and professor Jan Oldervoll.

This book is dedicated to the memory of my parents.
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Printing out these data-sets would require several thousand pages and would not be very practical. Hence I have decided to provide the appendices in electronic form on the Internet, so that the data can be used immediately for other purposes. The URL for the index-page to the appendices is:

http://www.let.rug.nl/~welling/paalgeld/appendix.html

Copying for scientific and educational purposes is allowed, if proper reference is given. On demand I can make cd-rom versions of the appendices for cost-price: please contact me via e-mail: welling@let.rug.nl.

New datasets
(in dBase format or MS-Access)
1. Havenboeken van de heffing van het Paalgeld (European trade) 1742, 1771-1787
2. Havenboeken van de heffing van het Paalgeld (West Indian trade) 1742, 1771-1817
3. Monthly Accounts and Year accounts Paalgeld 1742, 1771-1817
4. Codebook Port names
5. Codebook Products
6. Monsterrollen en Cherte Partijen 1778
7. Vonnissen van Averij Grosse 1778
8. Incoming shipping according to the Ship tidings in the Nieuwe Amsteramsche Courant 1778
9. Bills of Lading 1778

(in HTML format)
1. Imports to Amsterdam 1742, 1771 - 1787 breakdown in Products. Source : Portbooks of the Levy of the Paalgeld
2. Imports to Amsterdam 1742, 1771 - 1787 Regional breakdown: estimated total value of the trade, total Paalgeld levy, and number of ships.
3. Import to Amsterdam 1742, 1771 - 1787 Product per region.

Machine readable versions of older datasets
(in dBase format or MS-Access)
1. Convoyen en Licenten (De Vries)
2. Ship Tidings (Oldewelt)
3. Imports to Amsterdam (Posthumus, Van Nierop, d’Alphonse)
4. Incoming shipping (Van Nierop)
5. General Lists (Generale Lijsten - Snapper)
6. Veilgeld (Oldewelt)

(in HTML format)
1. Imports and exports of the Kingdom of Holland (before 1806: the Batavian Republic) from: F.J.B. d’Alphonse, Appercu sur la Hollande
2. Shipping to and from the Netherlands. source: L. van Nierop : Amsterdam's scheepvaart in den Franschen tijd in : Jaarboek Amstelodamum 21 (1924),119-139

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