Sir William Temple, William III and the Balance of Power in Europe

Wouter Troost

Sir William Temple was the most important as well as the most interesting and the best documented of English ambassadors in the seventeenth century. He negotiated the Triple Alliance with John de Witt in order to prevent Louis XIV from conquering the Spanish Netherlands during the War of Devolution. The Triple Alliance and Temple’s first embassy to the Dutch Republic ended in failure as King Charles II negotiated the secret Treaty of Dover with Louis XIV (June 1670). When England and France attacked the Dutch Republic in 1672, Temple was in England. After the Peace of Westminster, concluded between England and the Republic in February 1674, Temple began his second embassy to the Republic. During his stay in the Netherlands (1674-1679) he cooperated closely with William III who had become stadholder in 1672. This account will deal with their efforts to contain France and maintain the balance of power in Europe.

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Wouter Troost, Ph.D (1983) in History, University of Leiden, is an independent scholar from the Netherlands. He has published extensively on Stadholder-King William III. His works include William III, The Stadholder-King, A Political Biography (Ashgate, 2005).
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