

REPORT ON THE FINCH MANUSCRIPTS

Volume V

General correspondence 1693, secret service papers 1691-1693,
and naval and military papers to 1694

Edited by Sonia P. Anderson



This volume completes the Historical Manuscripts Commission's Reports and Calendars Series begun in 1870 and, within that, the sub-series on the Finch manuscripts. It is one of the largest and most fascinating volumes in the whole series, particularly in respect of its international scope and its coverage of the secret service papers of this period. An exceptionally full introduction and index ensure that this volume can be used independently of its predecessors and that the papers here calendared can at last be fully understood in context.

The volume deals with three groups of papers in the archives of the Finch family of Burley-on-the-Hill, now on deposit in the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland.

- (1) General correspondence of Daniel Finch, 2nd Earl of Nottingham, as secretary of state to William and Mary from January to November 1693. This completes the calendar for his first administration. It covers naval and military reversals in the West Indies, at Landen and Charleroi, and off Portugal – the Smyrna fleet disaster, for which Nottingham took the blame. It includes both sides of his extensive correspondence with William Blathway as secretary at war in attendance on William III in the Low Countries, and full transcripts of the news bulletins enclosed by Blathway for recension in the *London Gazette*.
- (2) Nottingham's secret service papers for 1691-3. This little known collection, which occupies more than half the volume, consists mainly of transcripts made in Rotterdam, under the direction of the Huguenot theologian Pierre Jurieu, of spies' reports smuggled out of France in invisible ink or cipher. They are printed here in their original French, and described and set in context in the introduction. Naval intelligence from the French Channel and Atlantic ports had the highest priority, but Nottingham's agents also reported at length on the land war in Flanders, Piedmont and Catalonia, social and economic conditions in France, events at the court of Louis XIV, and the persecution of the Huguenots which had driven the agents themselves into the service of the Allies. Correspondence between Nottingham and Jurieu discusses recruiting and paying them. There are also reports from other Allied agents outside Jurieu's network.
- (3) Nottingham's naval and military papers to 1694. These are described in summary form in the text, with some amplification in the introduction.



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Volume V



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