CHAPTER 6

‘Dieu veuille que cette Paix soit de longue durée . . .’
*The History of the Congress and the Peace of Utrecht*
by Casimir Freschot

*Heinz Duchhardt*

In 1716, a five-hundred-page book, long considered for good reason the authoritative history of the Utrecht peace congress, was brought out, in octavo format, by the enterprising and important Utrecht publisher van Poolsum. It carried the Baroque title *Histoire du Congrès et de la Paix d’Utrecht, comme aussi de celle de Rastadt & de Bade contenant les particularitez les plus remarquables & les plus interessantes desdites Negotiations depuis leur premiere ouverture jusqu’à la conclusion de la Paix Generale,* which curiously referred to a ‘general peace’ never concluded.1 Rather, in line with the vernacular of the day, only a number of bilateral peace treaties were signed at the time.

Interestingly enough, little is known about the author of this book, embellished with an impressive frontispiece engraved by Jan Goeree and a title vignette. Scholars generally attribute the work—as also apparent from a handwritten note on the title page of the volume I used—to Casimir Freschot, who shortly after the publication of his *Histoire* authored a ‘scandal history’ of the Utrecht congress and also edited the congress proceedings, as far as they were accessible at the time. But who was this man? The research literature2 commonly refers to a Benedictine monk named Casimir Freschot, who according to his biographical dates—ca. 1640 to 1720—could be the author. This Freschot produced other publications that, for example, analysed the Viennese court and provided policy recommendations to the office holders involved in the War of the Spanish Succession. But is it really conceivable that a Protestant Utrecht publisher would have entrusted to an author shaped by the fierce anti-Protestantism of the Franche-Comté such an important and rather semi-official publication? It is for this reason that the article by Françoise Knopper-Gouron

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Figure 6.1  Title page of Histoire du Congrès et de la Paix d’Utrecht (Utrecht: G. van Poolsum, 1716), with an engraving by Jan Goeree.
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