Walter Morgan Wolff: an Elizabethan soldier and his maps*

In memoriam Helen Wallis

I. THE QUEST FOR AN ELUSIVE MAP DESIGNER

From 5 July 1601 to 22 September 1604, the town of Ostend in Flanders, held for the young Dutch Republic of the United Provinces by a mixed force of mainly Dutch and English soldiers, sustained a ferocious siege by the army of mainly Spaniards and Italians on behalf of the Archduke Albert of Austria who ruled the Southern Provinces under the supervision of Spain. Among the many sieges of this long drawn-out war that of Ostend became one of the most famous and also internationally most noted; it was celebrated in verse and prose in England, France and Germany as well as in the Netherlands and left its traces even in possible Shakespearean allusions.

The earliest reports were, like those of other events, sent as newsletters, distributed both in manuscript and in print. The first account in bookform however was published anonymously and without imprint in Germany in 1604 under

* It was Helen Wallis who hearing me talk about Wolff suggested I should write this article. A first draft of the text lay on her desk when she died. I am however equally under obligation for their interest and assistance to many friends inside and outside the British Library to whom it is my pleasure to extend my sincere thanks. Of course all speculation and any remaining errors are mine and mine only.

1 I am retaining the form Wolff as it is thus it appears in print the only time one of his known maps was printed at all, although its bearer seems not to have used it for his signature. I am greatly indebted for their assistance to the staff of the British Library's Map Library, Mrs P. Basing of the Department of Manuscripts and to Mr Gervase Hood of the Public Record Office.

2 Suzanne Ponjaert, The siege of Ostend (1601-1604) in English literature and in contemporary books and pamphlets (unpublished thesis, Rijksuniversiteit Gent, Faculteit der Letteren en Wijsbegeerte, Academiejaar 1972-3), pp. 117-8, refers to Twelfth Night, I, ii, 11-14 describing Viola's rescue from shipwreck as based on News from Ostend, a pamphlet published in 1601, a derivation previously pointed out by G.B. Harrison, Introducing Shakespeare (Harmondsworth 1966), pp. 160-1. On pp. 120-2 the same author discusses several lines in Hamlet, where she, and J. Dover Wilson in his The manuscript of Shakespeare's Hamlet (Cambridge 1934), vol. 1, pp. 30-1 before her, found allusions to Ostend, such as IV, iv, 17-66, of which I. 18, 'We go to gain a little patch of ground' may indeed contain a memory of Grotius's 'Area parva ducum,' and II. 64-5, 'Which is not tomb enough and continent To hide the slain' may echo the description in News from Ostend of Vere's occupation of a churchyard outside Ostend as well as the gruesome practice developed by the defenders of using bodies to help construct new ramparts.
the title Belägerung der Statt Ostende. The definitive version of this book appeared in three parts, of which parts 1 and 2 were intended for the Frankfurt Fair of the autumn of 1604, while part 3 only appeared at the following Easter Fair. While the title-page of each part bears an engraved illustration, parts 1 and 2 each also have an 'Appendix' consisting of engraved illustrations including maps.

But the work had an earlier issue, intended already for the Spring Fair of 1604. It consists of part 1 of the definitive version and its 'Appendix' only and has a different title-page reading Belägerung von Ostende. After expounding numerous facets of the book, promising narratives of sallies and assaults and other military matters, all based on the 'most trustworthy' writings sent from Ostend and faithfully 'translated from the Dutch,' the illustrations are mentioned, with special reference to a map of Ostend, 'ein schone Mappa von Ostende [...] neulich gezeichnet,' which Prince Maurice of Orange, commander-in-chief of the United Provinces, had sent to the Grand Duke of Tuscany, no less, who would then have been Ferdinand I. de' Medici.

Most of the illustrations are anonymous, but two maps in the second 'Appendix' bear the name of the well-known Dutch mapmaker Petrus Kaerius (Pieter van de Keere). Only one copy of the work in its definitive version is known to me, and that in private ownership, which contains a separate plate, i.e. not an integral part of the quires of either 'Appendix,' of what could be the Grand Duke of Tuscany's map of Ostend. Too large for even this large folio volume, it is folded and inserted between the final leaf of the text of part 1 and the title-page of the first 'Appendix.' It bears inscriptions in Latin and Dutch, but has had a strip attached below it with a key and other necessary text in German (illus. 1).

'WOLFF. INVENT: FLOR. BALT. SCVL.P. ET IMPRE:' [Wolff designer, Flor. Balt. engraver and printer], declares this great map of Ostend, on which are shown, in the centre, a view of Ostend as it was in April 1604; in the left top corner, a view as it was in July 1604 under attack from 'forty mines,' when it was greatly reduced and new fortifications were built along a much shorter line; and, in the right top corner, an enlarged view of the last-held part, often for obvious