The Remarkable Career of a ‘Most Rare Workman’

Johan van der Wyck (1623-1679), a Dutch-educated Military Engineer and Optical Practitioner

PART 1: In the Service of the Dutch Republic

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Dutch Traces at a Foreign Location

The Swedish Skokloster Castle, in the countryside between Stockholm and Uppsala, holds a treasure of historical artefacts from the seventeenth century: paintings, tapestries, weaponry, scientific instruments, books and other curiosities, most of which has been brought together by one of its former owners, the Swedish army commander-in-chief Carl Gustaf Wrangel (1613-1676). Among the many portraits in the castle is a large picture of one of Wrangel’s flag officers: the ‘Obrist’ Johan van der Wyck (1623-1679), a man of German noble decent, born near Münster, but educated in the Dutch Republic (Fig. 1).1

As recently has been discovered, Van der Wyck was one of the most prominent optical practitioners in the Netherlands in the early 1650s. He was for instance praised as ‘a most rare [optical] workman’ by Samuel Hartlib, one of the important ‘intellectual brokers of seventeenth century Europe’.2 In the years 1654-1657 Van der Wyck lived and worked as a military engineer in Delft. Today, 17th-century Delft is known especially for its Delftware and for a group of very successful painters, the ‘Delft School’, renowned for the usage in their paintings of various mathematical and optical novelties.3 This pictorial innovation started in – or shortly before – the year 1650, when the brewer-painter Gerard Houckgeest (c.1600-1661) introduced a new kind of perspective in the paintings of his church interiors, which required a good insight into geometry and optics.4 This innovative diagonal viewpoint inspired several others. Artisans such as Emanuel de Witte (1617-1692), Hendrick Cornelisz van Vliet (c.1612-1675), Carel Fabritius (1622-1654) followed this new direction in painting. A decade later other painters continued to experiment with perspective and other optical effects in their depiction of Delft interiors. Best-known examples are Pieter de Hooch (1629-1684), Johannes Vermeer (1632-1675) and Cornells Willemsz de Man (1621-1706).

Together with Marlise Rijks, I have discussed elsewhere the probable exchange of mathematical and optical knowledge between some Delft practitioners – among whom Johan van der Wyck – and some of these Delft painters.5 We also discussed how Van der Wyck made excellent telescopes, microscopes and other optical equipment, such as a camera obscura and a kind of perspective box. In the construction of the latter, he must have received assistance from at least one of Delft’s pictorial artists. This was an intriguing find, especially in view of the still ongoing discussion about Johannes Vermeer’s presumed use of optical aids in the process of composing his paintings.6 Since that publication, continued historical research has revealed much more about the life and career of this praised optical artist Van der Wyck. Below I will discuss his further career, and its implications for Van der Wyck’s optical work.

Youth

Johan van der Wyck was born in Germany, at Schloss Neuhaus near Osnabrück, in 1623, as ‘Johann von der Wyck’, the second son of Engelbert von der Wyck to Neuhaus (1593-1653) and his wife Clara von Nehem. This couple would produce 15 (!) children, of which four sons and eight daughters reached adulthood. The Von der Wyck family belonged to a group of ‘Münsterischen Erbmänner’, whose nobility had very ancient roots.7 The family lived already for many generations on Schloss Neuhaus. The new-born Johan was named after a famous relative, Johann von der Wyck (c.1480-1534), who had been one of the forerunners of the Reformation. Eventually, as Syndicus of Münster, he was decapitated after the conquest of this city by the army of Münster’s catholic bishop.8 After this horrific event the Van der Wyck family returned to the Catholic Church. At least two of Johan van der Wyck’s sisters lived as nun in a convent. According to a family rumour, noted down in the 18th century, Johan and his elder brother Adolph Heinrich broke with their family for religious reasons. It was said that they went to ‘foreign countries’, after their conversion to the Protestant faith. After that, their family never would have received any account of their whereabouts.9

After the departure from their native Neuhaus, both brothers chose for a military career: a rather typical choice for men of noble decent. The elder brother died already in 1643, in Antwerp, at the age of 25.10 Johan finally enlisted the army of the Calvinist Dutch Republic. He settled in Breda where he married, Johanna van Horne van Brouhese, a lady with a distinguished lineage.11

The Academy: Breda

In the cited paper Van der Wyck’s whereabouts before Delft were still shrouded in mystery.12 We could only pinpoint his arrival in Delft as close as ‘at some point between 1646 and October 1654’.13 However, by lucky coincidence, a rare pamphlet emerged in the Kongelige Bibliotek of Copenhagen, which publication reveals important details about Van der Wyck’s education in mathematics and optics.14 The pamphlet, Schutz-Schrift des hochedelgeboren gestrengen und mannhafften hernn h. Johan von der Wyck, was published in 1663, and contains several signed testimonies concerning Van der Wycks life. Later, I will discuss the backgrounds for the publication of this pamphlet. Of relevance here is, that the Schutz-Schrift reveals that in Breda Van der Wyck enrolled the Collegium Aureicum, belonging to the renowned Breda Illustrious School, founded and funded in 1646 by the Dutch stadtholder Frederik Hendrik, with the purpose to train
young men from the country’s elite for military and civil service. One of the three curators of this prestigious academy was Constantijn Huygens the elder, who sent three of his own sons (Christiaan, Lodewijk and Philips) to this academy. On the Breda campus students lived together with their professors, so their mutual interaction must have been close. One of these professors was the English mathematician John Pell (1611-1685), who served in Breda until 1652. Pell was very skilled in mathematics and optics. He was also one of the early investigators of the telescope. Pell’s influence on Van der Wyck must have been considerable, both in mathematics as in (practical) optics. Because the Schutz-Schrift declares with respect to Van der Wyck that:

He has spent his time mostly in search of the right heavenly mathematics, in such a way that he barely came out of his chamber (which he had filled with all kinds of artfully constructed instruments, which he mostly had made himself), to mingle with others in public.

Elsewhere the Schutz-Schrift presents a picture of Van der Wyck as a young man with “an art-loving mind”, very eager to learn about “the ingenuity of the army, the politics and all other sciences”. Most interesting is also the testimony of some of Van der Wyck’s friends from Breda, who had visited him afterwards in Delft. These friends were Henricus Bornius (1617-1675), professor of ethics and logic in Breda until 1653, and Abraham Dircksz Santvoort (†1669), a painter, engraver and trader in Delftware, who in 1653 changed his career to become a Calvinist minister. One of Santvoort’s copperplate etchings depicts a visit to Breda of Mary Stuart, the widow of the late Stadtholder Willem II, together with the young hereditary prince Willem III, in 1653. No doubt that this royal event has been witnessed by Van der Wyck and his spouse (Fig. 2).

Santvoort would also engrave the coat-of-arms of Van der Wyck’s ancestors for the Schutz-Schrift (Fig. 3). Another friend who signed the Breda testimony was Jan van Vliet (1622-1666), town registrar of Breda, who in 1641 obtained a degree in law at Leiden University, and stayed active as a scholar all his life. Van Vliet, also known as Janus Vlitius, is still remembered as one of the 17th-century pioneers of comparative philology, establishing Gothic as origin of the Germanic languages. In Breda Van Vliet became also friends with the Huygens brothers. One of his poems reflects this close friendship. Because of his excellent knowledge of the English language, father Constantijn Huygens requested him in 1651 to accompany his son Lodewijk Huygens as a tutor to – then revolutionary – England, as member of a diplomatic mission. Finally, Van der Wyck’s Schutz-Schrift was signed by three military officers from the Breda garrison: first Erasmus van Falckenhaen, the military commander; then George Lauder, captain, and finally Joannis Scola, lieutenant-colonel. Lauder and Scola are also known as poets. Summarizing all the statements, it is evident that during his stay in Breda, Van der Wyck was encircled by several persons with an inclination towards intellectual and artistic pursuits.

According to the Schutz-Schrift Van der Wyck matriculated in Breda in early 1650. Christiaan and Lodewijk Huygens had left the Collegium Aureum in August 1649, so Van der Wyck missed them as fellow students by only a few months. However, younger brother Philips Huygens continued his study at the Collegium Aureum, reason why Christiaan and his elder brother Constantijn had made their acquaintance with Van der Wyck, obtained during visits to their brother in Breda. This is obvious from a letter Constantijn Huy-
gens junior wrote to his brother Christiaan in August 1654. In this letter Constantijn informed Christiaan about a meeting he had with a small man ‘de vosstre connoissance’, who lived in Breda, and who was continuously busy to grind lenses for telescopes and microscopes. ‘For heavens sake, what is his name’, he added to his brother. After which Constantijn continued:

[This man] entrusteG me much of all he knew, and swore that with the lenses he made, one could see from Breda what time it was [at the church] in Dordrecht. He pulled out of his pocket a small spyglass for indoor usage, which was pretty nice, because we could read quite a small letter ten, or twelve paces away. But the problem was that the instrument was too large to be hidden in one’s hand. After I have seen his lenses in close up, I found that they are not polished that masterful. From his pockets, which resemble a store full of beautiful things, he also dug up a microscope, made as the one I have myself, but much heavier. However, its lenses were worth not a big thing. I told him about my invention of small steel mirrors, without revealing to him what he desired to know with all his heart. It is a good little man, honest and telling you all he knows.27

At that time, in the summer of 1654, the two Huygens brothers had not yet really started with what would become their great mutual passion: grinding high quality telescope lenses. Obviously, in spite of Constantijn’s critical remarks, Christiaan desired to learn more about Van der Wyck’s lens grinding techniques. So, the Huygens brothers ordered a set of lenses by Van der Wyck, with the result that at the end of October 1654, Van der Wyck travelled from Delft to The Hague, in order to deliver a parcel containing two telescope lenses to the Huygens’ mansion. The accompanying letter provides us with Van der Wyck’s first remaining autograph (Fig. 4).28

During the following year Huygens would discuss Van der Wyck’s work on several occasions with both his father and his brother Constantijn. Although Christiaan was sceptical about Van der Wyck’s abilities, he repeatedly urged his brother to investigate the microscopes of this Delft ‘polisher’ which showed ‘worms in the cream of milk, in flour and in the flesh of a hare’.29

The City: Delft

The new information, presented above, implicates that Van der Wyck moved to Delft between 24 August and 27 October 1654. This means that, most likely, his relocation was a direct consequence of the Delftse Donderslag (‘Delft thunderstrike’), a huge explosion of the gunpowder repository of the States Gener-

al on the 12th October 1654, which blew away a large part of Delft’s inner city. This disaster killed more than a hundred people, including the painter Carel Fabritius (Fig. 5).

Before the blast, Delft had been one of the most significant military places of the Dutch Republic. In 1572, shortly after the proclamation of the independence of the country, its supreme political organ, the States General, had selected Delft as the central place for the storage of their weaponry. This implicated that a gunpowder repository was built inside the city walls. It was this Secreet van Holland
('Holland’s secret’), a place of crucial importance for the military strength of the country, that had exploded. So, in October 1654 the reorganization of the country’s military logistics required a large military deployment in Delft, obviously including Van der Wyck. After the blast, the only remaining repository of the States General was the Generaliteits Magazijn, a former catholic chapel, sequestered by the government after the Reformation, along the Oude Delft, one of Delft’s main canals. So in the next years this building definitely was the base of Van der Wyck’s activities in Delft (Fig. 6).

By coincidence his new working place was very near to the workshop of the late Delft optician and early telescope maker Evert Harmansz Steenwijck31, who had died only shortly before, and whose children were seeking for a buyer of his goods.32 Whether or not Van der Wyck bought his optical tools is unknown, but a connection between the two opticians was laid by Lieuwe van Aitzema, a well-known Dutch diplomat. For one of his clients, the German Duke August of Braunschweig-Lüneburg (1579-1666), Aitzema collected not only political information, but he also searched for collectibles to supplement the Duke’s Kunstkammer in Wolfenbüttel.33

In this context, Aitzema had contacted the optician Steenwijck in 1650, with the request for a special telescope; to be more precise, Aitzema ordered for his German patron a walking cane with in it a hidden spyglass – (as far as I know the first of its kind to be recorded in literature), so this indeed was an interesting gadget.34 After the first contact with Van Steenwijck, things were not going as expected: ‘The man who makes telescopes in Delft is old and a bad liar, because he has repeatedly promised to deliver such a tube, but he does not keep his word’, a disappointed Aitzema wrote to his patron.35 This complaint was repeated several times, so it is unclear if the desired optical walking cane was ever delivered.36 At that time the optician Van Steenwijck was in his seventies. His wife had passed away not long before, and perhaps he was ailing himself, for he died in April 1654.37

When Aitzema heard this news a few months later, Van der Wyck already had appeared on the scene. To Aitzema’s good fortune, he could offer the Brunswick duke an alternative: ‘The telescope maker in Delft is dead. But there is another [man], who can make similar or the same [devices]. He is of noble descent, but nevertheless makes such works’.38 Interestingly, Aitzema found it worth noting that manual practice was rather unusual for people from the higher social strata.

Already in August 1655, Van der Wyck’s optical skills were also noticed across the North Sea. Van der Wyck had given a remarkable optical demonstration before an audience in The Hague. This event was reported to Samuel Hartlib, a man with a wide-ranging interest in all kinds of science-related subjects, especially technological innovation in optics, and very much aware of the role of the Dutch Republic as a hub of knowledge. In August 1655 Hartlib wrote in his Epemerides – a personal diary – about ‘an excellent Man at Delph in Optics and glass-grinding, who begins now to make some rare works’.39 Later he presented more details:

At [The] Haage now to bee performed by one paire of glasse in the window to represent and convey all the objects without upon the Streets upon the table in the middle of the roome. The inventor, as I take it, is Van der Wijcke, the Belgick Reeves at Delfe, who makes all manner of Tubes and Microscopes excelling those of Brabant. The Tubes bee fit to the sight of every ones age; [He is] a most rare Workeman.41

It is evident that Hartlib’s note describes some kind of projection device. More details of the optical devices made by this ‘most rare workeman’ are revealed in the archives of the Brunswick Duke. In January 1655 Van der Wyck had boasted to Van Aitzema, that he had already delivered some optical playthings with rhombic glasses to ‘a foreign king’, as well as to a rich Amsterdam merchant. But now he could offer Duke August something very special: a recently invented device, never seen before. It was an optical show-box, a kind of peepshow, in which the viewer could witness the alteration of the architectural setting of an Italian castello with a background of mountains, into a naval piece revealing ships and mast. Van der Wyck’s muddled Latin description does not mention the working mechanism of the device, but it probably involved a kind of perspective box with a semi-transparent mirror and alternate lighting.42 This description is a most interesting document, for the better-known perspective box emerged in the Netherlands in the late 1650s.43 Today only six of these mid-seventeenth-century perspective boxes have survived, but none with an illusionistic arrangement as described by Van der Wyck.44 But his devise evidently was a variant of such an apparatus, indicating that in building it he must have cooperated with at least one of the contemporary Delft painters. Van der Wyck’s remark to Aitzema that he only recently had invented the apparatus, even suggests that he was inspired by what he had seen and heard in Delft. It is suggested for instance, that Carel Fabritius’s View of Delft, painted in 1652, was intended for a perspective box.45 Although Fabritius died before Van der Wyck’s arrival in Delft, it seems more than probable that the inventive Van der Wyck incorporated ideas that circulated among Delft artisans into devices of his own design. This, again, stresses the importance of the city as a location of knowledge, facilitating and stimulating the exchange of ideas, skills and objects.

In my earlier article on the Delft opticians, I have pointed to the remarkable geographical proximity of various Delft practitioners. Not only was Van der Wyck’s repository (see Fig.

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Fig. 6 Drawing of the Generaliteits Magazijn in Delft, the base of Van der Wyck’s military activities (City archive Delft). The house at the left, at the other corner of the Nieuwstraat, was probably the workshop of the optician Evert Harmansz Steenwijck.
7, no. 1) adjacent (or nearly so) to the former workshop of the optician Evert van Steenwijck (fig. 7, no. 2), he was also very near to another go-between, the Delft notary, surveyor and surgeon Jacob Spoors (Fig. 7, no. 4). This remarkable man was literally in the centre of a group of persons operating in Delft with a relation of some sort to mathematics, optics, chemistry, medicine or painting. Originally trained as a surgeon, Spoors knew the basics of anatomy and medicine; as a surveyor he mastered practical mathematics; as a liefhebber (‘enthusiast’) he performed observations and experiments; as a botanist he had a tulip named after him; as an author he wrote about natural philosophy; as an editor he doubled the text of a judicial textbook (in 1642 and 1658); and as a poet, he mourned the death of the famous Delft legal scholar Hugo Grotius (in 1645). Spoors was also well connected with several Delft painters. He evidently was one of Delft’s prominent liefhebbers: a man well respected for his practical skills and theoretical knowledge. Spoors was also acquainted with the mathematical instrument maker Antony Sneewins, a logical connexion given the fact that Spoors also worked as a surveyor until an advanced age. In 1676 Spoors produced all measurements for a large wall map of Delft, the Kaart Figuratief, in the making of which he measured the height of one of the Delft churches together with the surveyor and later microscopist Anthony van Leeuwenhoek. All his life Spoors lived at the Oude Delft, close to Van der Wyck’s Generaliteits Magazijn; perhaps even closer to his lodgings (Fig. 7, no. 3). During Van der Wyck’s Delft years they evidently became friends, as is proven by the fact that Van der Wyck in 1675, after his retirement from the Swedish and Holstein armies, travelled to Delft, specifically to have Spoors drawn up a new last will. By then Van der Wyck and his wife had settled in a mansion in Noordwijk (near Leiden), so their choice for Spoors as their notary can only be explained as a gesture ‘for old times’ sake’.

When Van Aitzema, Huygens and Hartlib were aware of the remarkable optical products of Van der Wyck as Perspectivmacher zu Delft, it can be taken for granted that Spoors, living only a few yards away, also knew of Van der Wyck’s optical achievements. Perhaps it was even Spoors who introduced Van der Wyck into the perspective box, or introduced him to his acquaintance, the painter Pieter de Hooch. Although archival or pictorial evidence is wanting, these guesses seem plausible. Was it indeed the (then) 26-year old Pieter de Hooch who assisted in Van der Wyck’s project? He lived nearby (Fig. 7, no. 5) and was more-or-less of the same age as the (then) 32-year old Van der Wyck. Interestingly, De Hooch is renowned for his ‘box-like...

Fig. 7 Fragment of the ‘Kaart Figuratief’, a map of Delft, composed in the years 1675-1677 by the surveyor Jacob Spoors:

1. Military repository, the Generaliteits Magazijn, the headquarters of the military engineer Johan van der Wyck during his stay in Delft [1654-1657].
2. Probable optical workshop of the late Evert Harmansz Steenwijck (†1654).
3. House of Catharina Noté, daughter of an army officer. In 1680 she was the only Delft heir of Van der Wyck. So it is an educated guess that in the years 1654-1657 he and his wife resided in her house.
4. Residence of Jacob Spoors from 1650 until his death in 1677. Spoors was surgeon, surveyor and public notary; most likely he was a go-between several Delft artisans.
5. Probable residence of the painter Pieter de Hooch in the years 1652-1660.
6. Residence of the microscopist Anthony van Leeuwenhoek from 1654 until his death in 1723.
7. Studio of the painter Johannes Vermeer from 1653 until his death in 1676.
chamber views’ and his experiments with optical effects in his paintings.53 But there are also other candidates. Van der Wyck’s friend Abraham Santvoort, for instance, who in 1663 declared to have visited Van der Wyck several times in Delft.54 It seems unlikely that Johannes Vermeer (Fig. 7, no. 7), who entered the St. Luke Guild on 29 December 1653, cooperated with Van der Wyck, although it is tempting to think that Vermeer witnessed a demonstration of Van der Wyck’s optical devices of a nature described by Hartlib. At such an optical performance, Vermeer could even have had company of the then still unknown Leeuwenhoek, who had returned to Delft that very year, settling close to the repository (Fig. 7, no. 6). At least Leeuwenhoek was in the neighbourhood when Van der Wyck made his Delft telescopes and microscopes, praised by Hartlib as ‘excel ling those of Brabant’.55 Was Spoors perhaps their go-between? Unfortunately, we only can say that Spoors knew both stakeholders very well.56

Be this as it may, in June 1655 Aitzema paid the Nobilis optici zu Delfft a complete sum of 310 ‘Reichsthaler’ for a rare piece of this optical equipment, on which Van der Wyck had worked for twelve weeks.57 Van der Wyck received the order in spite of the fact that the descriptions he had send to the Brunswick duke were not understandable to Johannes Wiesel, who in 1663 declared to have visited the optician and received the order in spite of the fact that the decision of the then unknown Leeuwenhoek, who had returned to Delft that very year, settling close to the repository (Fig. 7, no. 6). At least Leeuwenhoek was in the neighbourhood when Van der Wyck made his Delft telescopes and microscopes, praised by Hartlib as ‘excelling those of Brabant’.55 Was Spoors perhaps their go-between? Unfortunately, we only can say that Spoors knew both stakeholders very well.56

Notes and References
1. An engraved portrait, with the Van der Wyck coat-of-arms and the legend: “Joan von der Wyck, S. Reg. Majestatis Regorum. Sue ciae per Germaniae Provincias et Exercitum Artiglerie Summus Tribunos” is mentioned in De Navarescher (1853), p. 315. Unfortunately, I have not been able to find this engraving.
6. For an overview, see: Philip Steadman, Vermeer’s Camera. Uncovering the Truth behind Vermeer’s Last Optical Projects in Delft. Soon afterwards he would enter the service of the Swedish crown.

To be continued as Part 2 ‘In the Service of the Swedish King and the Duke of Schleswig-Holstein-Gottorp’ in the December issue.

Oer, 87 years of age, since 1730 widow of Johann Anastasius van der Wyck tot Neuhaus (c. 1670–1730), son of Johan van der Wyck’s younger brother Conrad Lucas van der Wyck (1624–1707). She declared ‘van wijlen haar gemaal, verscheidene malen gehoord te hebben, dat in het begin van het XVIIe eeuw, en om den tyd van den aanvang des diert jaren oorlogs, twee Ridderbooritge, op het Goed Neuhaus geboorene, Adelyke zoonen, wier doopnamen zy thans niet weet, om het aanne men van het Protestantsch geloof, dat toen ter tyd in het ampt Reckenberg gehaast en vervolgd wierd, zig van hunne gemelde Adelyke geboorteplaats en naar vreemde Landen be geveeven hadden, zonder dat ooit van de plaats van hun verblyf naarting ingekoomen was, of gezeide wylen haar gemaal, zyn vader of grootvader daar van eenige kennis bekomen hadden’. Nieuwe Nederlandsche Jaarboeckten 10.2 (1775), pp. 1036-1037. Indeed, it is striking that after the death of father Engelbert von der Wyck, in 1653, it was the third son Conrad Lucas van der Wyck who accepted the inheritance for himself, his younger brother Heinrich Otto, and his eight sisters. Evidently at that time the two older siblings were regarded as being dead; see W. de Morees, Het Mün sterse geslacht Van der Wyck (s’Gravenhage: [n.publ.], 1911), pp. 41–42, 44, 138.


13. Van der Wyck is not mentioned in the long file of customers (in 1646) of the Delft brewery of Isaac Elsevier, whereas the optician Evert Harmansz Steenwyck and one of his younger brother Heinrich Otto, and his eight sisters. Evidently at that time the two older siblings were regarded as being dead; see W. de Morees, Het Mün sterse geslacht Van der Wyck (s’Gravenhage: [n.publ.], 1911), pp. 41–42, 44, 138.


13. Van der Wyck is not mentioned in the long file of customers (in 1646) of the Delft brewery of Isaac Elsevier, whereas the optician Evert Harmansz Steenwyck and one of Van der Wyck’s closest friends (Eleazar Loewen, a Jewish Frenchman) was subject to discussion, but eventually the decision of the then unknown Leeuwenhoek, who had returned to Delft that very year, settling close to the repository (Fig. 7, no. 6). At least Leeuwenhoek was in the neighbourhood when Van der Wyck made his Delft telescopes and microscopes, praised by Hartlib as ‘excelling those of Brabant’.

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16. Lodewijk Huygens was forced to leave the Breda Academy in 1649, after getting involved in a duel. His brother Christiana also left at that occasion. Only Philip Huygens stayed until c. 1651.


19. 'Er hat aber seine Zeit meistens in durch- suchung der recht himmlischen Mathematique zugebracht, so dasz er kaum ausz seiner Kamm- mer (die er von allerhand kunstlichen von un ihm selbst verfertigten Instrumenten angeful- let) in öffentliche Versamlung unter Leute ge- hiitte, verhope dat het VE. deinen sall,' Schutz-Schrift, p. [4].


23. Jan van Vliet was a nephew of Jacob Cats, the *Raadpensionaris* (prime minister) of the Dutch Republic. As this uncle he was a staunch Calvinist. As former student of the great Leiden classicist Daniel Heinsius, Van Vliet remained good friends with his son, the librarian-diplomat Nicolaas Heinsius, main- taining a long lasting mutual correspondence. A collection of 55 letters exchanged between Heinsius and Vlietius is printed in: Pieter Bur- man, ed., Sylloges epistolarium a viris illustri- bus scriptarum, Vol. 3 [Janus Vlietius] (Leiden, 1727). See also Cornelis Dekker, *The Origins of Old Germanic Studies in the Low Countries* (Leiden / Boston, 1999), chapter 2.

24. Van Vliet also composed a poem at the occasion of the visit, in 1653, of the Stadt- holderly family, which poem was printed to- gether with an allegoric illustration made by Santvoort. See: J. van Vliet, *The masses wel- com to theyr Highnesses the Royal Princes Mary and the hopefull Prince William Herry, at theyr Highnesses Entrie in Breda, the 10th June 1653* (Rijksmuseum). Van Vliet and Santvoort worked often together. In 1664 they also issued the *Bredaesche Almanac*. Van Vliet made other Odes for Christina, former Queen of Sweden, and for his friend Henricus Bornius, when he left the Breda Academy. Cf. Dekker, *Origins of Old Germanic Studies*, p. 81, 148. Sassen, *Levensberichten*, p. 143; Huygens, Œuvres complètes, letter no. 521, d.d. 28 September 1658.


26. In 1649 Joannes Scoda made a poem for the disputation of the Polish student J. Wylam Kaliszanzy. Cf. Kot, 'Polen In Breda', p. 107. Especially Lauder, a Scottish royalist in exile, had a reputation as author of several Latin poems. In 1666, for instance, after Van Vliet's death, Lauder composed an epitaph on him, entitled *Tumulus viri incomparabili Jani Vlietii syndici Bredani* (Breda, 1666); see Dekker, *Origins of Old Germanic Studies* p. 60note. Lauder is called 'Count of Norwich' by the Delft notary Dirck de Haen (Oude Delft no. 120). Therefore, he must have been at hand whenever they needed a witness. This means Evert Harmansz rented a house very nearby. De Haen's house at the corner of the Nieuwstraat (a double house) was owned later by five children Steenwijck, who sold it in 1736. (Cf. Delft Archive, Huizenprotocol, fol. 380, 782, 924).

27. In April 1654 Evert Harmansz's heirs were commissioned to sell his goods. (Notary Johan van Ophoven, Delft, 28 April 1654). Deed partly printed in A. Bredius, 'De schil- ders Pieter en Harmen Steenwijck', *Oud Hol- mit in 1736. (Cf. Delft Archive, Huizenprotocol, fol. 380, 782, 924).


29. To my knowledge this is the first men- tion of such a device: 'tubus optricens (oder perspective), pour servir aussij de baston [= baton]'. In the 18th century walking canes with a hidden spyglass became rather com- mon. Cf. Lieuwe van Aitzema to the Duke of Braunschweig-Lüneburg, undated [March 1650, according to the letter's con- tent] (Hertzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel, 82 Novi, fol. 395: post scriptum). Courty- esy to Marika Keblusek, for her generosity of providing me with her notes from the Aitzema
correspondence.

35. Van Aitzema to Duke August, undated [1650, according to the letter’s content] HAB MS 82 Novi, fol. 405.

36. HAB MS 82 Novi, fol. 404 & 407.

37. Evert Harmansz Steenwijck ‘brillenmaker’ was buried in Delft in the Old Church on 23 April 1654. His wife Annetgen Pieters Bailly had preceded him into the grave six years earlier, on 8 February 1648.


42. Van der Wyck to Van Aitzema, 31 May 1655 (HAB 376 Novi fol.9r-9v). Courtesy to Leo Nellisen for the translation from the Latin.


47. Zuidervaart and Rijks, ‘Most rare workmen’ (note 5), p. 74-76.

48. In 1648 Anthonij Sneewins was an ‘oor- losymaecker’ (watch maker) at the Buikwa- tersloot in Delft. Shortly afterwards he started also making mathematical instruments. In 1656 he called himself a ‘mathematical instru- ment maker’. He executed deeds before Jacob Spoors on 16 March 1656; 24 Janu- ary 1659; 11 November 1660 and 10 January 1676. (ONA Delft).

49. H.L. Houtzager [et al], De Kaart Figura- tief van Delft (Rijswijk, 1997).

50. Johan van der Wyck and his wife Johanna Van Hoorn van Brouhese probably rented lodgings in the house of Catharina Noté (1622-1682), daughter of Samuel Noté (d. 1648), ‘kwartiermeester-general’ of the caval- airy. In 1680 she was the only Delft heir of the Van der Wyck-couple. With her sister Lowi- jsa (1633-1658), Catharina Noté lived at the Oude Delft across the Boterbrug, where the unmarried sisters had a shop. (NA Den Haag, Notary Van Adrichem, 3 April 1680; Notary Van Deuteron, 20 June 1680).

51. OCA Delft, 1681, fol. 51, 5 June 1675.


54. Other Delft painters likely to have con- tributed to a perspective box are Leonaert Bramer (59 years of age in 1655) and the then 44-years old Hendrick Cornelis van Vliet. Anthonie Palamedesz (1601-1673) is also an interesting candidate. He is well known for his paintings of military men, and in one of his paintings he even depicted a telescope CF. Zuidervaart and Rijks, ‘Most rare workmen’ (note 5), pp. 70-72.

55. In 1653 Anthony van Leeuwenhoek bought the house, called ‘Het Gouden Hooft’ (The Golden Head) at the corner of the Nieuwstraat and the Hypolytusburcht. [Nieuwstraat 16 = 034C151]. He lived here the rest of his life.

56. Vermeer’s mother in law, Maria Thins, used Jacob Spoors as her notary on 15 July 1649 and 31 March 1674. The last deed was co-signed by ‘Sr. Johannis Vermeer, Mr. Schilder’. Cf. J.M. Montias, ‘Vermeer and his milieu. Conclusions of an archival study’, Oud Holland, 94 (1980), pp. 50, 62.

57. Duke August to Van Aitzema, The Hague, 16 June 1655. HAB 376 Novi, fol. 6r-8v, printed in Keil, Ocularien (note 52), pp. 186-187. The price of a telescope was 80 “Reich- sthaler”.


59. Van Aitzema to Duke August: [undated], ‘Le maître a Delft a la reputation de le faire les mieux, mais il fait a chacun selon son prix’. HAB MS 82 Novi, fol. 202vs.

60. A hardly readable German translation of a lost Latin description of Van der Wyck’s two Brunswick telescopes, is preserved in: HAB 83 extrav., fol. 413r-413v [29 January 1655]. See for the dispatch of the piece d’art HAB MS 82 Novi, fols 253 (undated, but according to the content May 1656).


62. Van der Wijck to Van Aitzema, 31 May 1655 (HAB 376 Novi fol.9r-9v).

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