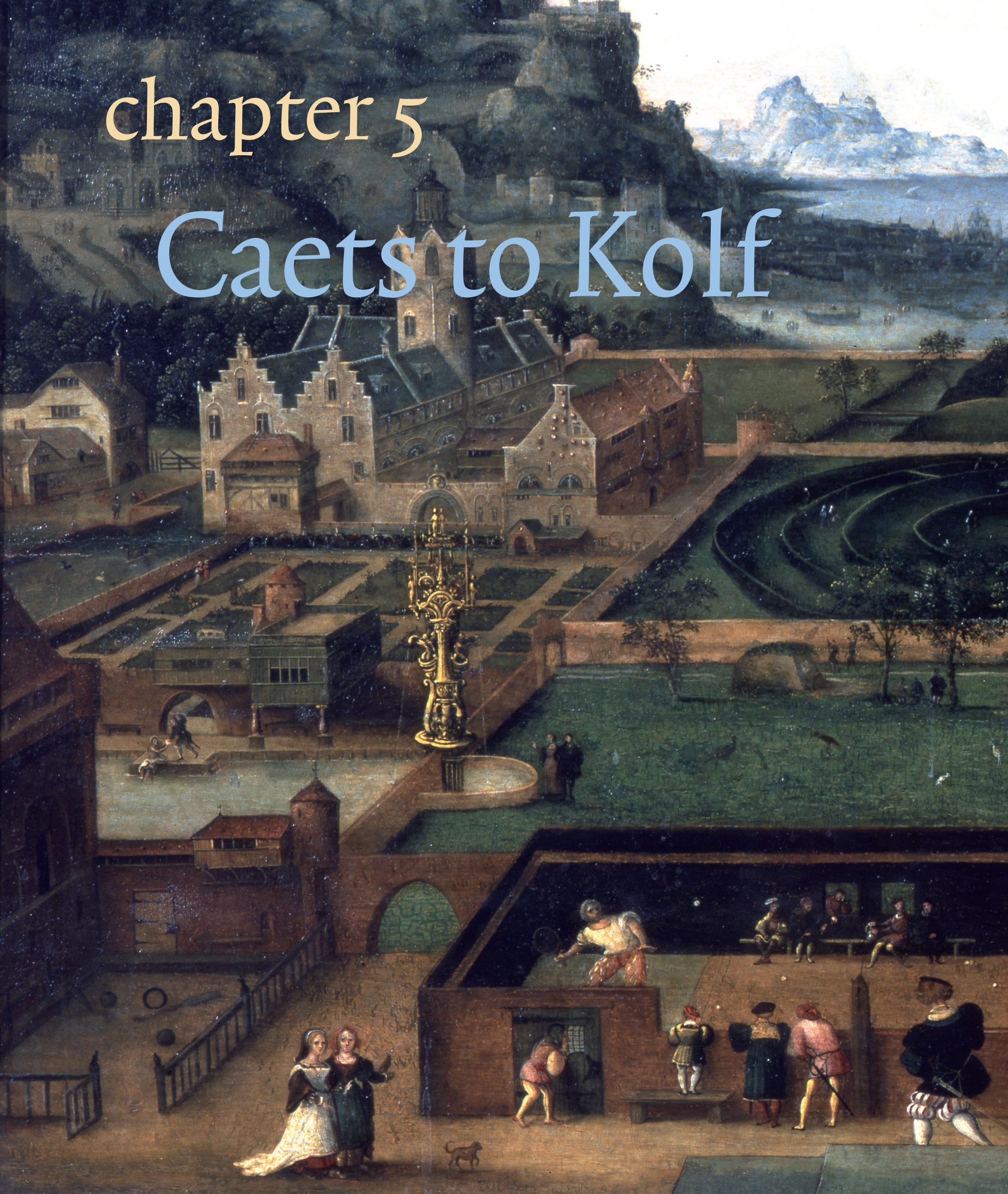


# chapter 5

# Caets to Kolf







DAVIDE VIRO BAI  
SABIA ABILLI  
COLLEGIUM  
AB HOSTIBUS  
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PRELII MORTU  
ANNO 15...



# Caets to kolf

Caets, or the ancient game of caets played in the Low Countries, is considered an important forerunner of the modern game of tennis or lawn tennis.

During the Golden Age of the Netherlands in the seventeenth century, the many caets enthusiasts could play on one of the hundreds of open or closed courts, a 'caetsbaen', available to them.



Portrait of Luigi Gonzaga at the age of 6 years

Caets and kolf were probably the most popular games of that time. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, both caets and kolf had fallen into decline. A different newer game of kolf replaced the old game of kolf. Usually it was played under roof coverage or indoors, in an enclosed limited space, in a way similar to the rules of caets based on scoring a 'chase'. In the province of Friesland in the Netherlands to this day they still play the traditional game of 'kaats'. The game has many similarities with the earliest form of caets in the Low Countries or with the open field game 'jeu de longue paume' in France. However, the caets game referred to here is the popular game played in an enclosed court, de 'caetsbaen' in the Low Countries, initially also referred to as 'teney's'. In English this game was referred to as 'tennis' but strangely in French the terminology 'jeu de paume' remained in fashion until the modern game of lawn tennis was introduced in the late nineteenth century.

Modern or lawn tennis known today has an exact starting date: 23rd February 1874, when Major Walter Clopton Wingfield obtained the patent for his invention, *A New and Improved and Portable Court for Playing the Ancient Game of Tennis*. It replaced the older game, traditionally played in enclosed courts and from then on being termed 'real tennis'. Real tennis is still played today, although rarely.

We can trace the origins of the early game of caets or teney's back to Renaissance Italy, France and the Burgundy Netherlands or the Low Countries. Culturally, there was a close connection between the southern Low Countries and the regions of northern France as they shared many common customs, traditions and a common language. After the northern Low Coun-

tries seceded, new features were added to the game. 'Caets' or 'teney's' very much continued to be a favourite pastime of the aristocracy but a new breed of upcoming wealthy merchants developed their own tastes and preferences. Now 'kolf' became their game to play.

It is interesting to note how many present day terms in tennis stem from either French or Dutch words, or from expressions used in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in the game of caets. A common belief is the English word tennis itself derived from the French expression 'tenez', meaning hold on, or look out for the ball. However, the French themselves never referred to the ancient game as 'tennis' but always as 'jeu de paume' as it is played to this day.

An important number in the Middle Ages was 60. It was an easily devisable number (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 12, 15, 20, 30) and therefore used for all sorts of measurements (time, weight, distance, etc.). In caets, each stroke won gained 15 points as still today and one needed to win four strokes: 15, 30, 45 and 60. The 5 in 45 was later dropped and 60 replaced by 'game'. Each game had to be won by two strokes difference, in old French 'deos' or 'deux', leading to the expression of duce, meaning 'deux a jouer', two strokes to be played. The basis of the word racket is caets, itself derives from the French word 'chasser', meaning to chase or hit forward. The prefix 're-' is added to express the return element of the action. Normally the hand protected by a glove returned the ball. Later a short bowed wooden piece with gut strings replaced the glove. This instrument became known as a 'rackett', literally meaning to hit back or 'recaetsen'. In Dutch to this day the expression exists: 'wie kaats moet de bal verwachten' [who plays caets should expect the return

ball]. The equivalent English expression is, 'those who play at bowls must look for rubs', a different game but the same intent.

The word set derives from the Dutch expression 'inzet', meaning the stakes played for at the game. Usually, players wagered large sums of money. In a sixteenth century writing John Florio is quoted as saying: 'Will you play in set, here is my monie, now stake you.' The prefix 'in-' disappeared and set remained.

The word love, often mistakenly referred to as being derived from the French word 'l'oeuf' meaning egg and symbolising a rounded zero, is actually based on the Dutch word 'loff'. If one did not play for an 'inzet', he would play 'omme loff', for the honour and therefore for nothing. 'Loff' and 'nothing' became synonymous and used in the game to represent zero points.

In thirteenth century France, it was mainly the clergy who played jeu de paume, in the enclosed courtyards of cloisters. Later the game would expand outside the cloister walls to the open streets although the main elements of the game – the roof and gallery – remained.

Ball games were hugely popular and caets expanded to the north in the Low Countries and England. In the Low Countries, the game known as caets became the most popular ball game in the fourteenth and fifteenth century. This is shown by the many town council decrees banning the game from the streets, such as in Rotterdam: 'verbiet...caets of teneyset op die strate.' [forbid...caets or tennis on the streets]. The

*Village of Donpière in Description de Hainaut (1598), by Adrien de Montigny of Valenciennes*





LE VILLAGÉ DE  
DONPIÈRE



game plainly was a nuisance, not only because of the damage to people and property but also because the game would always involve betting large sums of money leading to brawls in the streets and inevitable arrests.

Games were an essential part of social life in and around pubs and taverns. Innkeepers actively promoted them to encourage consumption of liquor and food. It became a game of the ordinary people too. A well-documented script of Jan van den Berghe of Brugge, *Dat Caetspel Ghemoraliseert* (1431) describes how to play the game of caets.

In royal and aristocratic circles *jeu de paume* (or *jeu de court paume*) and the game of caets became the game of choice in France and the Low Countries. The close social and political ties between France and England ensured the English royals and aristocrats followed suit.

Initially, it was a game played with the hand. Gradually, with the introduction of the racket and the increased speed of the ball, the game further popularized. This of course also led to more danger to the

ordinary citizen and to smashed windows. In 1531, we see the city council of Amsterdam banned the play with rackets imposing monetary fines: ‘...met raketten te caetsen, op strafe van 1 schelling Vlaams...’ [...to play caets with rackets at the penalty of one Flemish shilling...].

The game of caets became more and more restricted to specially designated, enclosed courts of dimensions that gradually became standardised. The characteristic rooftop and open gallery on the side and closed walls on the other remained special features of the game. Caetsbanen by the end of the sixteenth century had become indoor courts game. However, the outside game, *jeu de longue paume* or ‘*boerenkaats*’ as it became known, would continue moderately as a game played by the ordinary man in the street as a hand and ball game. In the densely populated northern Provinces of Holland and Utrecht, there were a couple of hundred caetsbanen and the game of caets had become the most favoured game of the well-to do and wealthy burgher class of the Low Countries. In Antwerp alone, there were around thirty courts.

It was a real masculine game needing strength, endurance and skill. People saw it as a healthy recreation, good for the body and mind of the youth. Even the great Dutch scholar Desiderius Erasmus in his *Colloquia* of 1522 would point out the importance of ball games (*Pila*) and a trained body for a healthy mind: ‘*Mens sana in corpore sano*’. Pieter van Afferden, senior master at the Great Latin School in Amsterdam, would use day-to-day expressions of the games of caets and colf in his Latin exercise book *Tyrocinium linuae Latinae* of 1552.

At this time, usually teams of three players played the game with the hand but the racket had already made inroads. In addition, a fringed cord was introduced to separate the two sides over which the ball needed to be hit.

Balls used for the game of caets were similar to the type of balls used for colf, leather balls filled with animal hair. Softer balls were made for the hand game and harder ones for the racket game.

Ball making had become an attractive and profitable craft with the ‘*maitre-paumiers*’ of Paris leading the



Students of Padua University playing tennis (c1610)





King Henry VIII of England, by Hans Holbein the Younger (Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica)

way. In the Low Countries ball making was concentrated in Brabant, in the towns of Tilburg, Goirle and Bergen op Zoom in the fifteenth century. This local industry would last until the late nineteenth century when the rubber ball took over in popularity and forced the last 'ballenfrutters' to close shop for good in Goirle.

Balls were made in all sizes depending on the use and the region. Later, with the growth of indoor courts in the larger towns and cities of Holland, such as Delft and Leiden, 'caetsmeesters' commercially exploited courts. They set up their own guilds for ball making and negotiated commercial contracts with the traditional ball makers of Brabant to protect their own caets business.

The use of the racket had now become common practice among the many royals and nobles playing this ancient game of caets or jeu de paume in Europe. This increased the possibilities of manoeuvring the ball and adjusting the speed. The first rackets were rather short but lengthened overtime with the realisation that speed could be increased even more. Rackets were normally made of bent strips of ash wood. In archives, no suggestions have been found of a racket maker's guild in the Low Countries. This leads to the conclusion that the number of racket makers was small and that they could therefore easily control the trade as did the Noblet family of racket makers in Amsterdam. Alternatively,

cabinet-makers, joiners and carpenters would have the tools and technique to make rackets. The strings of the racket were gut-string, also referred to as 'catgut'. This English word is a prime example of folk etymology as the word catgut comes from the Dutch word 'caets-darm', in other words gut used for a 'caetsrinket', a tennis racket. The gut used for stringing rackets was normally that of sheep and definitely not cats. Catgut in modern English/Dutch dictionaries is translated back into Dutch as 'kattendarm', indeed literally meaning the gut of cats, to make the confusion complete.

Courts of the ancient game of caets, jeu de paume, tennis (or giuocco della corda in Italian, meaning game with the cord) consisted of four walls and three roofed galleries on the side. Smaller courts would be limited to two roofed galleries. The gallery on the long side and short sides were open and intended for spectators. Usually the wall on the other long side would have an angled indent, the 'tambour', creating an extra hazard for the game. The second short wall would also have an opening, the 'grille', used for scoring. The roof slope was used for the first shot served in the game. A caets or chase scored with the second bounce of the ball hit as deep as possible.

History records show that jeu de paume was the most popular game of French royals and citizens alike. Paris alone counted more than two hundred courts in the sixteenth century. Most courts were open-air courts. In England, tennis was a game for the nobility, played in the castles and palaces of the Tudors. King Henry VIII was known to have been a most ardent player, impressing his many guests with his physical strength and skills at the game of tennis and waging large sums of money on the outcome of a contest. Henry even invited the Emperor Charles V to a game. The father of Charles V, the mightiest monarch of Europe, was Philips the Good, an early enthusiast of the game.

"... on Saturday the Kyng and the Emperor played at tennice at the Bayne, against the princes of Orenge ...." This was before William ('the Silent') van Nassau-Dillenburg inherited this Burgundian title from his cousin René of Chalon in 1544 to become Prince William I of Orange, 'Vader des Vaderlands' of the Republic.

Henry VIII built his most famous "Tennys-playe" court in the newly built splendid Hampton Court Palace. There to this day, at The Royal Court of Tennis, they still play the game of real tennis.

In London, the early game of tennis was promoted as a game for the young elite and 'to keep a tennis court in the city for the recreation of the young lords, knights, gentlemen and merchants'. This was pre-eminently the favoured game of gentlemen students at the famous Universities of Cambridge and Oxford. In the Low Countries, the game of caets or tennis

would follow a similar pattern in the sixteenth century, at a time when the nobility led the revolt against the Spanish domination. It is worth mentioning that an early leader of the 'Geuzen' rebellion was Henry of Brederode, one of the wealthiest nobles of Holland and known for his hot-headedness.

He owned many estates and castles such as Brederode in Santpoort and Huis ter Kleef in neighbouring Haarlem. Here he had his caetsbaen for the game he greatly loved and in which he excelled. The Huis ter Kleef caetsbaan still stands today in Haarlem and may soon be restored to its original purpose as a caetsbaen, thereby making it the first modern day real tennis court in the Netherlands.

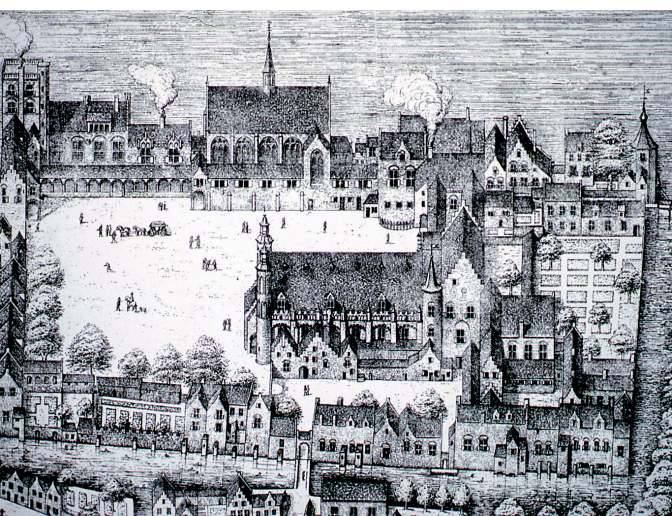
William of Orange was known to be an avid player of the early game of caets or tennis too. He had grown up at the royal court of Brabant in Brussels under the tutorship of his uncle, Emperor Charles V, where he learnt to play the game. He had at his disposal a caetsbaen at the residential court in The Hague at the Binnenhof, an enclosed court connected to the Raadsael, and one at his castle in Breda. The Prinsenhof Castle in Arnhem was known to have the first closed caetsbaen of the northern Low Countries.

The sons of the murdered Prince William I of Orange, Maurits and Frederik Hendrik, were consecutive

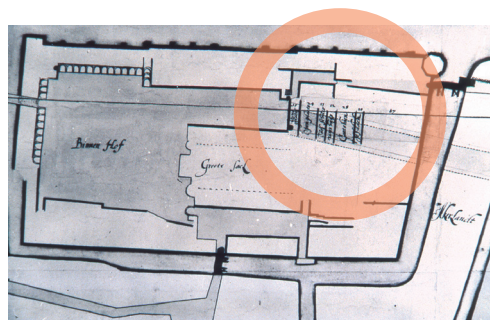


William of Orange (c1579), by Adriaen Thomas Key (Rijksmuseum Amsterdam)





The Binnenhof in The Hague (1616), after Bos and Van Harn



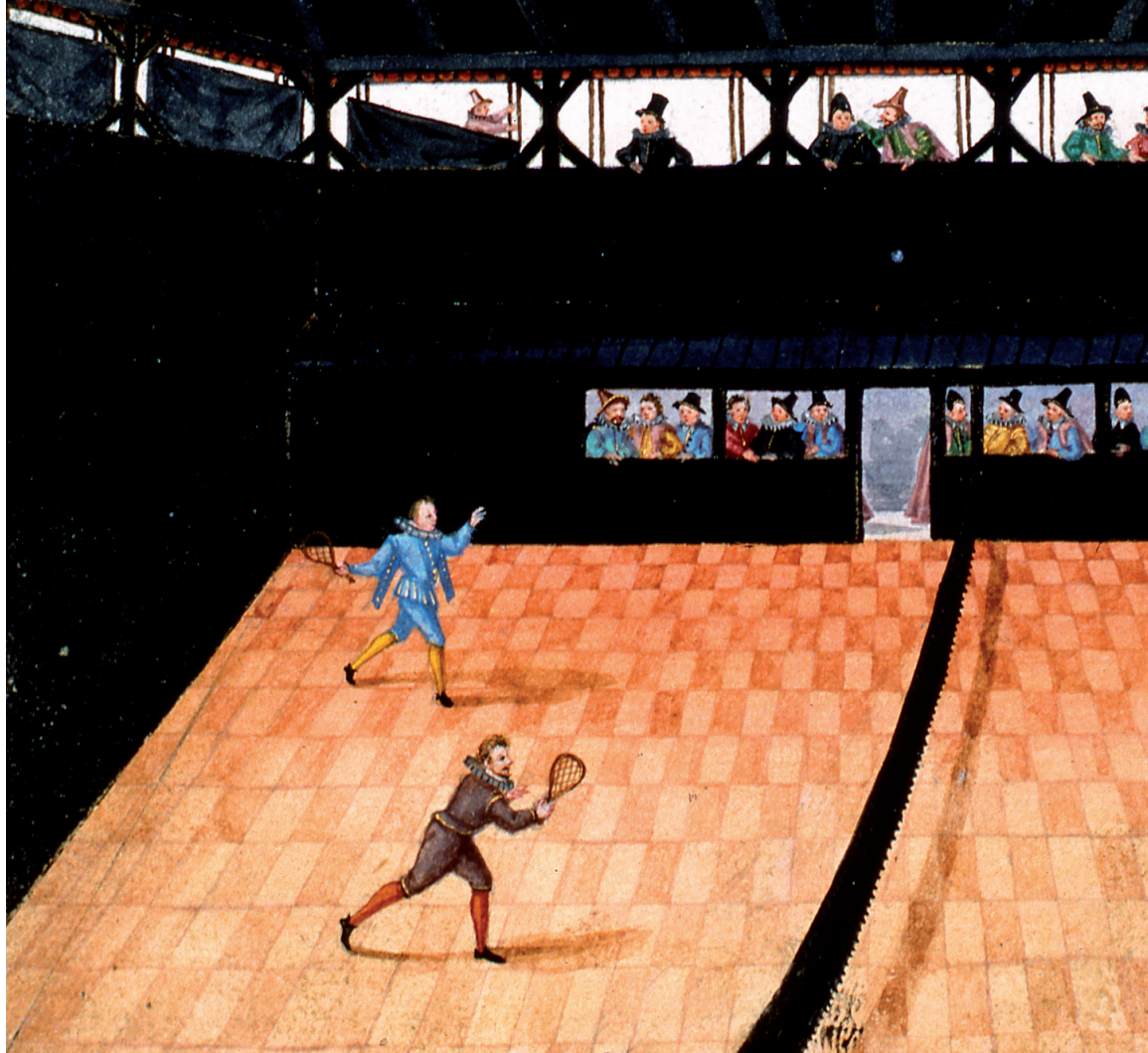
The Caetsbaen behind the Groot Saal of The Binnenhof (1633)

Princes of Orange and Stadtholders of the Republic of United Provinces of the Netherlands. They were the leading political and military opponents of the Spanish King Philip II in the struggle for independence of the Northern Provinces of the Low Countries during the Eighty Year War. Allegorically, poems dedicated to the glorious revolt against Catholic oppression, as in the city of Groningen, often referred to the game of caets:

“Daer maecken wy, een caetsbaen vry,  
Van twaalf schoone partueren,  
Ballen op d’zy, syn cruyt daer by,  
Dat moesten sy besueren,  
Papou rebel, verloor het spel...”

Freely translated: In a game of caets, those papist rebels were beaten with balls and powder in twelve straight games.

The House of Orange-Nassau in the Low Countries had formed close ties with the Stuart House of Scotland. King James VI of Scotland, after the death of Queen Elizabeth I in 1603, had inherited the English crown as King James I of England. He had several tennis courts at his disposal at the various royal pal-



Ballhouse of the Collegium Illustre, Tübingen from the Stammbuch of Duke August the Younger of Brunswick Lüneburg (Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel)

aces in London, where he had set up his royal court. In his written work *Basilicon Doron*, he proved to be a didactic promoter of physical exercise in ‘playing at caitche or tennis’ to enable a healthy body to fulfil properly the royal duties of kings and princes. In Scotland the game of tennis was referred to a ‘caitché’ or ‘caitchpul’ derived from the Dutch word caets; ‘-pul’ in this context refers to the word ball. His eldest son Henry Frederick, Prince of Wales, would occasionally meet and play caets or tennis with Prince Frederik Hendrik of the Republic at a young age.

Unfortunately, Prince Henry Frederick died of typhoid at the age of 18 years in 1612 after having taken a cooling dive in the Thames following a heated game of caets or tennis with his friends. These included Prince Frederik Hendrik and his cousin Frederik V, Elector Palatine, who was engaged to marry Princess Elizabeth Stuart, the daughter of King James VI and I. Stadtholder Frederik Hendrik (1584–1647), Prince of Orange, continued to keep a close relationship with King James I. Elizabeth and Frederik V eventually spent many years, until their death in the Republic, in the city of The Hague as royal exiles. They were banished from Bohemia and the Palatinate following defeat at the battle of Wittenberg. They became known as the ‘Winter King and Queen’ having spent

only one year on the Bohemian throne before losing it to opposing Catholic princes.

Frederik Hendrik, Prince of Orange, and Frederik V, King of Bohemia, were politically united by two sepa-



Frederik Hendrik, Prince of Orange (1650), by (atelier of) Gerard van Honthorst





Henry Frederick, Prince of Wales (c1611),  
by Isaac Oliver



Frederik V, Elector Palatine (1613),  
by Michiel van Mierevelt

rate wars, the Eighty Years War and the Thirty Years War. The first was being the rebellion of the Protestant States General of the Netherlands against the oppressive rule of Roman Catholic Spain. The other war erupted in Germany in 1619, when the Calvinist Elector Palatine accepted the elective crown of Catholic Bohemia.

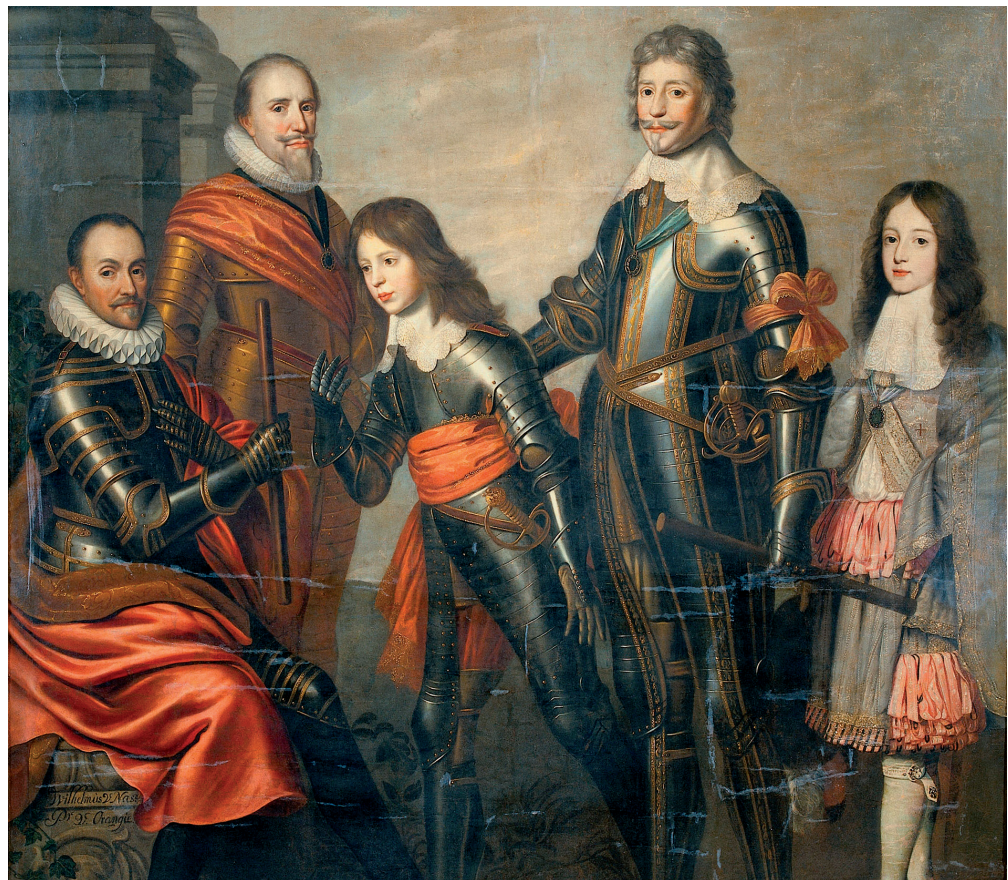
Both wars ran parallel in time and had similar objectives. Frederik V Elector Palatine was ousted from both the Palatinate and Bohemia after a short twelve-month reign. He was forced into exile in The Hague, where he established his royal court alongside that of the House of Orange. Both wars ended in 1648 with the Treaty of Westphalia (Munster). By the treaty, Spain recognised the independent Republic of the United Provinces of the northern Low Countries and the Palatinate was restored to Carl Ludwig, the son of the Elector Frederik V, who had died in The Hague in 1632.

The Catholic Habsburgs were the common enemy of the growing Protestant communities in Europe. Henry IV, King of France, opportunistically supported the efforts of the Low Countries against Spain. The objectives of both Frederik Hendrik and

Four generations Princes of Orange - William I, Maurice and Frederick Henry, William II, and William III, by Willem van Honthorst (1662)

Frederik V mostly coincided on this complicated political battlefield of Europe. Moreover, there were close family ties as Frederik V's mother, Louisa Juliana of Nassau-Dillenberg, was the sister of Prince William I of Orange-Nassau. Cementing the relationship was a shared religious interest. Frederik V first visited The Hague and his Orange relatives as a 16-year old on his way to London to marry Princess Elizabeth Stuart, the daughter of King James I of England and (VI of Scotland) in 1613. Frederik Hendrik joined the royal company of his cousin Frederik V in London as consort to attend the marriage. The marriage was delayed a few months after the sudden death of Henry Frederick, Prince of Wales, and the son of King James I and eldest brother of Princess Elizabeth Stuart, Frederik V's future wife.

During their stay in London, Frederik Hendrik and Frederik V regularly played cards, tennis and occasionally golf with Henry Frederick and his brother Charles. After Henry's premature death, Elizabeth became the second in line to the British throne after her brother Charles I. Many ambitious princes in Europe had sought after her hand. James I preferred a Protestant alliance in Europe, although he cautiously refused to perceive openly that Spain was his enemy as his predecessor, Queen Elizabeth I had. The marriage between Frederik V and Elizabeth Stuart took place during the Twelve Year Truce from 1609-1621 orchestrated by Johan van Oldenbarneveldt, Advocate of Holland. This was an important period as it allowed the Republic to regroup its resources and prepare for a prolonged struggle for independence.







*Maurits, Prince of Orange on his death bed (1625), by Adriaen van de Venne*

The lives of Frederik and Elizabeth were reasonably fortunate and they enjoyed a period of great contentment during their first six years of marriage. On their way from Margate in England to the Palatinate, they arrived in Flushing (Vlissingen) in Zeeland as recorded by several painters, one of which was Adriaen van de Venne. It was a rapturous welcome and Elizabeth would spend several days in The Hague and other cities awaiting her reception with her future husband Frederik V in Heidelberg.

She befriended many people in the country, where she would later spend the rest of her life in exile after 1621. In Heidelberg, Elizabeth's existence at the Palatine court was leisurely and she gave birth to the first of her thirteen children. Against all good advice, Frederik V accepted the invitation by Bohemian Protestant rebels to be their elective King of Bohemia in 1619.

Even King James I was not too supportive of his son-in-law's assumption of the Bohemian crown as this would possibly upset the Spanish Habsburgs and endanger the relative tranquillity in the relationship between England and Spain. His acceptance of the throne irritated many princely opponents in the Catholic League who were increasingly confident they could depose the king quickly.

At the Battle of the White Mountain near the city gates of Prague, Frederik V's army was defeated with great ease. He was forced to flee in haste, abandoning many personal belongings, such as his badge of the oldest order of the English knighthood, the Order of the Garter. After this quick defeat, Frederik V was dubbed the 'Winter King' as his kingdom had disappeared with the snows of winter. It was rumoured by pious opponents that Elizabeth had left behind some 'titillating scandalous books'.

*The surrender of Breda to Spinola - detail (1625), by Velazquez*

Elizabeth arrived in The Hague in February 1621 where the Stadtholder Prince Maurits of Orange welcomed her. Shortly afterwards she was joined by her husband Frederik V, whose situation had become

hopeless. The States General, the Parliament of the Republic, granted the royal couple financial support, buildings and land for their stay.

Their public support and popularity soon began to wane because of the extravagance of their royal court, to which the Calvinist residents of the Low Countries were not familiar. Abroad their misfortunes continued and they could get no political support to enforce Frederik V's reinstatement in the Palatinate. In Holland, the Eighty Year War recommenced after the truce had expired in 1621. King James I tried to foster an Anglo-Spanish alliance through the marriage of his son Charles, Prince of Wales, with the Infanta of Spain. Thereby simultaneously receive support from Spain to have Frederik V and Elizabeth reinstated in the Palatinate. This policy failed dismally and backfired on remaining prospects for a favourable outcome.

Hope and morale rose once more with the signing of an Anglo-Dutch Treaty in 1624 after King James I realised the chances of establishing proper relations with Spain were reduced to nothing. This followed his refusal to a Spanish request to shelter Spanish







*Heusden on the River Maas (nr1), by Adriaen van de Venne*

warships carrying supplies, intended for use against the Republic, to Dunkirk.

In The Hague Stadtholder Maurits, Prince of Orange, summoned Frederik Hendrik to his deathbed urging him to marry in order to secure the line of heritage for the House of Orange-Nassau. Frederik Hendrik was quick to choose Amalia van Solms, whom he had first met in Heidelberg a decade earlier at the royal court of his nephew Frederik V. She was the daughter of Johann Albrecht van Solms, the Chief Steward of Frederik V and had become the trusted Maid-of-Honour to Elizabeth Stuart.

Soon after Frederik Hendrik's marriage in 1625, Maurits died. His death was a severe blow to the Dutch morale, made worse by the unexpected defeat and loss of the important city of Breda to the Spaniards led by Spinola. Within days, the Infanta Isabella, acting Regent of the southern Low Countries, occupied the Nassau castle of Breda, traditional home of the Orange-Nassau dynasty, in triumph. The surrender of Breda was a severe blow to the prospects of the Republic of gaining an independent status. The painting of the famous painter Velazquez is a tribute to this unparalleled Spanish victory. The defeat of Breda was followed by the loss of the South American Dutch colony of Bahia in Brazil taken by Spaniards. The year 1625, the first year of the reign of Stadtholder Frederik Hendrik, was a depressing year for Dutch morale.

In this year, Adriaan van de Venne would start work on an album commissioned by Frederik and Elizabeth, the Winter King and Queen. The state was in great danger and it was questioned whether Frederik Hendrik as Stadtholder shared his brother Maurits' great gift for warfare. Dutch trade was suffering from the Spanish naval embargo and relationships with France were starting to deteriorate due to religious matters involving the French Huguenots. In England, King James I had also

died in the same year 1625 and his death would bring about a change in the Anglo-Dutch relations. The brother of Elizabeth was now crowned King Charles I of England and Scotland. He sought to improve relations with France by heading a major anti-Habsburg alliance against Spain. In 1625, the United Kingdom and the Republic signed the Treaty of Southampton aimed against Spain in case it threatened the interests of the Republic or the Palatinate. The prospect of a restoration of the Winter King to the Palatinate in Germany looked brighter for Frederik and Elizabeth. At the same time, hope for Dutch independence with support from the United Kingdom was increasing.

However, within a year the Winter King's cause had fallen to new depths. His hoped for support from the Danish King, against the Habsburg Emperor in Germany, waned. The efforts by the British to bring France into an anti-Habsburg alliance also failed. Charles I never again resorted to military force on behalf of his sister Elizabeth and her fate as an exile was sealed.

Frederik Hendrik as Stadtholder embarked on a more aggressive stance against the Spanish and moved on the offensive. He took 's Hertogenbosch in his first great victory in 1629, the year after Piet Hein had resoundingly captured Spain's silver fleet. Stadtholder Frederik Hendrik, Prince of Orange died in 1647 after having concluded well-advanced negotiations for the Treaty of Westphalia (Munster), signed in 1648. This ended the Eighty Years War and secured the independence of the northern seven Provinces of the Republic of United Provinces of the Netherlands. His stadtholdership gained immeasurable benefits from the prosperity of the Republic's Golden Age.

The new fortification of the city of Heusden along the river Maas stood as symbol for the national aspirations and impregnable resilience of 'sLands Sterckte. Wonderfully illustrated in Adriaen van de Venne's al-

bum, dedicated to Prince Frederik Hendrik of Orange and commissioned by the Winter King and Queen, Frederick V, Elector Palatine and Princess Elizabeth Stuart as a 'liber amicorum'.

After her husband's premature death in 1632, Elizabeth lacked the funds to pay off her many creditors and she was forced to stay in The Hague, where she continued to perform ceremonial duties for the Republic. She gained some solace from the marriage in 1641 of her niece, Princess Mary Stuart (1631-1660), daughter of her brother Charles I to Prince William II of Orange (1626-1650), son of Stadtholder Frederik Hendrik. In 1649, her brother King Charles I was beheaded. Her nephew Charles II had arrived as exile in Rotterdam and as king eventually supported her return to England, where she died shortly thereafter in 1662.

The son of Stadtholder Frederik Hendrik, Prince William II of Orange, in 1641 married princess Mary Stuart, the daughter of King Charles I. Mary's brothers were the successive kings Charles II and James II. The son of Stadtholder William II, Prince William III of Orange (1650-1702), also married a Mary Stuart (1662-1694), the daughter of King James II.

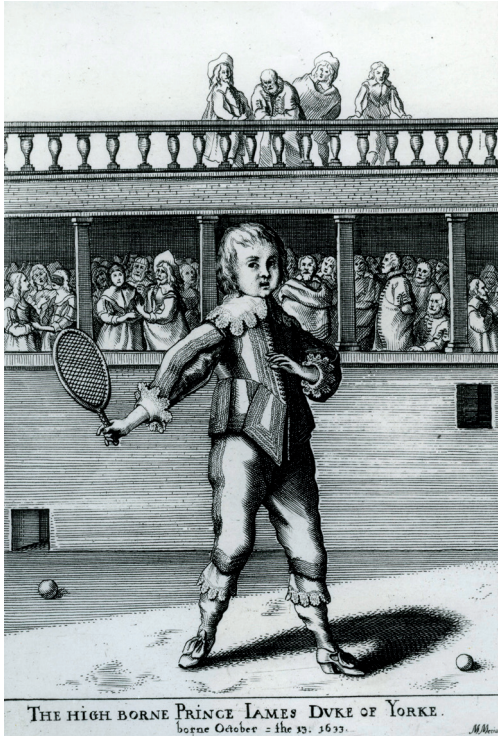
Prince William III of Orange and Stadtholder of the Republic of the United Provinces of the Netherlands, chased his father-in-law and uncle King James II from the English throne because of his increasing 'papist tendencies' and with his wife was crowned as King William III and Queen Mary II of England, Ireland and Scotland. After William III's death, the crown passed to Queen Anne (1665-1714), Mary's sister. On 1 May 1707, under the Acts of Union 1707, England and Scotland united as a single sovereign state. After her death, the Stuart dynasty ended in England. Successive struggles, known as the Jacobite



*Charles I, King of England (1635), by Anthony van Dyck*



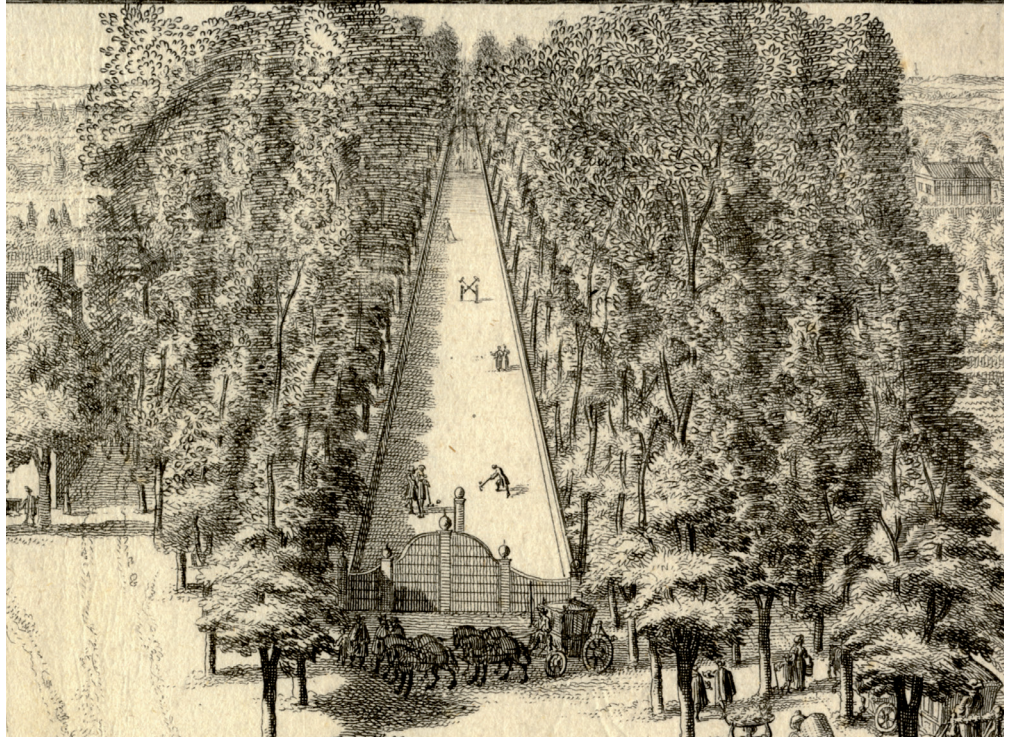
Rebellions, to reinstate James II's descendants to the throne of Scotland ended following 'Bonnie Prince Charlie's bloody defeat at the Battle of Culloden in 1746. The House of Hannover made its entry and it was the son of Elizabeth Stuart's daughter Princess Sophia, who was crowned King George I of England.



James II, Duke of York (1641), by M. Merian jr.



Charles Stuart, 'Bonnie Prince Charlie' (1745)



Pleasant view of the Maliebaen in Utrecht (1715) – detail, by Gerard Kribber, engraving by I. van Vianen (Atlas van Stolk, Rotterdam)

The Act of Settlement of 1701 appointed Sophia, Electress of Hannover, as Queen Anne's successor. This act was initiated by William III to secure a Protestant to the crown.

Both William II and William III were known to be active players of the game of caets or tennis. The stay of Federik V with his wife Elizabeth Stuart and family in The Hague as royal guests in exile is iconographically well-documented, especially by the painter Adriaen van de Venne. From his drawings and paintings, we can assume that members of the royal households of Orange and Stuart occupied themselves with games, such as caets or tennis, malie and colf. There is an early game of shuttle tennis pictured too. Quite remarkable is the illustration of billiards being played in its earliest form resembling a game of table colf or table malie played indoors. Malie, pell-mell or 'le jeu de mail' was especially popular in France and later introduced to the Royal Court of England. In the Low Countries, malie was played on specially designated long courts, a 'maliebaen'. The maliebaen in The Hague and in Utrecht were best known. In The Hague, members of the royal households of Orange and Stuart were frequent users of the beautiful tree-lined alley, which to this day is visibly existent. The maliebaen in Utrecht was a favourite among the students of the University of Utrecht attracting many well-to-do aristocrats and landed gentry, who preferred this game of malie to caets or colf. Adriaen van de Venne's album, known as *Commonplace Book* is now in the possession of the British

View of Middelburg at the time of the Winter Queen's visit in 1613 welcomed by Maurits, Prince of Orange and Stadtholder, by Adriaen van de Venne (Rijksmuseum Amsterdam)

Museum in London. It had until 1978 been kept in the library of the Earls of Spencer house Althorp in Northamptonshire, England, for more than two centuries. The album had been bought on the continent and at first had mistakenly been thought to be the work of Pieter Brueghel. Described as 'exceedingly precious and amusing', the album was later ascribed





to Adriaen van de Venne because of his recognisable portrayal of the Winter King and Queen and the Prince of Orange with his wife in The Hague.

Adriaen van de Venne's parents of Protestant background – estimable and wealthy people ('achtbare lieden en van vermoghen') – fled from Brabant and settled in Delft where Adriaen was born in 1589. Delft had joined the Protestant rebellion against Spain in 1572, attracting many immigrants from the south escaping war and religious strife. Van der Venne considered himself as a painter from Delft although he was trained at the Latin school in Leiden, where the burgeoning University bolstered the intellectual climate. With his parents, he relocated to Middelburg where he was married in 1614.

It appears that he had good contacts with the court in The Hague as his paintings often included portraits of the Orange princes. The Middelburg years were important for his artistic development producing some of his finest paintings. He also published works of poetry and kept a friendly relationship with Jacob Cats also living in Middelburg for whom he illustrated his work. Van de Venne moved to The Hague in 1625 becoming a citizen of the town and joining the Guild of St Luke. It was probably Frederik Hendrik, Prince of Orange, who in that year had succeeded his brother Prince Maurits as Stadtholder of the Republic, who called Van de Venne to The Hague.



Winter – detail (c1625), by Adriaen van de Venne







*Pastime on ice, by Hendrick Averkamp*

Van de Venne was commissioned to paint *Prince Maurits lying in State* and he would make many more propagandistic images and political prints. He produced portraits in grisaille of the Winter King and Queen in 1626. 'In general Adriaen van de Venne revelled in depicting the panorama of human life, whether courtier or peasant, describing in his art the moral extremes of contrasting behaviour of which they were capable. Based on his observations of life around him, the style he developed is among the foremost of which seem consciously Dutch, a style clearly born of the independent United Provinces'. His powerful qualities as a narrator and designer qualified him exclusively to produce the famous album now in the British Museum. His painting *View of Middelburg at the Time of the Winter Queens Visit in 1613* is among his finest works in scope and style, demonstrating the hand of a trained miniaturist. His depictions of non-idealised figures from everyday life place him in the Brueghel tradition with its characteristic high viewpoint and bright local colours. In this painting, a British ship can be recognised in the distance as the *Red Lion*. This vessel, firing a salute, escorted the newlywed royal couple Frederik V, Elector Palatinate, and Princess Elizabeth Stuart to the Netherlands after their marriage in London in 1613. Well represented is the welcoming Dutch court with Stadtholder Maurits, Prince of Orange, with his coat of arms on the flag of the yacht on the left. The larger vessel in the centre bears the arms of Zeeland and Middleburg underlining this politically important event.

The Van de Venne album as an illuminated and emblematic book is unique in its extensiveness. In the early Renaissance period, masters of illumination

would receive commissions from illustrious royal courts in Europe and served many purposes, usually for a restricted audience.

The miniatures of Simon Bening of Bruges were used as calendar illustrations incorporated in books of hours. Hans Bol too can be considered an important precursor producing a large number of miniature paintings in gouache. Lucas van Valckenborch and especially Jacob Hoefnagel had influence on his development both working in the milieu of Van der Venne and in the entourage of the Winter King. We can consider Hendrick Averkamp, about the same age as Adriaen van de Venne, in the same context having produced many works in oils and in gouache of winter scenes with similar motifs. These included

figures skating, playing golf and other games, or indulging in other amusing pastimes. His works were conceived in the same spirit although they have not been gathered in albums or series. Averkamp worked on a larger scale with many figures.

The Van de Venne album did not emerge from a vacuum and was committed to the emblematic tradition depicting everyday life. The original binding of the album was added last and the volume was a small horizontal octavo, a pocket-book dimension similar to an album amicorum. The album is a characteristic vehicle for private messages, both serious and humorous.

The Van de Venne album unfortunately has no original descriptive text and is therefore subject to interpretation. It is presumed the illustrations accompanied a text or poems in rhyme. Van de Venne himself was a painter and poet and most probably provided the text himself in a separate booklet. However, no one has found an accompanying text and therefore the illustrations are necessarily subject to difficult and often impossible interpretation. The detailed illustrations do give an excellent insight in everyday life. Especially interesting are the illustrations of various games played.

The album with the Adriaen van de Venne illustrations is assumed to be an informal personal gift. An 'album amicorum' from the Winter King and Queen, to Stadtholder Frederik Hendrik, on his marriage in 1625 to Amalia van Solms, the Queen's Maid-of-Honour. Fredrik and Elisabeth sealed their friendship with a gift titled 't *Lants Sterckte* [the Nations Strength], symbolised by the city fortress of Heusden and flattered the leadership of Frederik Hendrik as the nation's supreme commander. Allegorically it stressed the shared objectives of the Palatinate and the Republic.



*Amusement on ice, by Hendrick Averkamp (Koninklijk Kabinet van Schilderijen Mauritshuis, Den Haag)*





A Man exercising a Horse in the Ring (nr4), by Adriaen van de Venne



The Captain General on Horseback (nr5), by Adriaen van de Venne



A States Yacht, the Neptunus, with two other Vessels (nr6), by Adriaen van de Venne



An armed Yacht saluting a Man-of-War (nr7), by Adriaen van de Venne



Shooting the Popinjay (nr10), by Adriaen van de Venne



Ambassadeurs (nr11), by Adriaen van de Venne

As stated, the title of the album is ‘t Lands Sterckte’ depicting the military town stronghold Heusden. It symbolised the military prowess and boldness of the nation and represented the security of the Republic on land and sea. It displays confidence and optimism although the reality of the situation was not rosy. The elite corps was of course the cavalry emblematically illustrated by *Man exercising a Horse in the Ring* (nr 4), stressing life’s unending and circular search for satisfaction. The horseman on a grey mount, Frederik V, is watched over by Frederik Hendrik

with hat adorned by red, white and blue feathers. The commander of the war effort of the United Provinces, Captain General of the States General army and Stadtholder, Prince Frederik Hendrik of Orange, is pictured in symbolic orange plumage and drapery trumpeting the men into furious battle (nr 5). The next illustrations (nr 6 and 7) give a hint of the importance of the album in the context of the relationship between the House of Orange and the Winter King and Queen. The princely yacht *Neptunus* flying the Winter King’s flag is saluted by a ship fly-

ing the red, white and blue containing the arms of the Stadtholder, who in this way accords precedence to the Winter King and Queen.

The armed yacht with the state flag of Holland, the red lion on a yellow field, salutes a ‘man o’war’ of the United Provinces. The ‘man o’war’ flies its flag and coat of arms, the yellow lion holding seven arrows representing the seven Provinces in one paw and a sword in the other paw.

Lastly, we see the orange banners that symbolised the political mood and the high spirits of a new na-





*The King and Queen of Bohemia (nr12), Frederik V with Elisabeth Stuart followed by Frederik Hendrik with Amalia van Solms, by Adriaen van de Venne*

tion as well as the increasing importance of the naval status (nr 8 and 9).

*Shooting the Popinjay* (nr 10) shows a game with target guns, 'doelroeren', used by city burgher militia, the 'schutterij', aimed at shooting off the last fragment of a wooden bird on a pole. Frederik Hendrik is overlooking the contest again. It symbolises the reality that only one can be the winner and king of the game.

The *Ambassadors* (nr 11) illustration portrays the envoys of France, England and Venice in order of historic importance to the Low Countries and symbolises the anti-Habsburg alliance. King James I promoted The Hague to the ambassador rank because of the political position of his son-in-law and daughter, the Winter King and Queen, living in exile in The Hague. Besides, the Treaty of Nonsuch (1585) gave the English representative a permanent place in the Council of State in The Hague.

The portrait of *King and Queen of Bohemia* (nr 12) with its most lavish decorations, highlighted in gold, clearly shows the high royal status of the Winter

King and Queen. They ride in front of Stadtholder Frederik Hendrik, Prince of Orange and his newly-wed wife Amalia van Solms, both following at a respectable distance but still showing the informality and friendliness of the relationship.

Frederik V's wife Elizabeth Stuart had a Cupbearer in her royal household, John Quarles of Ufford from London. A Cupbearer is a formal position in court, awarded to a close confidant and personal advisor. John Quarles stayed in Holland in the royal court due to the prolonged exile of his Winter Queen. He eventually married the daughter of the mayor of Rotterdam and took up a position as governor in the wool merchants business in Rotterdam. He would become the ancestral head of the Quarles van Ufford family in the Netherlands.

Several generations later, Pieter Quarles van Ufford sold the property of Zandvoortsch Duin, where Kennermer Golf & Country Club in Zandvoort had its new home since 1928, to the members. On the folio, *Prince*

of Orange Stadtholder Frederik Hendrik is clearly recognisable. Most probably, his wife Amalia van Solms and other members of his family and courtiers go with him. John Quarles could be one of these courtiers. Frederik Hendrik is informally portrayed as the reigning head of the family and the House of Orange.

The next folio illustrations of Van de Venne show the various courtiers actively indulging in several sports. This gives a detailed iconographic insight in the way these games were played and more interestingly, the material used for these games. Lacking an original descriptive text it is difficult to analyse the allegorical meaning of these illustrations, but most probably, they would be political emblems relating to the severe issues at stake during this time. There is also the possibility the illustrations humorously have hidden amorous or sexual connotations, especially in games played such as bloon, tennis, shuttlecock and pell-mell.

Of special interest is the folio with the yet unfamiliar game billiards. It has interesting interpretations attached to it apart from the obvious transformation of an outside game of colf or malie to an indoor game played on a table.

About the album and its representation of an image of strength and resilience, the illustrations of courtiers indulging in sports does not intend to allude to an undesired form of idleness during the nation's time of war. Rather, the images support the nation's claim to greatness. Van der Venne was known to be a wholehearted supporter of the House of Orange and this album is a clear sign of that commitment. The *Game of Billiards* (nr29) shows Frederik Hendrik ready to use his 'billard' – cues were not in use in the game of billiards until the eighteenth century – and to strike the ball through a gate. At his side, is his wife Amalia gesturing and giving encouraging advice. At the other end of the table stands Elizabeth Stuart, the Winter Queen, pointing at the gate and the direction to go. A warning is also given not to



*A Game of Billiards (nr29), Elisabeth Stuart, Frederik Hendrik and Amalia van Solms, by Adriaen van de Venne*



*Game of Pell-Mell (nr31), Frederik V and Frederik Hendrik, by Adriaen van de Venne*





*A Game of Balloon (nr18), by Adriaen van de Venne*



*A Game of Tennis (nr20), Frederik V and Frederik Hendrik, by Adriaen van de Venne*



*Two Women playing Battledore and Shuttlecock (nr22), probably Elisabeth Stuart and Amalia van Solms, by Adriaen van de Venne*

knock over the 'king', the vertical post on the table intended as a hazard. The allegorical meaning is clear: do not hurt the interests of the Winter King during political strife and war efforts.

In the *Game of Pell-Mell* (nr 31) the political meaning is an even clearer, demonstrating that the Winter King and Stadtholder Frederik Hendrik share the same goals and objectives. Frederik Hendrik, dressed in his usual black and gold costume with his orange stockings and plume, looks on at the Winter King, who is wearing his traditional blue garter, ready to strike the ball with his mallet. Both



*A Man and a Boy playing Golf on the Ice (nr96), by Adriaen van de Venne*

men have the same target and direction in mind. Pell-mell needs some skill and the ball needs to be hit accurately and for a considerable distance. The folio gives a detailed picture of the club, the *malie*, used to hit the ball with and the size and form of the wooden ball. The shaft of the mallet used for the game of *malie* or pell-mell was flexible, creating substantial club head speed when swinging through the ball. The sideboards are visible and are used as boundaries. The flight of the wooden ball was probably not too high although the ball could easily bounce outside the boarded court if not well struck in the right direction. The distance of a '*maliebaan*' varied but covered a long distance of about 400 metres.

Another ball game is shown in *A Game of Balloon* (nr 18). '*Baloen*' was played with a large inflated leather ball, a '*windbal*', and teams of three a side, similar to the outdoor game of *boerencaets* or *jeu de longue paume*. To protect the under arm when striking the ball a wooden or leather arm-brace, a '*brasser*', is worn. The emblematic meaning of the scene is not clear and rather speculative. However, the message may well be, '*undress and harness for war*'.

The illustration on *A Game of Tennis* (nr 20) probably represents Frederik Hendrik playing a game of caets or tennis with the Winter King. The men are standing at opposing sides of the court divided by a cord. The men have done away with old equipment and are using a new type of '*caets rinketten*', rackets strung with catgut and stuffed leather balls. The picture shows the game played outside on a grassy field instead of an indoor court, where the side-walls and roofs are an integral part of the game. Perhaps the allegorical meaning is that battles are fought in the open field and are won with modern

equipment, even if outnumbered by the enemy. A similar illustration is made in *Two Women playing Battledore and Shuttlecock* (nr 22) in which Elizabeth Stuart and Amalia van Solms are pictured playing a more feminine game of shuttlecock. The game was probably played with wooden bats and feathered corks. In illustrations, the game usually has an amorous connotation and warnings of idleness. However, we know the game of shuttlecock was a popular courtly pastime in The Hague at the time and that Elizabeth played it avidly. Therefore, we should probably see this illustration in the same allegorical context as Frederik Hendrik and the Winter King playing at tennis.

Unfortunately, folio nr 23 is mysteriously missing from the album and may well have been illustration of people playing the other most popular game of colf. There is, however, an illustration of a courtier playing colf on ice in a series of winter scenes on ice in the album (nrs 95-102). It alludes to the winter amusements but give a warning of the dangers of ice as well. In the illustration *A Man and a Boy playing Golf on the Ice* (nr 96) the man with the colf is shown full face at address position and about to strike the ball. The colf is pictured in detail that matches with other iconographic evidence. The colf is covered with a leaden colfshoe, '*colfslof*', to protect the club head during play and to increase the swing weight and club head

*A Horse-drawn Sleigh with four Passengers (nr95), Adriaen van de Venne*







*A Peasant falling through the Ice (nr102),  
by Adriaen van de Venne*



*A Peasant pulling his Wife and Chattels across the  
Ice (nr100), by Adriaen van de Venne*



*Two Eel-Fishermen (nr91), by Adriaen van de Venne*



*Four Skaters (nr99), by Adriaen van de Venne*



*A Peasant pushing a Woman on a Sledge (nr98),  
by Adriaen van de Venne*



*An elderly peasant Couple on the Ice (nr93),  
by Adriaen van de Venne*



*Six elegant Figures in a Horse-drawn Sledge (nr101),  
by Adriaen van de Venne*



*Skaters tumbling on the Ice (nr97),  
by Adriaen van de Venne*



*Two boys with a colf - detail, by unknown artist  
(Kennemer G&CC)*

speed when striking the ball. The two players also wear metal grips under their shoes to protect themselves from slipping when striking the ball. The game of colf was definitely a long distance game aimed at a post set and guarded by a foreman as marker, the 'markeur'. There are many proverbs in the Dutch language relating to the game of colf. One is applicable to this scene: 'Als het hard vriest colft men op 'tys', meaning that if it freezes hard one plays colf on the ice. In other words, you need to make the best of it in adverse conditions. Playing colf was seen as a good exercise for young boys to train their discipline and mental skills. Many wealthy burgers of the Low Countries had their young children portrayed with a colf in their hand symbolising these personal proficiencies.

The games pictured by Van der Venne are mostly those favoured by the courtiers and nobility. Other games more popular with the ordinary man or peasants are also depicted in the album. The folio *Figures playing Ballgames* (nr 76) pictures three games, ring-ball ('beugelen'), skittles ('kegelen') and bowls ('boallen'). This scene, with peasants trying their hardest to drive a ball through a ring with their club while a young woman looks on from the side is definitely an amorous allegory. The hoop on the ground swivels on a pinion and stands for chance while the balls 'represent heaven's favours'. In life, one needs to artfully manipulate one's chances. The Old Dutch saying 'het kan niet door de beugel' means that something cannot pass in terms of indecent or unbecoming behaviour. The game of beugelen was popular, both in, and around inns. It is still played in isolated pockets in the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany. Beugelen is considered an ancient game from which the newer game of kolf evolved. Kegelen and boallen also still exist in various forms. Beugelen is described in the *Historia Leodiensis* dated 1331, a history of the city of Liege in the Low Countries. The game is sometimes indentified as 'lepelen', relating to the spoon format of the bat with which the ball is rolled through the metal ring, the 'beugel'. The popularity of the game as early as in the Middle





Figures playing Ballgames (nr76), by Adriaen van de Venne

Ages caused beugelen to suffer similar limits to colf and caets by being banned from certain areas in town and from courtyards alike in the city ordinance of Deventer in 1485. A forerunner of 'beugelen' is 'klossen'. The revolving metal ring, the 'beugel', replaces the arch, made of two wooden poles. The popularity of beugelen gradually dwindled as kolf overtook it. 'Kolf' as a game developed in the late second half of the eighteenth century as a mixture of other games. The game used various elements as 'beugelen' – the enclosed short court, 'malie' – the two wooden poles, 'caets' – the scoring system, 'boallen' – the size of the ball, and 'colf' – the club and short game. The game of beugelen is played with four solid balls made of hardwood, preferably of the quebracho tree from South America, with a diameter of 14-23 cm and a weight of 2.5-4 kg. The court measures 10 m x 5 m.

The Courtyard of an Inn, by Gerrit Lundens (Noortman Master Paintings)



The only known drawing by Rembrandt depicting games is of a man playing at 'beugelen' and not colf as often inaccurately stated.

The French term 'chasse' is the earliest known name for tennis and is one of the most archaic features of the whole game, namely to chase and attack. From northern France the word found its way to the Low Countries at an early date. In the 'keurboeken', the city charter, of Oudenaarde in the province Flanders of 1338 we can read that the game with this name was banned from playing in the churchyard: 'men verbiet de kache te speelne op 't Kerkhof...'. Tennis, as a game from the Low Countries, was imported into Scotland at an early date, becoming a relatively popular pastime for the younger generation. However, it was of concern for parents trying

to impose a certain degree of discipline on their children's upbringing and to avoid too much playing of games, as in the enjoyable versified treatise 'Ratis Raving' (1475):

to impose a certain degree of discipline on their children's upbringing and to avoid too much playing of games, as in the enjoyable versified treatise 'Ratis Raving' (1475):

'For resone than is yong and wak  
And may nocht lat that eild to laik,  
...now at the killis,  
Now at the prop, and vthir-quhillis  
Ryne at baris and at the ball  
And at the caich play with all,  
Now at the tables, now at the ches  
Weill of, and seldin at the mes,  
And mekile with playing at the dyce  
That work yhit hald I maist unwyssh,  
For thar is aithis set at nocht,  
And infortunne to mekil socht

...  
My sone, Set nocht thi happiness  
In na syk plays na les.

(Since reason is then immature and weak  
And this age cannot refrain from playing  
...[it is] now at skittles,  
Then at the [archery] butts, another time  
At running at the bars and at football  
And especially at caich;  
Sometimes at backgammon, then very often  
At chess, but seldom at holy mass;  
And much time at dice.

Such conduct I consider most foolish,  
For there curses are considered a trifle,  
And misfortune is virtually beckoned.

...  
My son, do not seek your fortune  
In any such games neither more nor less.)



Jeu de Mail Flamand (1750), Tableaux du cabinet de Mr Boscrit, engraving by I. Surugue





Henry Frederick, Prince of Wales (1610),  
by Robert Peake



Elisabeth Stuart playing Shuttlecock – detail nr22,  
by Adriaen van de Venne

The use of the name ‘caich’ in Scotland slightly obscures the game’s nature. However, the game of caich spread all over Scotland. Even for the established men of society this game became a favourite pastime. King James I in his Basilicon Coron as King of England encouraged his son Henry Frederick to enjoy this aristocrat’s game.

The Stuart royals of Scotland were self-confessed addicts to the ancient game of golf. The game of caich,

or tennis, was the most fashionable game for the kings and princes of England, as James experienced later in his new Royal Court in London, as King of England. He never abandoned golf though. He introduced golf to Greenwich Palace in London, where his royal household played the game on the grounds of Blackheath near the palace. There his son Henry Frederick, Prince of Wales, was a frequent player of the game. Henry’s elder sister Elizabeth Stuart spent most of her life in exile in The Hague. From the illustrations of Adriaen van der Venne, we can show today that she too was an enthusiast game player and clearly as a true Stuart, she must have likened golf too.

During the early part of the seventeenth century and later, many hundreds of young Scots attended the University of Leiden as students. It is likely that they too would have indulged in the favourite pastime of their fellow students of the Low Countries, the popular games of caets and colf. Colf and golf were a shared passion of the two nations for a long time starting from the early trade relations between the Scottish burghs and the cities in the Low Countries. In previous centuries, the games of colf and caets were banned from the city streets. Players were directed to play outside the city walls in designated areas, or parks. In Edinburgh, this was ‘Bruntsfield Links’ outside the Burgmuir, and in Haarlem, an area named ‘De Baen’ became the town’s playground. The game of caets was played in a specially enclosed area or court. Later this became roofed areas. Obviously, this game of inside caets or tennis, and the jeu de paume court, was a game for the wealthy. Universities in the Low Countries eventually pro-

moted the building of caetsbanen in the city as this attracted more students. The city of Leiden had three or more caetsbanen near the University and these courts became regular hangouts and drinking holes for the sporty and thirsty students, who regularly caused predictable noisiness and disturbance.



Student in Leiden dancing with caets rinket,  
by Adriaen van de Venne, an illustration in ‘Spiegel  
van den ouden en den nieuwen tijdt’ by Jacob Cats

The caetsbanen were professionally run by ‘caetsbaanhouders’ or ‘maitre paumiers’ as they were named in French. They were responsible for maintaining the courts, the repairs of rackets, called ‘caetsrinketten’, the purchase of balls from skilled manufacturers, and for giving playing lessons. Markers were hired as assistants and as referees for the contests between players. In addition, innkeepers ran commercial caetsbanen,



Students of the University of Leiden playing at caets, by Crispijn van de Passe





*Ice scene with Merwede House (1638), by Jan van Goyen*

at first in town, but then increasingly outside the town alongside the many transport waterways. Their aim being to attract guests, who would either play themselves, or watch as others played for their entertainment. Innkeepers promoted many different games inside and around their inns to promote their business.

Inns were the starting and finishing point for a game of colf played on the adjacent open ground and roads. The game of colf was especially popular during wintertime when rivers and waterways froze up creating an excellent smooth terrain for colf. The many winter landscape paintings are witness to this remarkable period when flocks of people would hive off to enjoy their pastime on the ice. In order to not lose any business, innkeepers set up their tents, usually old ship sails, on the frozen waterways and served skaters and colf players with warming soup or beer and spirits.

During the second half of the eighteenth century, the games of caets and colf gradually lost its appeal. Probably under the influence of new French fashion, people resorted to games needing less physical effort and movement. A new form of game evolved, developed from the early game of colf. Where the earlier game was played in open-air over reasonably long distances the new game of kolf was played in a restricted area attached to the inn.

Caetsbanen no longer used for caets or tennis were transformed into indoor 'kolfbanen'. This new game of kolf evolved from other ball games, elements of which it would use. It used the short game elements of colf requiring accuracy. It borrowed the surrounding boarding planks and the two poles at each end used in the game of malie. The ball became larger and heavier as in beugelen and boallen. The clubs became bulky and much heavier than the traditional colf.

Eventually people would call the club used in kolf a 'klik'. This was the name the Dutch used for wooden



*Kolf players (c1780)*



*Kolf pamphlet illustration - Salus Botniae - Vivat Mulder, De wereld is een speeltoneel, elk speelt zijn kolf en krijgt zijn deel, R.O.N. Anno 1783*

golf clubs imported from Scotland from the middle of the seventeenth century as an alternative to the traditional leaden colf used in the Low Countries. The point scoring system of kolf had more similarities to caets using the chase as scoring system.

This new game of kolf grew hugely popular with numerous 'kolfbanen' in the Republic in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. However, this game of kolf fell rapidly into decline during the second half of the nineteenth century. Many reasons can be found for this decline. As examples, the increased popularity of billiards innkeepers promoted this indoor game, and the arrival of rubber balls following the introduction of gutta percha as a raw material. The introduction of new ball games in the wake of the expansion of the British Empire: football, hockey, cricket and of course golf.

Interestingly the game of kolf has still managed to survive and avoid total extinction. There are still about a dozen kolfbanen in the region West Friesland of the province North Holland and one in Utrecht. The number of clubs playing on these mostly public kolfbanen is growing again with more youth being attracted to the game and social atmosphere.

Kolf had become a popular game in the Republic in the eighteenth century replacing the earlier game of colf. Probably because of the excitement of the short



*The New Game of Kolf (1792), engraving, by D. Schuurman after J.C. Schults*



part of the colf game on the flat surface of ice. The aim and anxiety of hitting the post used as target for the final deciding stroke no doubt added to growing attractiveness of the shorter game of kolf. From the seventeenth century rhyme, by J. Six van Chandelier we can infer the early game of colf had two elements, as does today's modern golf. First, a game of long shots and secondly a short game aimed at a specific target, adding up the total number of strokes played. 'Far and sure' was the credo.

The score was kept by marking each stroke with a knife on a short stick, the 'kerfstok'. Derived from colf or kolf the Dutch language still today uses the expression 'paal en perk stellen', meaning to set limits or bounds and 'veel op het kerfstok hebben' meaning to have a good deal on ones slate or much to answer for.

*'Colvende aan een paal geperkt,  
Of slaat om 't verdste, slach na slach,  
Om wijtes of een vaan in 't lach,  
Gekorven op een dunne tak,  
Die ieder in 't wambuis stak.'*

[Playing the ball to a pole,  
Or hitting it the farthest, stroke after stroke,  
For money or for beer at the inn,  
Marked on a thin tally stick,  
Kept by each in his coat.]

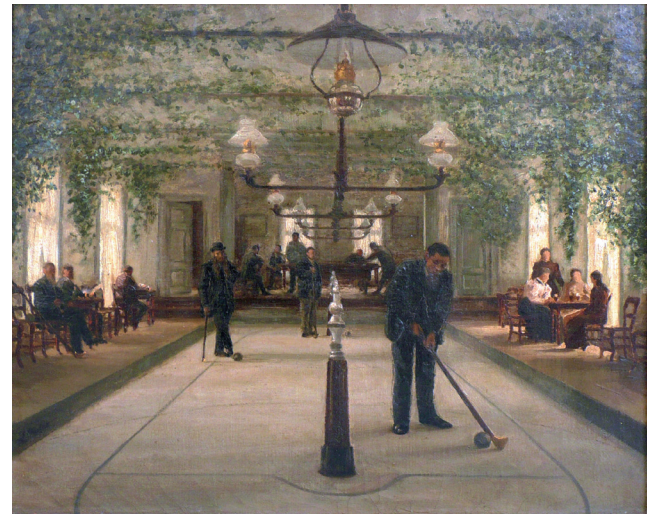
The game of kolf was played on a 'kolfbaan' a flattened court of about 25-30 metres long and 5 metres wide surrounded by wooden sideboards like the game of malie. These sideboards, called 'rabat', decreased in height as the size of the ball increased

*Kolfbaan at De Oliphant in Maarssen (1820), by Jan Hendrik Verheyen*



*Game of Kolf (c1850), by J. Halff jr.*

and rolled over the flat surface of the court. Later in indoor courts, the 'rabat' was made of stone. Early iconographic evidence shows the material used for the early game of colf was the same as used for this newer game of kolf. With the evolution of the game the clubs became heavier and the balls larger. At each of the two short ends of the kolfbaan, targets were placed in the form of wooden poles a short distance from the rabat. Eventually the poles were placed at a slight angle to stop the ball from jumping as it hit the pole and so improved the roll of the ball. The kolfbaan did not have a gate at mid-distance as the game of malie did as an added hazard due to the shorter character of the game. The rabat is an integral part of the game and as in table billiards can be used



*Kolfbaan (c1910)*



*Kolfplayer (1910), by G.H. Rynder*





Klieks for playing kolf



Kolf balls



Ball mat with kolf balls

to hit the intended target. This is called 'rabatteren'. Kolf is played with a single club called a 'kliek', measured to ones liking. To this day the Dutch expression 'een kolfje naar de hand' is used in common language, meaning something to ones liking. The kliek has therefore no standard format or size. This is similar to the earlier game of colf where a single colf was used both for hitting the longer shots and for accuracy in the short game towards the intended target or butte. Nowadays the bottom part of the kliek, referred to as the 'kolf', has various forms, and is mostly made of brass.

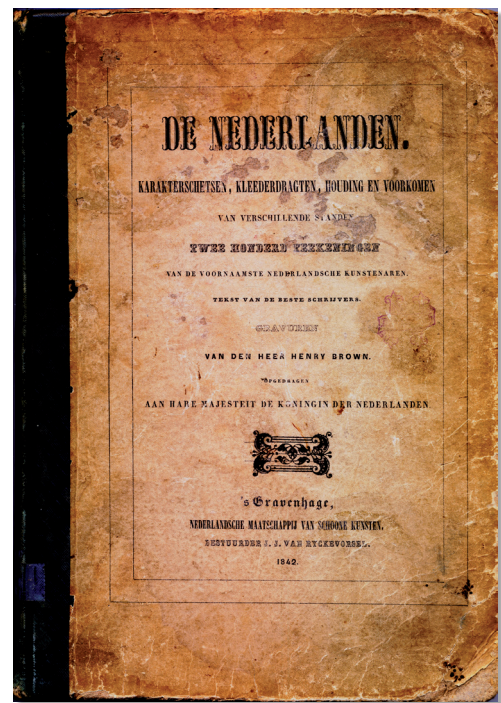
Balls were made of wool covered with stitched leather. Later in the nineteenth century, gutta percha gum strips covered the wool to form the 'sajet' ball. Even later, solid gumballs came into fashion and some are still in use today. To improve the roll, the balls could be warmed in a specially designed stove.

The open-air courts, where kolf was played in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, were sometimes half covered with a roof. In the nineteenth century, with the support of the patented new English lighting equipment of Boulton & Watt, the game of kolf moved indoors. Wooden floors and later, cement or asphalt carpeting, gradually replaced the hardened loam floors used outside.

Most kolfbanen were attached to inns, attracting players and stimulating consumption. An anonymous kolfguide (1769 and reprinted in 1792) 'Concorde nous guide', listed the names and locations of kolf courts in the Netherlands. The numbers are impressive: Amsterdam 50 establishments with a total of 76



Ball stove

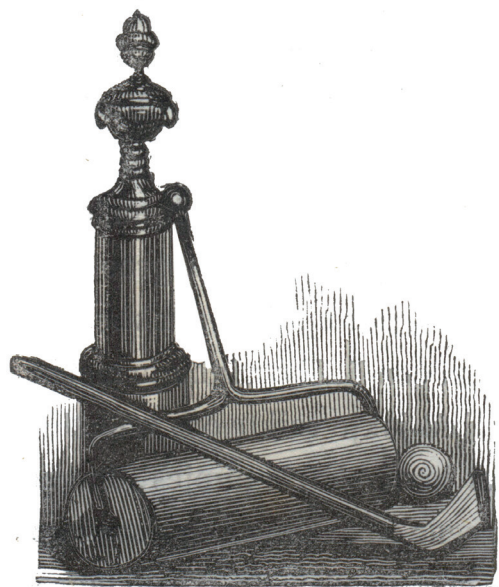
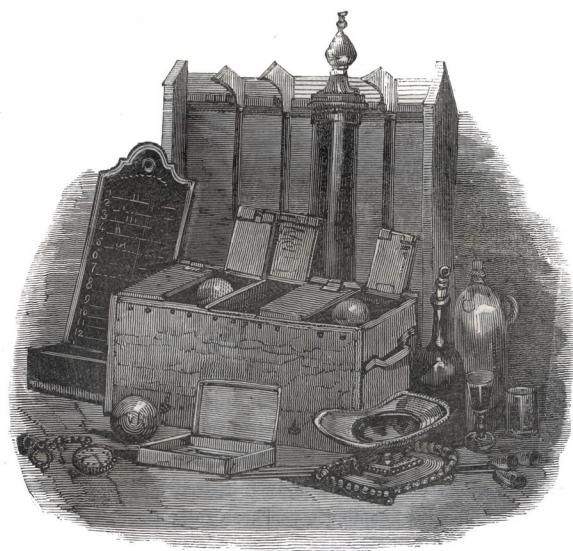


*De Nederlanden, Nederlandsche Maatschappij van Schoone Kunsten, 1842 - Illustrations by Henry Brown (see below)*

courts; the surroundings of Amsterdam housed another 136. Leiden counted 46, Rotterdam 53, Utrecht 21. In the second half of the nineteenth century, kolf would slowly fall into decline and in 1878, the last kolf court in Amsterdam closed because of the low economic returns achieved by the innkeepers.







At the same time, the wish for healthy outdoor sports increased dramatically. In Utrecht, fortunately one kolfbaan is still in use and kept by the Sint Eloyen Gasthuis. It is a wonderfully restored court with its traditional decorations and classical artefacts. In 2010,



Interior Kolfbaan Sint Eloyen Gasthuis (c1900)

the present kolfbaan of Sint Eloyen Gasthuis in the Boterstraat in Utrecht celebrates its 280<sup>th</sup> anniversary since first established in the inn 'De Hollandsche

Tuin'. To help guard the historic heritage of colf and kolf in the Netherlands, Sint Eloyen Gasthuis now provides a permanent housing for the collection of the 'Early Golf Foundation'. Thereby, continuing to preserve and honour the work of the deceased golf historian Steven van Hengel and his predecessor Aijolt Brongers.

In 1884, Gerard Cornelis van Balen Blanken took the initiative to protect the game of kolf from further extinction and invited the few remaining kolfclubs to join in a federation. In a meeting at the kolfclub 'Keer Niet' in Haarlem, the Nederlandsche Kolfbond was officially founded by nine clubs.

The Koninklijke Nederlandse Kolf Bond (KNKB) celebrated its 125th anniversary in 2010. The federation of kolf clubs aims to protect the heritage and the future growth of the game of kolf. The Kolfvereniging Sint Eloyen Gasthuis in Utrecht presented the KNKB with a digital web-museum - [colf-kolf.nl](http://colf-kolf.nl) - with more than 1000 illustrations and texts representing







*Kolf attributes belonging to Kolf Society De Prins van Oranje, founded in 1855 in Goes*



*Tableau of kolfbaan, presented by the daughters of A.P.L. Spuybroek to Sint Eloyen Gasthuis*

the history of early colf and kolf in the Netherlands. This is a wonderful initiative in this modern age of information and communication technology and it will certainly find support from the Nederlandse Golf Federatie too in order to protect the heritage of golf in the Netherlands.

Secretary A.P.L. Spuybroek in his illustrated manual 'Het Kolfspel' of 1895 gave an extensive overview of the rules and regulations of the kolf game. At that

time, there were just over one hundred courts where kolf was still played. Until 1967, when women were finally admitted, kolf was a men's only game. The kolfclub of Sint Eloyen Gasthuis remains a gentlemen society due to the historic nature of the institution.

At present only 14 kolf courts remain, hosting 18 men's and 15 ladies kolfclubs with about six hundred members in total. The rules of kolf have gradually

evolved. Rules as written in the 'Wet, wegens het Kolven' dated 1799 of the 'Collegie Eendracht maakt Macht' in Amsterdam are definitely different from the modern day rules although similarities are present. The early rules show a relationship with the malie game. After 1855, the rules stated by the kolf society 'De Prins van Oranje' in Goes were followed. The present scoring system was introduced in 1883 in Gouda. Following the institution of the Nederlandsche Kolfbond, this body set the rules of the game. The size and form of the kliek and ball are not standardised with each player permitted to play with his or her own specific material.

Three people usually play the game at a time. A match consists of three games; each game consists of five series; and each series has three successive plays: the 'uitklap', the 'opklap' and the 'trekklap', sometimes referred to as the 'eindslag'. The highest number of points scored decides the winner. The first play, the uitklap, the ball is directed from one end behind the post line towards the post at the other end to the 'achterpaal', with the intent to hit the post direct or via the rabat. The second play, the opklap, the ball is directed via the achterpaal back to the other end, the 'voorpaal', where the post needs to be hit. A miss of the achterpaal is zero points, a 'poedel'. The third play, the trekklap, decides the points scored and the ball is directed via the voorpaal towards the achterpaal. A miss of the voorpaal is again a poedel.

The number of points scored is determined by where the ball ends up in the end zone of the achterpaal as determined by lines drawn on the court. Comparable to a chase in caets or real tennis, with one point scored at the line of the voorpaal to 12 points at the rabat at the achterpaal. Hitting the achterpaal directly with the trekklap gives 10 points.

A referee acts as marker, the 'merkeur', for each match and determines whether the post was hit and where the ball ends up. Balls are marked and lifted before the next player hits the ball. A series has a maximum of  $5 \times 12 = 60$  points. A match is played by a team, a 'korps', of three successive players forming a team and each playing a game of five series. The maximum score of a korps is therefore  $3 \times 60 = 180$  points. Since 1963, kolf has introduced a handicap system, which is divided in five classes.

'Hij heeft goed gekolfd' is an Old Dutch expression meaning that one has done well in life. 'Hij werpt de kolf naar de bal' is quite the opposite and literally meaning that one throws the club at the ball, he has given up. A sign of desperation, that one can still see today, in the modern golf game.

"Plus ça change, plus ça reste la même chose".