



"Here lie buried Goessen Jansz Lord of Aalst in the year 1544 on [Saints] Simon and Judas Day [and] Johanna van Aalst Sander's daughter wife of Gossen van Aalst on the Wednesday after Pinkster" reads the inscription on the 2.6 x 1.4 meter stone in the floor of the church of Aalst. The family crests are seen in the upper left and right corners, and a shield bearing both crests is shown at the feet of the kneeling couple - he clad in full armor. Sander van Tuyl of Brakel, an administrator with family ties to the lower nobility, had effected a good marriage for his daughter Johanna, ensuring the van Tuyls' place in the local ruling class [Photo: J. Vleer].

Chapter 4

War and Prosperity 1550 ~ 1620

After the 1543 Treaty of Venlo, the Low Countries were unified under German Emperor Charles V, with Brussels as the capital. Charles was a relatively moderate sovereign who listened to his counselors in this part of his empire, but his reign ended in 1555 when he turned his empire, including the Low Countries, over to his son, Philip II of Spain. Philip was a Roman Catholic religious zealot who favored a strong, centralized monarchy and church.¹ He regarded the Dutch as heretics because of their growing interest in Protestantism. So, after convincing Pope Paul IV in 1559 to increase the number of Catholic bishops in the Netherlands, he toughened up the laws against Protestantism and extended the scope of the Inquisition.² The Bommelerwaard became a Spanish-Catholic outpost in the political and religious struggle to dominate the Dutch by force and with propaganda.³

Faced with wars against Ottoman pirates in the Mediterranean as well as a civil war in Granada and military involvement in France, Philip needed money to support his armies. He levied taxes on, among other things, private capital - much to the consternation of the well-to-do and the nobility.⁴ But the burden of his taxes fell most heavily on the peasants - those people who were barely surviving as it was, and for whom the winter of 1564/65 was a particular disaster.⁵ Famine loomed, and the people were on the edge of revolt.

“They’re Only Beggars, Milady”

Philip II was a reclusive monarch who never visited his Dutch dominions after 1559. Educated in Spain, unable to speak the Dutch language fluently, beset by overwhelming problems of government, by 1566 he was attempting to govern the Low Countries through an intermediary, his

¹ Martin, C. and Parker, G., “The Spanish Armada,” Penguin Books, London, 1989, page 110. “*The Low Countries wars were fought so that there should be no concessions over religion*”, he wrote thirty years later to the Count of Olivares, the Spanish ambassador in Rome (letter of 22-08-1585).

² Martin and Parker, pg. 68. In 1559 Pope Paul IV established four new dioceses. One was headquartered in 's-Hertogenbosch, and included the Bommelerwaard.

³ Koldeweij, A. et al., “In Buscoducis 1450-1629; kunst uit de Bourgondische tijd te 's-Hertogenbosch,” Den Haag, 1990, pg. 269.

⁴ Presser, J., “De Tachtigjarige Oorlog,” Amsterdam, 1978, pg. 60. This was the first time in history that such a tax had been levied.

⁵ Van der Zalm, J. and P., “Familiekroniek Van der Zalm,” Zaltbommel, 1982, pg. 167. Severe weather led to crop failures and a 2-to-3 times increase in the price of grain.

half-sister, Margaretha of Parma.^{6,7} In April, 1566, several hundred Dutch noblemen petitioned Governor Margaretha for lower taxes and for moderation of the Inquisition. Inexperienced, surrounded by advisers who whispered contradictory advice in her ears, she was somewhat intimidated by the petitioners. One of her advisers, Berlaymont, is said to have calmed her fears by saying, "*They're only beggars, milady*".⁸ This insult - uttered in French - provided the catch phrase *geuzen* ["beggars" in French] for the rebellion that followed, overshadowing Margaretha's attempts at reconciliation. Revolutionaries styled themselves *geuzen*, pirates were called *zee-geuzen*: the word "beggar" had become a badge of patriotism for the anti-Spanish cause. The revolt grew spontaneously, taking on the character of class warfare, anti-imperialist revolt, and religious war all mixed together. By August, 1566, fully *half* the Dutch had adopted Protestantism, and 200,000 of them were in open revolt against the government.⁹ Starting in Flanders, churches were looted and burned in a wave of *Iconoclasm* that swept northward.¹⁰ King Philip was appalled. Declaring, "*...I do not propose nor desire to be the ruler of heretics*" he decided the time had come for a crackdown, and he had just the man for the job: Fernando Álvarez de Toledo y Pimentel, 3rd Duke of Alba.¹¹

Loyal to the King

One way to keep a population "loyal" is through stern and repressive measures, and Alba, unlike his predecessor Margaretha of Parma, warmed to the task. To pull it off, he needed men truly loyal to the king, and in the Bommelerwaard he found such a man in Caspar Turck. A bastard son of one Godart Turck, Caspar was, despite his illegitimacy, an important nobleman. The powerful military commandant of the city of Gorinchem, he also commanded Loevestein Castle - the giant fortress near Brakel where perhaps 60-70 soldiers guarded the Waal and Maas from behind two meter-thick walls, a moat and drawbridge.^{12,13,14} Caspar Turck came from the local family who

⁶ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th edition, vol. 9, pg. 376.

⁷ Kossmann-Putto, J., and Kossmann, E., "The Low Countries, History of the Northern and Southern Netherlands," Flemish-Netherlands Foundation, Flanders, 1993, pp. 22-23.

⁸ Martin and Parker, pg. 62.

⁹ Martin and Parker, pg. 69.

¹⁰ Martin and Parker, pp. 67-74. Presser, pp. 69-72.

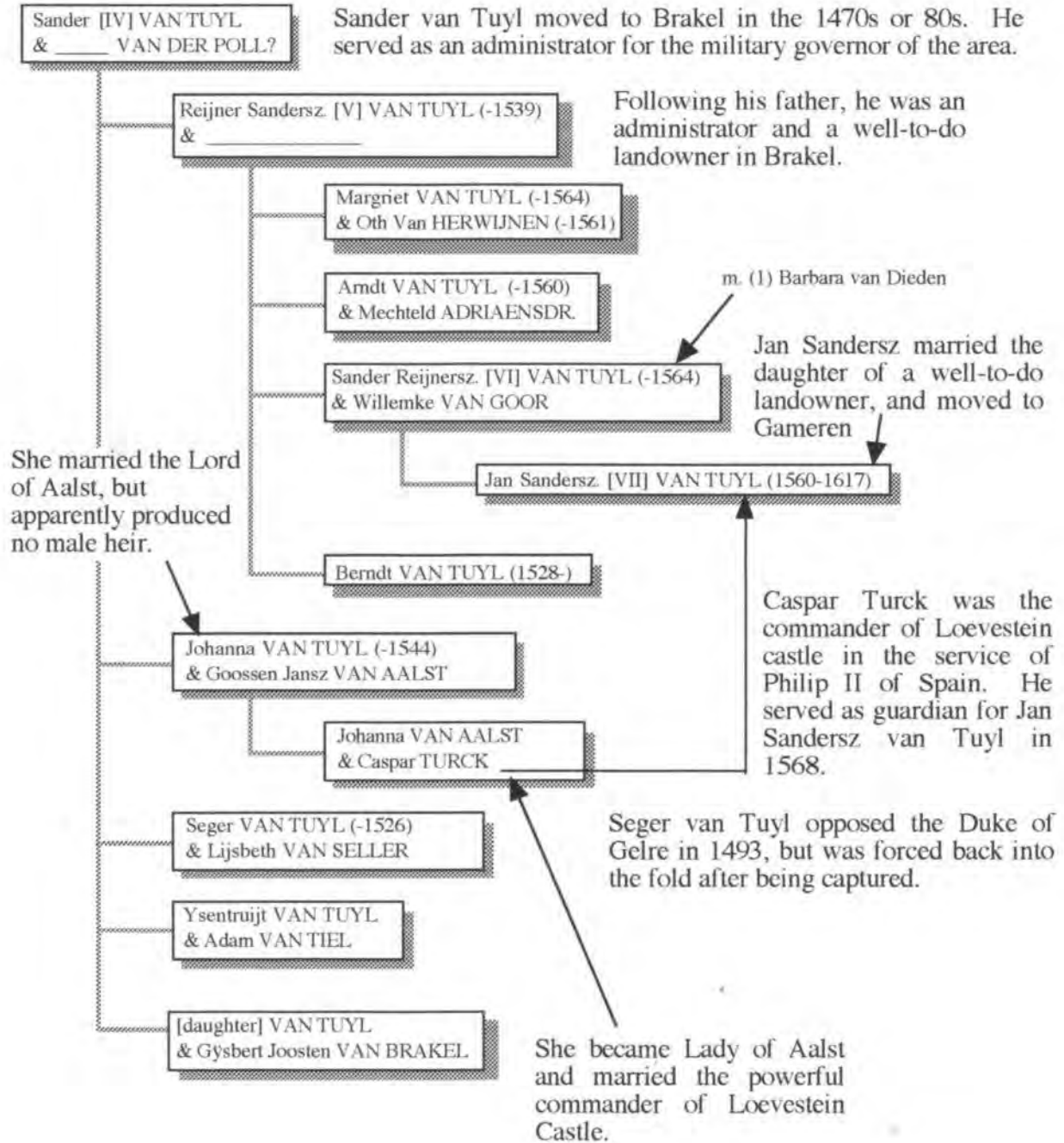
¹¹ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th edition, vol. 9, pp. 377, 205.

¹² Rijksarchief Gelderland (RAG), Rechterlijk Archief Zuilichem (RAZ) 664, fol. 3v, 12-02-1568.

¹³ W.J. Baron D'Ablaing van Giessenburg, "De Ridderschap van het Kwartier van Nijmegen," Den Haag, 1899, pg. 196. Caspar Turck appeared on the list of nobility of the Quarter of Nijmegen [1555-1570]. He died soon after the surrender of Gorinchem to the Prince of Orange in 1572.

¹⁴ Built in 1357-1368 by Diederick Loef van Horne, *Loevestein* - at the strategic confluence of the Waal and Maas, as well as the frontiers of Holland, Gelre, and Brabant - imposed tolls on all passing ships. Converted to a state prison in 1600, it confined Dutch philosopher and politician *Hugo Grotius* from 1619 until his escape in 1621.

The Van Tuyls of Brakel



were lords of the village *Nederhemert*, and he was related by marriage to the Van Tuyls of Brakel.¹⁵

Caspar and his fellow enforcers of the law must have had their hands full in the 1560's. The revolutionary wave that was sweeping the country caused them to seek out and arrest those citizens of the Bommelerwaard who were *geuzen*, or who supported those revolutionaries. The city of Zaltbommel, where a vocal minority of the people had turned Calvinist, had granted freedom of worship to these "heretics" in 1566. But the king's emissaries visited Zaltbommel and overturned the agreement, forcing many Protestants to flee to Germany or to the countryside.¹⁶ On 28 June, 1567, proceedings were instigated to ferret out those who had supported the Iconoclasms of 1566. After one year of investigation, the court condemned 23 citizens of Zaltbommel and surrounding villages to exile and forfeiture of property.¹⁷ Three of these people were actually beheaded on the market square of Zaltbommel on 6 August, 1568, and another was hanged on 7 May, 1569.^{18,19.} ²⁰ The executions were not limited to these minor figures in Zaltbommel. In 1568, the Duke of Alba captured the Count of Egmond, Stadholder of Flanders, and the Count of Horne, Stadholder of Gelre. He cut off their heads. With this act of repression began the Revolt of the Netherlands -the *Eighty Years' War*.²¹

"Where shall we be safe from harm...?"

A full-fledged social, political, and religious revolution was now in progress, and, as usual, the poor farmers and villagers were paying a heavy price. The *geuzen*, it seemed, were everywhere. They came from all kinds of backgrounds and families. It was not unusual for families to be divided in their sympathies, with some members remaining loyal Catholics and others casting their lot with the revolution. An interesting case was that of the family van Haeften - the lords of Gameren descended from the Dirck van Haeften who had taken Zaltbommel from the Burgundians in 1511.²² Now, in 1568, Dirck van Haeften - knight, lord of Gameren and grandson of the 1511 liberator of Zaltbommel - despite his rank in society and despite the fact his mother and sisters hewed faithfully to the Catholic Church, had cast his lot with the *geuzen*.²³ The authorities

¹⁵ Caspar was married to Johanna van Aalst, the Lady of Aalst, daughter of Goossen Jansz van Aalst and Johanna van Tuyl, daughter of Sander van Tuyl of Brakel.

¹⁶ De Groot, page 169.

¹⁷ De Groot, pp. 170, 458.

¹⁸ Anonymous, "Beschrijving der Stad Bommel," Arnhem, 1765, pg. 188.

¹⁹ Rijksarchief Gelderland, Rekening Ambtman Robrecht van Heerde, 23-10-1568/23-10-1569, fol. 47.

²⁰ Before the Spanish occupation, on 12 November, 1542, a Lutheran who attacked a priest in Zaltbommel was drowned in the Waal as punishment. [De Groot, pg. 139].

²¹ Kossman-Putto and Kossman, pg. 23.

²² De Groot, pg. 110. See chapter 3.

²³ Van Hasselt, G., "Stukken voor de Vaderlandse Historie," Arnhem, 1792-1793.

confiscated his property and sentenced him to exile, even though he was nowhere to be found.²⁴ Van Haeften, like his grandfather before him, did not knuckle under to the foreign-controlled authorities. On 31 July, 1572, he and 50 fellow *geuzen* overwhelmed the guards at Zaltbommel's *Bossche* gate through trickery, roused the oppressed citizenry, and "liberated" Zaltbommel. Thus, Bommel became the only city outside of Holland and Zeeland to have been freed from Spanish domination.²⁵

But in the countryside, the Spanish still controlled things through their military might and with the cooperation of some of the local ruling families - perhaps including the van Tuyls. The poor farmers were caught in the middle, as so movingly articulated by an anonymous poet of the time:

<i>Waer sullen wij nu toch blijven</i>	<i>Where shall we be safe from harm,</i>
<i>Wij boeren clyn en groot</i>	<i>We farmers great and small?</i>
<i>Ons koeyen siet men ontdrijven</i>	<i>Our cows are driven from the farm,</i>
<i>Wij worden bijster en bloot</i>	<i>We are bereft of all.</i>
<i>Die Spaengiaert wil ons hencken</i>	<i>The Spaniards love to use the lash</i>
<i>Als wij die Geus bijstaen</i>	<i>When we support the geuzen</i>
<i>Die Geus die wil ons crencken</i>	<i>The rebels come to burn and slash</i>
<i>Als wij bij die Spangiaerts gaen.</i> ²⁶	<i>When the Spanish we have chosen.</i>

In Brakel, where the Van Tuyls were among the leading citizens and where the village was located near the Spanish garrison at Loevestein, the people clung to their Catholicism. The new Protestant Church in the Low Countries was busy organizing itself, and little attention was paid to the Bommelerwaard - that far away corner of the rebellious provinces.²⁷ But on a Sunday morning in 1574, the villagers - almost certainly including young Jan Sandersz van Tuyl - were attending mass in their village church when a sudden cry "*geuzen*" disrupted their worship. A furious crowd from outside the village entered the church and started to destroy anything that couldn't be carried away. The altars, the *prie-dieu* and the sculptures of the Holy Virgin, Saint Ann, and Saint Anthony were smashed into pieces and many other sacred objects were destroyed. As a result of this Iconoclasm, the village priest was forced to hold mass secretly in his home for the remaining faithful, until he finally fled to Belgium.²⁸ Apparently, this event began the gradual conversion of Brakel's citizenry to the Protestant religion which was then sweeping the country. But it wasn't until 1587 - some 13 years later - that Brakel's first Protestant pastor arrived.²⁹

²⁴ Acquoy, J., "Jan van Venray en de wording en vestiging der Hervormde Gemeente te Zaltbommel," 's Hertogenbosch, 1873, pp. 264-266.

²⁵ Acquoy, pg. 91.

²⁶ Van der Zalm, pg. 165.

²⁷ Hamoen, G., "Het begin van de Reformatie in de Bommelerwaard," *Tussen De Voorn en Loevestein*, Jaargang 20, April 1984, pg. 2.

²⁸ *Tussen de Voorn en Loevestein*, jaargang 12, December 1976, pg. 122. Based on a chronicle written by a later Lord of Brakel (RAG, Archief Familie Van Dam van Brakel (AFDB) 7/8, page 104).

²⁹ Schutjes, L., "Geschiedenis van het bisdom 's-Hertogenbosch," St. Michiels-Gestel 1870-1876, pg. 365.

In 1574, the Spanish - possibly in retaliation for the destruction of the village church and the drift of the villagers toward the Protestant faith - sacked the castle of Brakel.³⁰ And this was only the beginning. The prolonged struggle that came to be known as the *Eighty Year's War* was about to hit the Bommelerwaard full force.

Bommel Besieged

Naturally, the fall of Zaltbommel did not sit well with the Spanish. That city on the Waal was of tremendous importance because it stood astride the land route from Brussels to Utrecht and Holland, as well as the water route to Germany. So in 1574, an army under command of Gilles of Berlaymont, Lord of Hierges - a nobleman from the southern part of The Netherlands who was loyal to King Philip - invaded the Bommelerwaard and lay siege to Zaltbommel. To cut off the lines of communication between the city and the outside world, he stationed troops in Herwijnen, Bruchem, Tuil and Gameren. Ironically, the soldiers in Gameren were stationed around the castle of Dirck van Haeften, Lord of Gameren, who was at that very time leading the defense of Zaltbommel.³¹ The city lay besieged from July to October, with mercenary soldiers aiding both the besiegers and the besieged.³² Skirmishes between the combatants laid waste the farms in the neighborhood. By the last week of August, new Spanish troops bivouacked outside the dike of Gameren, and on 1 September, German mercenaries in service of the Spanish attacked the Dutch forces' Scottish mercenaries across the Waal. Dirck van Haeften himself was involved in this skirmish, and narrowly escaped capture by retreating to Zaltbommel.³³

The Spanish deployed artillery from the southern shore of the Waal at Gameren to prevent resupply of Zaltbommel from the north.³⁴ And from Tuil, on the northern shore, they bombarded Zaltbommel itself, lobbing a cannonball into the church of St. Martin on Sunday, the 28th of August, during services.³⁵ The Spaniards even built a fortification - a blockhouse - between Gameren and Zaltbommel, in an attempt to guard their camp in Gameren against raids from Zaltbommel.³⁶ But by late September, the Spanish were finally driven off by the traditional last, best defense of the Dutch: they pierced the dikes, bringing ruin to their farms but depriving the

³⁰ Vermeulen, F., "De monumenten van geschiedenis en kunst in de Bommelerwaard," Den Haag, 1932, pg. 40.

³¹ Huybers, H., and Kleynjens, J., "De blokkade van Zaltbommel, dagverhaal van Gasparus de l'Agarge 1574," Arnhem, 1925, pg. 94, ff. Letter of 5 July, 1574 from de Berlaymont to Requesens, the governor : "*Et estant cedit fort en deffence je debvois passer avecq les mesme gens vers Gamer pour entre la et ladicte ville faire ung autre fort*".

³² De Groot, pg. 185. Both sides employed Scots, German and Swiss mercenaries. Four companies of Scots - under Col. Balfour - and one company of Germans aided the defense.

³³ Huybers, pp. 57-58, 74.

³⁴ Huybers, pp. 72-73.

³⁵ De Groot, pg. 185.

³⁶ Huybers, pg. 75. During the 18th and 19th centuries, the location was still called "The Blockhouse".

besiegers of mobility and provisions. By 11 October, 1574, the siege of Zaltbommel had been relieved.³⁷

The Van Tuyls Move to Gameren

Jan Sandersz [VII] van Tuyl of Brakel was a young man, probably about 14 years of age in 1574.³⁸ He had been fatherless for 10 years, and in 1572, his guardian, the soldier Caspar Turck, had died. He was now under the protection of a certain Jacob Sterck.³⁹ So this young man, well-connected to the ruling class of Brakel and the heir to property in the village, must have been at an impressionable age when the *geuzen* attacked the Catholic church of Brakel in 1574. Jan Sandersz van Tuyl grew to manhood in the village, probably adopting the new Protestant faith before 1586 - the very year that he married the Protestant Marijke van Oever of Gameren.^{40,41} These years after the 1574 siege of Zaltbommel and iconoclasm of Brakel were apparently peaceful ones, broken only by sporadic Spanish raids.⁴² By the time of Jan's betrothal, the Spanish were back: they crossed the Maas in 1585, sending farmers scurrying to Zaltbommel for protection.⁴³ But the raids came to nothing, and to his great good fortune, a period of relative peace would be Jan Sandersz' lot during the crucial years of his young manhood.

Peace was not the only bit of good luck for Jan Sandersz: he married well. The new Mrs. van Tuyl was Marijke van Oever, daughter of Ott van Oever, a well-to-do landowner who had served during 1564/65 - along with Jan Sandersz' father - as *schepen* on the High Bench of Zuilichem, the local court.⁴⁴ Ott van Oever owned several estates : *Blockenhoff*, *Hoge Scheilweg*, and *Ott van Oever's Hoff*. The Blockenhoff property went to Ott van Oever's son (also named Ott), but the land along Gameren's *Burgersteeg* - the one called *Ott van Oever's Hoff* - was inherited by Marijke, and it became the Van Tuyl couple's home.⁴⁵ Originally, much of the farmland along the *Burgersteeg* had been cultivated in common by the villagers - the *Burghers* for whom the street had

³⁷ Huybers, pg. 87.

³⁸ His father, Sander [VI] had died in 1564, and Jan Sandersz came of age by 1583 and married in 1586.

³⁹ Rijksarchief Gelderland, Archief Familie Van Dam van Brakel, 851, charter 33x. Appointed guardian of the young van Tuyl in 1568, Sterck took an oath on Jan's behalf in 1570, pledging fealty to the Lady of Brakel in the matter of a fief for 1 morgen of land. He swore that Jan Sandersz would renew the oath when he came of age.

⁴⁰ Schutjens, L., "Geschiedenis van het bisdom 's Hertogenbosch," St.Michiels-Gestel, 1870-1876, pg. 365.

⁴¹ The wedding took place between 22 April, 1586, when Marijke was mentioned without husband [RAG, RAZ 3, 22-04-1586], and 24 Nov., 1586 [RAG, RAZ 3, 24-11-1586].

⁴² In 1583, there was a Spanish raid on Brakel involving the theft of some horses [RAG, RAZ 3, fol. 163.]

⁴³ Wagenaar, J., "Vaderlandse Historien der Verenigde Nederlanden," Amsterdam, 1749-1759.

⁴⁴ Rijksarchief Gelderland (RAG), Rechterlijk Archief Zuilichem (RAZ), 1. This association between the fathers from different villages may have led to Jan and Marijke's betrothal.

⁴⁵ Today, Gameren's *Burgersteeg* is called the *Burgerstraat*, and it is still the home to various of Jan Sandersz' and Marijke's descendants.

been named - and in Jan's time some of the farms were still shared land, though much of it was privately owned.⁴⁶ In addition to the main farm, Jan owned 1 1/2 morgens of wheat field called *Op de Woerden*, which was located just north and west of the Burgersteeg.⁴⁷ Jan's marriage also brought with it a property inheritance from Marijke's uncle Dirck van Oever.⁴⁸ But Jan brought his own inherited property into the marriage as well - property inherited from his father, grandfather and childless uncle, Arndt.⁴⁹ He also received property in Brakel through inheritance from his aunt Margriet and her husband, Ott van Herwijnen.⁵⁰

Jan Sandersz van Tuyl, the young heir to so much fertile land, the possessor of a good family name, and the beneficiary of a temporary lull in the *Eighty Years War*, was well-positioned to pursue the life of a prosperous farmer and leading citizen in his new home along the Burgersteeg of Gameren at the close of the 16th century.

Land Bounteous and Beautiful

A contemporary chronicler wrote of the late-16th century Bommelerwaard:

*'t Landt zijnde schoon en vet
veel schoone beesten voyt,
En daer van als genoech
seer overvloedich groyt.
De Wael ende de Maes tself tot
een eylandt maken,
Die tsamen daer in een aen
bey de hoecken raecken.
De hooft-stadt Bommel is,
gheleghen op de Waal,
Een goede stercke stadt,
zy heeft oock altemael
's Landts dorpen onder haer*

.....
*'t Volck oock stoutmoedich is,
in d'oorlogh onvervaert,
Verstandich in hun doen,
scherpsinnich, cloeck van aert.*⁵¹

*Land bounteous and beautiful
with many splendid beasts,
Where the harvests of the fields
to enrich have seldom ceased.
The rivers Waal and Maas
an island's form define,
From the fortress called De Voorn
to the Castle Loevestein
The capital called Bommel
standing fast upon the Waal,
Is a strong and flourishing city,
'midst its villages withal,*

.....
*The people so courageous
are undaunted by the war,
Wise in their behavior,
they are stalwart evermore.*

⁴⁶ Rijksarchief Gelderland (RAG), Rechterlijk Archief Zuilichem, RAZ 1, 06-11-1562.

⁴⁷ Rijksarchief Gelderland (RAG), Rechterlijk Archief Zuilichem (RAZ), 671, fol. 377, 20-07-1617. This land was sold shortly after Jan's death by his children for the sum of 912 *Caroli Guilders* - the standard coinage of the 16th and 17th centuries, named for Charles V. [It was subdivided into either 20 or 22 *stivers*]

⁴⁸ Rijksarchief Gelderland (RAG), Rechterlijk Archief Zuilichem (RAZ), 671, fol. 343, 06-02-1616.

⁴⁹ Jan was the only child, therefore he would have inherited this property, it seems.

⁵⁰ One of Ott van Herwijnen and Margriet van Tuyl's daughters married *jonckheer* [young gentleman] Dirck Pieck van Tienhoven, but the marriage produced no children. So in her will [RAG, RAZ 670, 17-3-1583], Margriet had named nephew Jan Sandersz van Tuyl the primary heir. He inherited property in Brakel and a part of a foreland in Heesselt, which he sold in 1592 to Dirck Pieck [RAG, RAZ 670 fol. 193].

⁵¹ Heyns, Z., "Den Nederlandtschen Landtspiegel," Amsterdam, 1599, [1994 facsimile], pg. G2.

Gameren of this period was home to many smallholding farmers who practiced mixed agriculture, combining grain fields, orchards, vegetable gardens, and animal husbandry. Principally rye, but also wheat, were ground in the local mill, and barley, oats and buckwheat were made into porridge. Beans, turnips, and sometimes meat were used for stews.⁵² Jan Sandersz van Tuyl owned orchards and hoplands in addition to his wheat fields. Records show that he promised to sell a local man “all the hops lying on his loft”⁵³ and to a local woman he contracted to supply “a barrel of excellent winter apples”.⁵⁴ Jan also owned horses, which were serviced in 1593 by a stallion borrowed from one Jacob Gijsbertsz.⁵⁵ And as was apparently the custom among the property-owning farmers of the area, Jan Sandersz van Tuyl bought and sold land on speculation, and he also borrowed and loaned money at interest.⁵⁶

But the activity which really set Jan Sandersz apart from the average farmer was his participation in local government. As had his father and father-in-law before him, Jan served on the *High Bench of Zuilichem*. His service spanned some 28 years, from 1589 up to his death in 1617, and during part of this time he acted as president of this local judicial body which both made and enforced laws.⁵⁷ Throughout his tenure, he was called upon to put his seal to many judgments and other papers of the Bench, and we know that for this purpose, he had a seal made bearing the Van Tuyl coat-of-arms.^{58,59} The High Bench dealt with cases ranging from relatively minor transgressions up to capital offenses. An example of an actual case was that of a Nieuwaal farmer who was brought before the High Bench for the offense of planting a private crop in a publicly-owned field.⁶⁰ For the extremely serious offense of deliberately breaking a dike, the High Bench could fine the wrongdoer 100 guilders for the first offense and condemn him to death for the second. Obviously, to wield such power, a member of the High Bench would certainly have had to be a citizen of high standing and repute. Note, however, that these judges were *not* the local nobility.

⁵² Slicher van Bath, B., “De agrarische geschiedenis van West-Europa 500-1850,” Utrecht, 1987, pp 287-8, 292-3.

⁵³ Rijksarchief Gelderland (RAG), Rechterlijk Archief Zuilichem (RAZ) 5, fol. 218, 10-04-1617.

⁵⁴ Rijksarchief Gelderland (RAG), Rechterlijk Archief Zuilichem (RAZ) 671, fol. 75, 06-05-1598.

⁵⁵ Rijksarchief Gelderland (RAG), Rechterlijk Archief Zuilichem (RAZ) 4, fol. 75, 23-08-1594.

Unfortunately, the stallion’s owner sued Jan because the animal died while in his possession.

⁵⁶ Rijksarchief Gelderland (RAG), Rechterlijk Archief Zuilichem (RAZ) 3, fol. 144, 28-02-1588; RAZ 670, fol. 185, 17-06-1591; RAZ 670, fol. 187, 07-11-1591; RAZ 670, fol. 193, 16-01-1592; RAZ 670, fol. 193v, 16-01-1592; RAZ 671, fol. 47, 29-08-1596. Borrowing could be a risky business, because the mortgages or debentures could be sold to secondary investors who might foreclose, or establish a lien against the borrower’s property.

⁵⁷ Many references appear in the records of the High Bench which mention his service. For example: Rijksarchief Gelderland (RAG), Rechterlijk Archief Zuilichem (RAZ), 671, 18-05-1617.

⁵⁸ Rijksarchief Gelderland (RAG), Archief Rekenkamer van Gelderland, charter 1290, 14-05-1610.

⁵⁹ Rijksarchief Utrecht, Archief Kapittel van Oud-Munster 895.

⁶⁰ Rijksarchief Gelderland (RAG), Rechterlijk Archief Zuilichem (RAZ) 1, 06-11-1562.

They were common people chosen for this important office by some process no longer known. In Jan Sandersz' case, inheritance apparently had a lot to do with it.⁶¹

For the first thirteen years of Jan Sandersz van Tuyl's life in Gameren, the ongoing war with Spain must have intruded minimally on his daily life. But in 1599, the Bommelerwaard once again found itself at the center of the bloody events of the nation-forming *Eighty Years' War*.

Prince Maurits Defends the Bommelerwaard

The last major event of the war to affect the Bommelerwaard van Tuyls was the siege of Zaltbommel in 1599. The central player in this drama was not a local revolutionary like Dirck van Haeften, but rather a soldier of consummate skill and international repute - Prince Maurits of Orange. Maurits was the son of the ambitious Prince William of Orange, who had been the scion of a noble house from the German province of Nassau. William had been *stadholder* [i.e. the King's provincial governor] of Holland, Zeeland, and Utrecht before the arrival of Alba in 1568, at which time he took refuge in Germany. William led the resistance movement from abroad by providing the *geuzen* with *letters of marque* with which to justify their guerilla raids. Although William's brother Louis won a small battle in 1568, he was badly beaten thereafter. Orangist forces were basically unsuccessful. But William carefully noted that key element of the *geuzen's* success: the cooperation in town after town of a radical religious minority - the *Calvinists*. So when the states of Holland in 1572 proclaimed him *Stadholder* of Holland and Zeeland, William returned to Holland and promptly joined the Calvinist Church, thus assuring his family's ultimate place as leaders of a post-Spanish, Calvinist, Dutch Republic.⁶² Prince Maurits had been trained in the military arts from boyhood and, together with his cousin William Louis, would succeed in securing much of the territory which today comprises the Netherlands.⁶³ An outstanding example of his generalship was to be seen in his 1599 defense of Zaltbommel. Don Francisco de Mendoza struck the Bommelerwaard from the east in April of that year, but Maurits stopped him cold at a small fortress called *De Voorn*, just east of the Bommelerwaard.⁶⁴

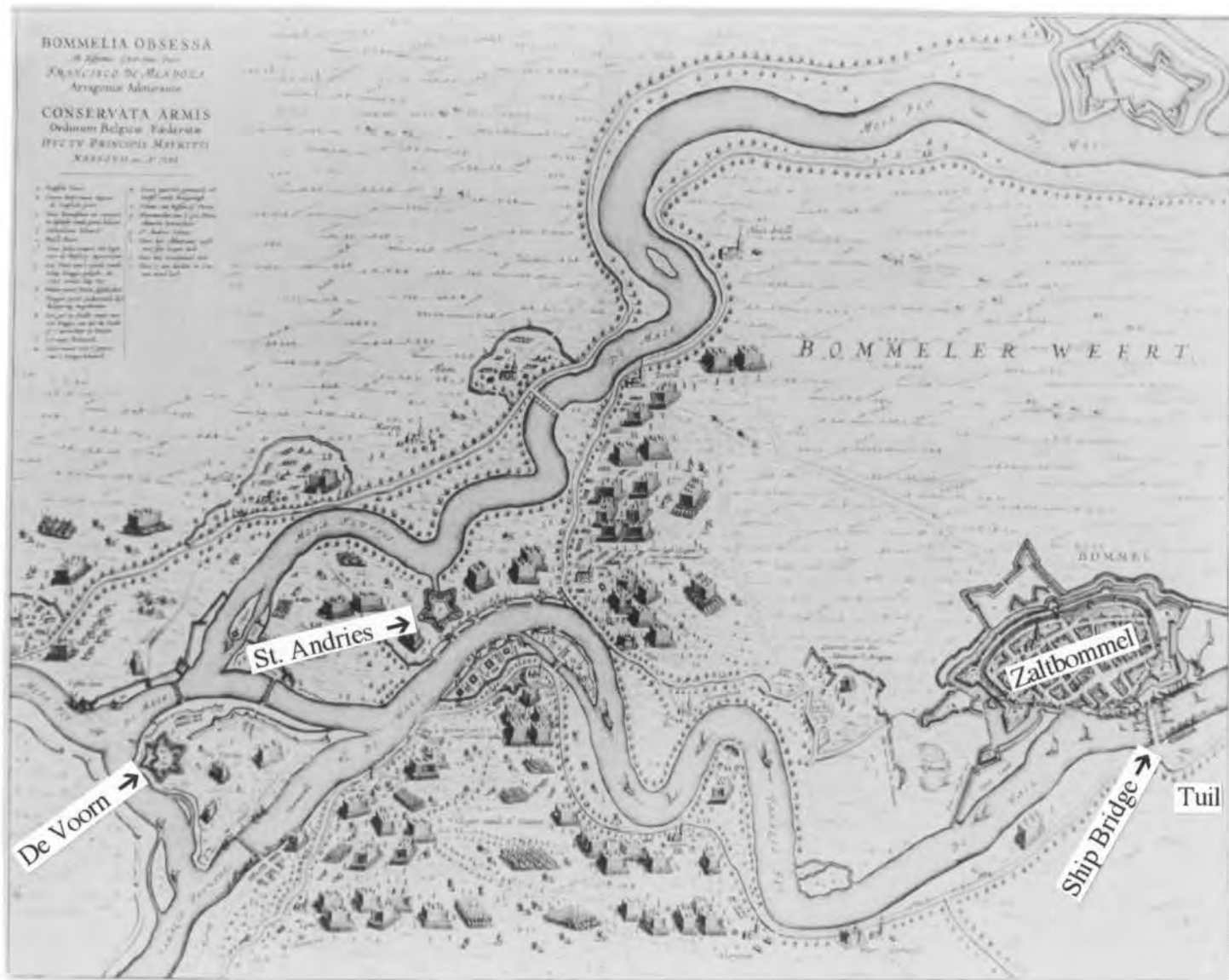
⁶¹ Streekarchief Bommelerwaard, *Dagelijks Recht 1623/1644*. In 1623 and 1644, after Jan Sandersz' death, the High Benches of Driel, Zuilichem, Tuil, and Deil proclaimed new statutes based on centuries-old common law [the *Dagelijks Recht*]. They contained articles regarding cattle that broke out and damaged property of others, the number of sheep one was allowed to keep (four per morgen), rights-of-way over someone else's property, hunting, the right to cut trees, and cattle-breeding. Also, they contained the laws governing dikes.

⁶² *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed., vol. 23, pp. 324-325.

⁶³ Kossmann-Putto and Kossmann, pp. 28-29.

⁶⁴ De Groot, pg. 225. *De Voorn* no longer exists. It stood on a small island between the Maas and the Waal, at the extreme eastern tip of the Bommelerwaard.

N



Prince Maurits lifts the Spanish siege of Zaltbommel [1599-1600], supplying the city with a ship bridge from Tuil. [Streekarchief Bommelerwaard]

One of Mendoza's commanders attacked the Bommelerwaard from the south in May, laying siege to the ever-critical fortified city of Zaltbommel. Prince Maurits himself took command of the city's defense, and in order to keep it supplied from the north, he employed a stratagem presaging that of the 20th century allied invasion of Europe: the floating bridge. Maurits' engineers took fourteen flat-bottomed Dutch ships, stripped them of their rigging, then anchored them in a line crossing the Waal from a point east of Tuil to the harbor of Zaltbommel. They then constructed a plank roadway across the ships which was wide enough to allow two wagons to pass in opposite directions.⁶⁵ For the first time, the Bommelerwaard had a highway to and from the north, and the military advantage so gained was incalculable. The Spaniards invested the city for several months, but to no avail. At the end of May, they tried a flanking maneuver to the west, but were met at Brakel by Maurits' troops. To prevent the Spanish from encircling Zaltbommel from the west, Maurits reverted to the methods of his predecessors: he pierced the dikes near Gameren, flooding the farmers, but saving the city.⁶⁶

By early the next year, Prince Maurits drove the Spaniards from the Bommelerwaard once and for all, thus dealing a fatal blow to their campaign to extend the Spanish Netherlands north of the Maas. ⁶⁷ The Van Tuyls and their neighbors picked up the pieces once again, and resumed their normal lives. Never again would they be occupied or besieged by the Spanish. From 1609 to 1621, a twelve-year truce ensured the peace. With the resumption of hostilities after 1621, Maurits' successor, Prince Frederick Hendrik in 1629 captured the city of 's Hertogenbosch to the south of Bommel, thus pushing the war's front line south for the duration.

The Heirs of Jan Sandersz van Tuyl

Jan Sandersz van Tuyl died on 18 May, 1617, during the twelve year truce. He was under 50 years of age, and seems to have led a remarkably successful life, given the state of war that raged around him during his adult years. Unfortunately for him, the last year of his life was not one of peace and contentment. Marijke, his wife, had died the year before, and now his children were squabbling over the estate.⁶⁸ The four children were: Marijken and Sander, both adults at this time, and Ott and Aerd, minors.⁶⁹ Soon after her mother's death, Marijken tried to sell half the estate of her mother.⁷⁰ But for this to happen, the estate would have to be divided. So Sander, apparently joining his sister Marijken, petitioned for a division of the estate, but their father, Jan

⁶⁵ De Groot, pg. 227.

⁶⁶ De Groot, pg. 232.

⁶⁷ De Groot, pg. 236.

⁶⁸ In Dutch society, property could be inherited through one's mother. Since Marijke had brought much of the property into the marriage, it became heritable upon her death.

⁶⁹ See: *Dutch Genealogy*, Generation 6. Ott was ten years old when his mother died, because it stated in 1641 that he was 35 years old (RAG, RAZ 8, fol. 279, 12-11-1641). Aerd was younger because in 1626 Ott acted as guardian for him (RAG, RAZ 673, fol. 22, 07-05-1626).

⁷⁰ Rijksarchief Gelderland (RAG), Rechterlijk Archief Zuilichem (RAZ) 671, fol. 344, 21-02-1616.

Chapter 4

Sandersz, refused.⁷¹ Marijken apparently reconsidered in June, withdrawing her request for division of the estate.⁷² The property matter was settled several years later, after Jan Sandersz' death.⁷³ Presumably, the combined inheritance from both parents, when divided, yielded enough property to satisfy the needs of all four children.

The Van Tuyls of Gameren were now, after the death of Jan Sandersz, in a position of less wealth and social standing than had accrued to their father, the man who brought the family to this small village. Their world was changed forever. They were no longer ruled by kings and dukes, no longer answerable to the Catholic Bishops, and they no longer had a heritable family position on the lower fringe of the medieval system. The 17th century would turn out to be the "Dutch Golden Age", but the van Tuyls of Gameren were now just simple farmers in the backwater of the new *Dutch Republic*, and what role they might have in the coming glorious century was far from clear.



The Spanish were defeated by the armies of Prince Frederik Hendrik of Orange [right], half brother of Prince Maurits, and his general Ernst Casimir at the siege of 's Hertogenbosch in 1629. This victory pushed the Catholic/Protestant frontier southward, insulating the Bommelerwaard from future battles of the *Eighty Years' War*. [’s-Hertogenbosch, Noordbrabants Museum].

⁷¹ Rijksarchief Gelderland (RAG), Rechterlijk Archief Zuilichem (RAZ) 671, fol. 38, 26-03-1616.

⁷² Rijksarchief Gelderland (RAG), Rechterlijk Archief Zuilichem (RAZ) 5, fol. 202, 17-06-1616.

⁷³ Rijksarchief Gelderland (RAG), Rechterlijk Archief Zuilichem (RAZ) 6, fol. 46, 23-03-1619.