

Jacob and Fijtje Cloeten “van Ut in ’t Land van Ceulen”

On 23 May 1693 there is an entry in the Journal¹ of the Cape Governor, Simon Van der Stel:

“This evening, between the hours of 8 and 9, was murdered, not far from the Castle near the butchery, Jacob Cloeten, corporal in the service of the Hon. Company, the oldest of the Comp’s servants, having helped to lay the foundation of this colony, having been the first Freeman, though having later returned to the service of the Company...he was found, badly mistreated with three blows to the head and two stab wounds to the chest, all five mortal, over and above 25 lesser wounds, he was found lying in his blood with his sword at his side still in its scabbard, so that the attack must have been treacherous, as he was still very agile and as fit as a 25-year old young man.[...]”



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SO ENDED the life of one of the most singular men in South African history and progenitor of the vast family of CLOETE, now spread all over the world. This is the one man who occurs most often in the ancestry of South Africans of European descent. For many he occurs multiple times. That is true of both the author and of his wife. Our son counts no fewer than five ancestors among the thirteen children of his daughter, Elsje.

In July 2007 the author set off on a quest to determine his son’s complete ancestry back to the *stamvaders* of South Africa and soon ran into the intrepid Jacob and his wife Fijtje, who should possibly be nominated as a *Mother of the Nation*. After all, their daughter, Elsje, is the origin of all the VAN DER MERWES, VAN HEERDENs and (JANSE) VAN RENSBURGS of South Africa; and all MYBURG(H)s alive in South Africa today are descended from her – the other MYBURG(H) wing having terminated centuries ago.

Jacob carries the distinction of being the first of the Free Burghers at the Cape to meet the three key criteria of obtaining a *Letter of Freedom*; settling with his wife; and producing children who remained at the Cape to build the nation. In doing so, he

outranks all nineteen men who preceded him on the Free Burgher roster. He was then also, along with Hendrick HENDRICKSZ, the first to obtain individual title to land on 10 October 1657. Jacob was the first truly committed European immigrant South African – the man to follow.

Jacob Cloete – The Twentieth Burgher

Whereas hundreds of thousands of South Africans have this man in their ancestry, remarkably little is known about him. According to De Villiers,² he arrived in 1652 with Jan van Riebeeck. This lends a special air to any association with him and hence many people proudly sport in their genealogies the comment that their ancestors landed on 6 April 1652. However, when one scours the early documents at the Cape, it becomes clear that there is no direct evidence for this statement.

The best supporting argument thus far, has been that Jacob was made a Free Burgher after serving five years at the Cape, thereby pinning his arrival in 1652, as he was made a Free Burgher in 1657. This follows a statement made by Moritz³ about the first Free Burgher, Harmen Remajenne, who, according to Moritz, was made Free Burgher after having served a five-year contract. However, it is not clear that such a rule existed. Even if it did, what Moritz failed to consider, is that on 16 April 1657 Councillor Extraordinary of India, Rykloff van Goens, representing the Dutch East India Company, instructed Van Riebeeck⁴ during his inspection tour of the Cape:

“[...] we have only to proceed to the fulfillment and further object of devising the most suitable means of diminishing the expenditure; and which means are to be found in the observance of the following points – if only attended to with the zeal expected of you by the Directors.

First; – Discharging all salaried servants above the number of one hundred, according to the list prepared in conjunction with you, and hereinafter inserted.

Secondly; – Employing these servants on no other work than that which is the most indispensable, that is to say, upon agriculture and the raising of grain.

Thirdly; – That you endeavour to encourage to that employment as many Burghers as possible [...].”

Since Jacob joined the ranks of the Free Burghers after this date, it is quite likely that he was expediently encouraged to it by Van Riebeeck as a cost-saving measure, exactly as instructed. We therefore have no direct evidence that Jacob arrived at the Cape in 1652 with Van Riebeeck; and even the circumstantial evidence is suspect.

It is, of course, possible that Van Riebeeck might have favoured him if he had indeed been one of the first to land, but that is out and out speculation. In consulting with Dutch archives, the author has learnt that there are no surviving Dutch East India Company pay book records for the period 1650-1660. So, that particular avenue is also closed to us.

Let us consider the arrangements for the Free Burghers. They were given their land under a contract entitled *Letter of Freedom*,⁵ which included a stipulation that they had to work those lands diligently for a minimum of twelve years. This was first drawn up on 11 April 1657 and Jacob received⁶ his on 10 August 1657, the twentieth man ever to become a Burgher. By implication, his contract would then have expired in 1669, a date we need to remember in this work. He was granted⁷ his land on 10 October 1657 and joined the Free Burgher group of Harmen Remajenne, whose correct name was possibly Remagen, a surname that existed in the Cologne area:⁸

“The Commander and Council, &c. grant to Jacob Cloeten of Cologne, deep E. by N. and W. by S. at the S. side 145, and at the N. side almost to the same extent, but towards the W. end, because of the river tapering somewhat narrowly 177 roods ; broad at the E. and S.W. by S. and N.E. by N. 80 roods, and at the W. end at the aforesaid river S. by W. and N. by B. 57 roods, thus making all together 12,000 square roods or 20 morgen of ground, as shown in the exact diagram of the same, drawn above, viz., No. 9.

Given in the Fort the Good Hope, this 10th day of October, 1657.

(Signed) JAN VAN RIEBEECK."

It is significant that Harmen, just like Jacob, was also from the general area of Cologne or "Ceulen". On the same day Hendrick Hendricksz became the other of the first two men to have individual title to land at the Cape.

Jacob's arrival at the Cape

In determining when Jacob came to the Cape, it seems reasonable to consult the muster rolls⁹ of the Cape for the period preceding his *Letter of Freedom*. We have those for 1656 and 1657, and Jacob is not among the one hundred and thirty-three souls at the Cape on 20 March 1656, nor is he among the one hundred and twenty-four on 6 March 1657. We also have muster rolls for 31 May 1657, covering both men stationed at the "Fort" and Free Burghers. He is not among either of those groups. On 15 February 1658, he appears for the first time as a Free Burgher on the muster roll. Whereas there is a section on that muster roll for the wives and children of Free Burghers, there is no entry for any wife or children for Jacob.

Clearly, Jacob Cloete arrived at the Cape after 31 May 1657 and before 10 August 1657 when, with the stated rank of *Adelborst* (Cadet), he received his *Letter of Freedom*. Only two DEIC ships¹⁰ came to the Cape in that winter period – both from the Netherlands. The first was the *Maria* that arrived on 13 July 1657 from Vlie, under captain Claes France Bordingh. This ship remained at the Cape for a year, doing service between the Cape and Angola. One single unidentified sailor left the ship at the Cape. The second ship was the *Verenigde Provinciën* that arrived on 7 August 1657 from Wielingen. Twelve men from that ship remained at the Cape.

Somehow, it just does not seem feasible that a man would land unprepared to stay in Africa on 7 August and already have a formally signed *Letter of Freedom* from the station commander two or three days later. This suggests that Jacob was the unidentified sailor who stepped off the *Maria* on 13 July 1657 and, over a period of a month, finally obtained his *Letter of Freedom* from Van Riebeeck. He is

then also the only individual to be granted such a letter between 30 June and 30 September of that year. This also suggests that he was not part of a larger planned group. Possibly Jacob visited fellow Cologne native, Harmen Remajenne, was intrigued by the Free Burgher status of the latter and obtained his support in being recommended to Van Riebeeck as suitably qualified to make a positive contribution to the Cape as a Free Burgher. Whereas he would later change his view, we know that Van Riebeeck considered Remajenne the most competent Free Burgher at that time. This might also explain why it is that Jacob was the first man to obtain individual land title at the Cape, whereas the two previous grants to Harmen Remajenne and Steven Jansz (later Bothma) had been communal. All this would have taken considerably more than three days to achieve, making the *Maria* of 13 July 1657 his likely ship of arrival.

Another argument has been that he pointedly came out to the Cape to become a Free Burgher and had applied for the opportunity in Europe, having somehow heard of it. The author suggests that the starting point is the letter¹¹ of the Lords XVII to Van Riebeeck dated 6 October 1654, in which they informed him that they had been told by David Claes that the Cape is a superb place, and that a couple of families from Europe might be placed there to grow grain and breed cattle. They also said they would make no decision until they heard from Van Riebeeck. Van Riebeeck replied¹² on 28 April 1655, explaining that Free Burghers would need help and freedom from taxes for a while, but would have to be bound to trade only with the Company or those approved of by the Company. However, Commissioner Ryk van Goens had arrived at the head of a fleet on 21 April of that year, and he later played a big role in the Free Burgher effort. Van Riebeeck and Van Goens went on a tour of the Cape area a week later on 28 April 1655 and it is likely that they discussed a policy around Free Burghers. No doubt this affected Van Riebeeck's response to the Lords XVII on the same day.

For the next year, several of Van Riebeeck's letters speculatively addressed ways of getting Dutch Free Burghers, bonded Chinese debtors or *Mardijkers* (Christian Indian Freemen from Indonesia) to come to the Cape. On 19 and 20 February 1657 Van Riebeeck

reported in his diary that several men had offered to *betake themselves to freedom* under fair conditions.¹³ On the next day, the 21st, his diary is brimful of details about the two Free Burgher “Colonies” of Harmen Remajenne and Steven Jansz Bothma. On 5 March 1657 Van Riebeeck advised¹⁴ the Lords XVII of his decision of 21 February and said pointedly that men could volunteer and that there was enough land to grow food to feed all the DEIC possessions in the East, if he had but the people. This was not the behaviour and these are not the words of a man merely administering a scheme already advertised in Europe.

Van Riebeeck wrote the first ever *Letter of Freedom* for Harmen Remajenne only on 11 April 1657, while the *Maria*, with Jacob speculatively on board, left Vlie in the Netherlands on 10 April 1657, and the *Vereenigde Provinciën* left Wielingen on 13 April. On 14 April South Africa’s earliest surviving Free Burgher, Steven Jans (Bothma) from Wangeningen, received his *Letter of Freedom* with a list of other men. Those on board the ships could not conceivably have known about the Free Burgher opportunity yet, unless, of course, it had somehow been announced in Europe. Yet, we have no record of such an event or decision or advertisement. Nor, according to JR Bruijn,¹⁵ does either ship’s log show that a passenger was on board and disembarked at the Cape. It was a sailor that disembarked from the *Maria*. And it is only on 16 April that Van Goens belatedly issued the cost saving instructions shown under “Jacob Cloete – the Twentieth Burgher”.

Against this background, appointing sailors to the role, when Van Riebeeck’s instructions were to reduce the number of men on payroll stationed at the Cape, would not have helped. Jacob’s case had to have been some sort of exception, such as special qualifications, or a recommendation by an existing person of repute, such as Remajenne. That would have taken time. All these reasons make the *Maria* of 13 July 1657 the obvious choice of ship for Jacob to have arrived on.

Fijtje Raderotjes and her unique family name

Jacob’s wife was Fijtje Raderotjes. One of the enduring puzzles of the early Cape has been Fijtje’s hugely peculiar surname. The puzzle

arises from an entry in the records of the Council of Policy at the Cape on Wednesday 10 November 1660:¹⁶

*“Pieter Raderotjes van Ut in ’t lant van Ceulen, hier te lande
gecoomen voor vrijman met ’t schip Aernhem den 16en Meert
ao. 1659 met sijn suster Fijtje Raderotjes, huijsvrouw van den
vrijborger Jacob Cloeten [...].”*

This quite unequivocally states that Fijtje Raderotjes [sic] was the housewife of Jacob Cloete and that she had arrived more than a year-and-a-half earlier on 16 March 1659. Moritz,¹⁷ a German author, who also elected to write her name as Raderotjes, preferred to interpret this as implying that she married Jacob only after arriving at the Cape. Her marital status upon arrival is a question we address later on. For the moment, the intrigue here is with her surname. We consider a few other places where it is mentioned in the records at the Cape:

The 1660 Muster Roll: Fyckje Raderottjes – 3 k

The 1661 Muster Roll: Fyckie Raderottjes, van Oijt – 3k

The 1662 Muster Roll: Fyckje Radergenties of Oijt

The 1664 Muster Roll: Fijtje Raderatjes van Uts – 4k

The 1665 Muster Roll: Fijtge Raderootjes van Keulen – 4k

So, the only thing we can vaguely be certain about, concerning her surname, is that the first two syllables are “Rader”, that here may possibly be an “es” at the end, and that there may be an “o” in between. Given the fact that Rademacher and Rademeyer and the like are relatively common surnames, the incentive is there to experiment with the fifth letter as well. All of this leaves the researcher with pitifully little to rely on.

With services like the Familysearch.org facility of the Mormon Church and genealogical systems such as Rootsweb.com, it is possible these days to get some sort of lead to follow, as long as one does not allow oneself to be misled by doubtful information. However, putting any of these names into either of these facilities, or even trying variants such as Radergörtz, which has been suggested,

merely regurgitates decades of speculative entries by South Africans in search of their earliest ancestor. Despite the many entries in these databases for “our” Fijtje, Fijtge, Fyckje, Fyckie, there is not a single case where either of these services produced an original source. In fact, the Mormon Church has now immortalised this misleading speculation on compact disk.

At this point in our presentation, her name remains a temporary mystery. It will, however, become clear in what follows. The one thing that is quite clear, however, is that Fijtje, Fijtge, Fyckje and Fyckie are all “pet” names derived from Sophia. We do therefore know that Jacob married a Sophia with a surname of the form Rade(r)x[o]xxxxes, and that she came from “Ut in ’t land van Ceulen”.

The Search for “Ut in ’t Land van Ceulen” – Jacob speaks

Jacob’s first name is exceedingly common in Germany and his surname has roots of the form Klut, Kluth, Klaut, Cloet or even Clooth, which in itself gives rise to a vast range of possibilities. Therefore, the best direction to follow in order to find their marriage in Europe was to find the elusive “Ut” or “Oijt”. There surely could not have been marriages between more than one Klut(h), Klaut, Cloet, Clooth family and a Rade(r)x[o]xxxxes family in a place with an exceptional name like “Ut” – but where to look?

The Cape Council of Policy tells us that “Ut” was in the “land van Ceulen”. There was no Germany in the 1650s. When Jacob joined the DEIC, the country that would later become Germany was a mind-boggling patchwork of scores of baronies, duchies, kingdoms, and bishoprics – the remnants of a disintegrated Holy Roman Empire. It therefore seemed reasonable to look in the demographic unit in which Cologne was located in the 1650s. The State of Köln or, more correctly, the Electorate of Cologne (Kurfürstentum Köln, Kurköln) was ruled directly by the Archbishops of Köln from 953 to 1803. The territory later became part of Westfalen and is now part of the states of Nordrhein-Westfalen and Rheinland-Pfalz.

In performing this investigation, it seemed obvious to the author that one had to find a map of the 1600s Rhine around Cologne. The

most famous cartographer of that era was a man named Blaeu, and, usefully enough, he made exactly the map that was required. Below is the Blaeu map of “Coloniensis”, depicting the general part of the seventeenth century Germany around Cologne, which Blaeu refers to not as Köln or Ceulen, but as Collen. On this map, the area of interest is referred to as the Niderstift, a “stift” (“stigt” in Dutch) being a Bishopric. This map appears on a website of the University of California at:

<http://www.library.ucla.edu/yr1/reference/maps/blaeu/coloniensis.jpg>

One then had to ask what would be the Niederrhein German spelling of a place that an Amsterdam DEIC person, sitting at the Cape, would perceive to sound like “Ut(s)” or “Oijt(s)” when pronounced by a Niederrhein German like Jacob. The author speculated that for “Ut”, they were hearing the German “ö” or “oe”. The spelling of the name of the town would likely be Ödt, or, written out fully without umlaut – Oedt. It takes very little effort to find Oedt as a sizable village for its time, located near Kempen, on the very



Part of the “Land van Ceulen”, showing Köln (Collen), with Oedt and Kempen in the northwest near the border

north-western limit of the “Niderstiftf” (Note that north is to the right on this map).

This is rather an intriguing result, because Moritz states:¹⁸

“*Jacob Cloeten kam [...] mit seinem Bruder Gerrit von Kempen [...].*”

In hindsight, ignoring for the moment Moritz’s theory about the relationship between Jacob and Gerrit, somehow locating Jacob at Kempen rather than at Cologne/Ceulen should have been a clue to him. The author has no idea where Moritz obtained that information, since no early Cape documentation contains it. Oddly, while placing Jacob so near to our proposed “Ut”, he proceeds to suggest that Fijtje’s “Ut” is actually Ütze or Uetze, very far to the northeast beyond Hanover. There seems little logic in a young man travelling hundreds of kilometres in 1650 to go and marry a young lady from a place that was nowhere near his home town of “Ut”.

Today Oedt is a mere village square within the small town of Grefrath, north of Viersen, in the church district of Kempen. It is completely swamped by Grefrath and hardly appears on any maps. Once one knows where to look, it can be found with services such as Google Maps. It seems ready to finally disappear.

Nevertheless, there is always hope. And so it is that there is a man in Oedt who is concerned about their culture dying out. He has established a website, www.Oedt.de, styling the little place the *Jewel of the Niers*. This all sounds interesting but unimportant to us, until one explores his work a little more closely. This reveals an effort on his part to act as custodian of their disappeared language, with the name of none other than “Uetsch Platt” (probably, more correctly in German, “Oedtsch Platt”), and this is quite possibly where the Dutch descriptive “Oijts” came from that was used in some cases when describing Fijtje’s origin. The little bit that is provided in the *Wörterbuch* suggests that Uetsch Platt is a Lower Franconian Germanic language, just like Afrikaans. Most Afrikaners today would probably have understood Jacob if he had spoken slowly in his mother tongue of Uetsch Platt.

Finding Fijtje

The next step in the quest was to see what genealogical information, if any at all, could be unearthed for Fijtje in Oedt. A simple Google search for “Oedt + Sophia” produced a rather unique website by a very helpful German by the name of Robert Krebber who does genealogy in the German-Dutch cross-border Niederrhein (Lower Rhine) region. He maintains a website at www.OnGen.de

Krebber had done something rather unusual, and key to our quest. For a given town, he had listed all the surnames from the marriage books of the local churches and, separately on the same page, listed all the first names, never combining the two. He repeated the process separately for baptisms. Consulting his pages for Oedt, the author was stopped dead in his tracks when he found the following surnames listed:

Radergoertges, Radergortges, with a missing umlaut on the “o” explaining the “e” in *Radergoertges*

Radergoerdgtges, Radergordtges, with a missing umlaut on the “o” explaining the “e” in *Radergoertges*

Radergoertgens, Radergortgen, with similar umlaut problems, and a more remote, *Radergorden*

There were also the rather more wayward *Raderguetges* and *Radergeurttes*.

Krebber also stated that his source was church book entries on the Familysearch.org site. For once, the author suspended his judgment of the quality of popular data on that site and entered each surname in turn. They all referred to the same set of church books – that of the Catholic church in Oedt, Niederrhein, Preusse. When the author entered “Radergoertgens” it produced the following result as transcript from those church books:

Jacob Klauten x Feigen Radergeortgens

31 May 1650 Katholisch, Oedt, Rheinland, Preussen

Parish register transcripts of baptisms, marriages and deaths for Ödt, Rheinland, Preußen, Germany

Kirchenbuch, 1612-1798, Katholische Kirche Ödt (Kr. Kempen)

Taufen 1612-1659; Heiraten 1631-1655, 1615-1631
Film Detail: FHL INTL Film 176143

Clearly we have not just correctly identified “Ut in ’t land van Ceulen” as Oedt, but we have found the marriage of “Jacob Cloete” and “Fijtje Raderotjes” in the Catholic Church in the Niederrhein town on 31 May 1650. This marriage entry also appears on microfiche at the archives in Bruehl, where it is referenced as entry Ba 2010 Fiche 5/6 p145.

Jacob van Oedt in ’t land van Köln

It has become somewhat of a genealogical tradition among South Africans to insist that the parents of Jacob were a certain Wilhelmi Klutt and Girtrudis Burschett of Cologne. This was a real couple and they indeed had a son by the name of Jacob. For the sake of completeness we provide here the baptisms for this Klutt couple from Cologne, who also had a further child that no one has ever referred to:

Jacobum Klutt baptism: 2 Dec 1624, Koeln Stadt, Rheinland, Preussen

- Father: Wilhelmi Klutt
- Mother: Girtrudis Burschett

Gulielmum Clooth baptism: 10 Aug 1626, Koeln Stadt, Rheinland, Preussen

- Father: Gulielmi Clooth
- Mother: Girtrudis Clooth – from Kirchenbuch, 1595-1798, Katholische Sankt Kunibertkirche Cöln.

However, one is hard put to understand why there has to be this insistence on seeing Jacob as coming specifically from Köln Stadt, simply because he was listed as “Jacob Cloeten van Ceulen”. To this end, consider the 1665 muster roll entry for Fijtje where she is also described as “Fijtge Raderootjes van Keulen“. The “Ceulen” that was referred to in these 1660 notes, was simply the State of Köln, not Stadt Köln. It is more reasonable to look for Jacob’s birth in the town in the State of Köln where he was married. Proceeding on the

assumption that Jacob was likely to have married in the town in which he had been born, we find in the transcripts of the very same Oedt Catholic church books the following baptisms:

Father: Conrad(t) Klauten, sometimes called “Conradi”

Mother: Catharina No Name, sometimes called by the diminutive¹⁹ “Trein”

- Jennicken Klauten ≈ 5.3.1628, a diminutive²⁰ name for “Johanna”
- Jacobus Klauten ≈ 11.11.1630, possibly the “Jacob Cloete” of the Cape
- Nehssgen Klauten ≈ 6.5.1635, a diminutive²¹ name for “Agnes”
- Joannes Klauten ≈ 18.4.1638
- Petrus Klauten ≈ 27.1.1641
- Adelheidis Klauten ≈ 31.12.1645

The above is more than likely the correct Oedt-based family for Jacob Cloete, and the following section serves to further support this conclusion, but work to confirm this is still continuing in Germany.

Gerrit and Elsje van Oedt in 't land van Ceulen

Having firmly settled on Oedt as the hometown of our Klauten family, we simply search in the *Kirchenbücher* of the St Vitus Catholic church in Oedt to find the following two baptisms:

Father: Jacobi Klauten

Mother: SOPHIAE; Katholisch, Oedt, Rheinland, Preussen.

- Godefridus Klauten Male ≈ 2.4.1651. This entry is referenced in the Bruehl archive as Ba 2010 fiche 3/6 p79. The name Godefridus is merely a Latinised version of Gottfried. In the Niederrhein area Gottfried is often reduced²² to “Gört” or “Göert”; hence the son “Gerrit” we know at the Cape. The witnesses to this baptism are two unknown people, namely Andreas Entgens en Metges Pauli.
- Adelheidis Klauten Female ≈ 28.2.1655. This entry is referenced in the Bruehl archive as Ba 2010 Fiche 3/6 p90. In the

Niederrhein the name Adelheid is often reduced²³ to Eltgen; hence the daughter “Elsjen” (Dutch) we know at the Cape. The witnesses to this baptism are Petrus Sax en Agnes Klauten. It seems reasonable to conclude that the second witness was none other than Jacob’s younger sister “Nehssgen”.

These are clearly the two children who came to the Cape with Fijtje on 16 March 1659 on the *Arnhem*. There are no further children baptised by the couple after 28 February 1655 in that church. All of this is completely consistent with Jacob leaving for the Cape at some point after 28 February 1655. It does mean, however, that both De Villiers²⁴ and Heese²⁵ have the wrong indexing for the family Cloete, and that the De Villiers numbers of Gerrit and Elsjen have to be swapped around. “Gerrit” (Göert) is b1 and “Elsjen” (Eltgen) is b2.

Jacob’s life at the Cape

The life of Jacob Cloete at the Cape has been well documented. We know how Sophia had to flee to a shelter with Gerrit and Elsje when the “Hottentots” under Doman threatened them on 21 May 1659, shortly after she had arrived. We know that, as Free Burgher, Jacob had to do a Commando parade after church every Sunday, after Van Riebeeck created the world’s first ever *Commando* on the next day, 22 May 1659. We also know how Jacob repeatedly got into trouble for his illegal trading of cattle with the Khoi.

By 7 May 1660 Van Riebeeck observed that the amount of land then available for sowing wheat and rye was fifty morgen of the company, thirty-five of his own as commander, and fifty-seven among the Free Burghers. This shows the significance of the Free Burgher agricultural effort at that time. Jacob was responsible for ten morgen of that total.

On 4 July Van Riebeeck realised²⁶ the full extent of Harmen Remajenne’s activities. It turned out he had not just been trading with the Khoi, paying them up to six times more than the Company. He even paid them in iron, which they used for weapons to attack the Dutch. He had also been training them in how to use firearms and had even intentionally disrupted an ambush the DEIC men had laid

for the Khoi during the 1695 war. The Khoi and Remajenne implicated Jacob in the illicit trade. Amazingly, considering the severity of Remajenne's actions, Van Riebeeck fined only Remajenne and let Jacob off with a warning.

On 11 November of 1660, Van Riebeeck noted in his Journal:²⁷

“Pieter Raderotjes, of Uts, in the land of Cologne, who arrived here as freeman in the Arnhem on the 16th March, 1659, with his sister Fytje Raderotjes, wife of the burgher Jacob Cloeten, who begged us to be taken into the Company's service, and who, since April last, has been employed at the Company's Schuur, is, in consequence of his good knowledge of agriculture, accepted by us as agriculturist, at f10 per month, provided that he remains here in service ten years; his pay to commence on the 1st April, the day on which he entered on his duties at the Schuur.”

As life proceeded at the Cape, Jacob clearly became more and more frustrated with the limitations imposed by the Company. Burghers were not allowed to barter with the Khoi, they were not allowed to trade with the visiting ships without Company consent, they were not allowed to sell meat to the inhabitants of the Cape without working through the Company. It was pretty clear that they were just supposed to plough and sow wheat and rye and provide it to the Company at a controlled price and keep quiet. The situation proved too much for most of the Free Burghers and, by the end of the 1660s Jacob, Wouter Cornelisz Mostert, Steven Jansz Bothma and Hendrick Elbrechtsz were the only ones left of the original twenty Free Burghers of 1657. By August 1669 his twelve-year Free Burgher contract expired. However, he still had to work off his original employment contract. So it was that it was only on 4 February 1671 that he requested permission from the Council of Policy to return to the Netherlands. This permission was duly granted. A fleet of eleven ships left the Cape for Europe on 26 Feb 1671 and another fleet of five in March 1671. He was likely on one of those. These fleets amalgamated and started arriving in the Netherlands on 14 June 1671. This brings to a close Jacob's first period at the Cape.

Before dealing with his second period at the Cape, we return first to 16 March 1659 to address another aspect of his contribution to the Cape.

Sophia's children

According to JR Bruijn et al in *Dutch-Asiatic Shipping 1595-1795*,²⁸ the *Arnhem* left Vlie in the Netherlands on 22 October 1658 and arrived at the Cape on the date given by the Council of Policy, namely, 16 March 1659. On board were six soldiers destined for the Cape, as well as eight passengers. Four of those passengers were Sophia, her brother Pieter Radergoertgens, and the two children born in Oedt, Gerrit (Gottfried) and Elsje (Adelheid). There is no documentation to prove this statement, except for the 1660 list of Free Burghers, which we shall address shortly.

On 3 April 1660 the *jacht Vlissingen* arrived with the Rev Cornelius Walrandt on board. This provided the opportunity for proper baptisms, of which six were performed the next day, 4 April 1660. One of these was Van Riebeeck's baby daughter, Elizabeth. Another was the first of Jacob and Sophia's two children that would be conceived at the Cape. As though to ensure that we do not, three hundred and-forty-eight years later, attribute to Jacob the wrong parents, namely Wilhelmi and Girtrudis Burschett of St Kunibert in Köln Stadt, the couple baptised the child as Catryn (Catharina), thereby naming their baby girl after Jacob's mother in his distant home town of Oedt in the Land of Köln. Van Riebeeck²⁹ recorded the event in his Journal:

“Sunday 4 April: Cloudy sky and wind as above. The aforesaid minister preached on the shore and baptised 6 children viz. [...] One of the Free agriculturalist, Jacob Cloeten, Catryn.”

The Free Burgher list of 1660 states quite clearly that “Harmen's Company” was composed of Remajenne, without wife, and Jacob Cloete of Ceulen with his wife Fyckje Raderottjes [sic], and three children. It also lists Pieter, “Fyckje's” brother, with Jacob Bruyn and Hans Cornelisz as “Dutch Servants”. The children are logically Gerrit, Elsje and the Cape-born Catryn.

Three years later, Jacob and Sophia's last child is born. It was a boy, and in keeping with the notion of making sure that we correctly identify Jacob's parents today, the little boy is baptised on 23 April 1663 as Coenraad.

On 28 May 1665 the new Commander of the Cape, Zacharias Wagenaar, committed the following³⁰ to his Journal:

"In the afternoon we heard from our chief surgeon that shortly before, the wife of the agriculturist Jacob Cloeten had died in the Lord. In her the poor man and his four little children have lost much."

And so the stalwart lady from Oedt in the State of Köln died in Africa, far away from her mother and father. She had been one of the key individuals in starting a nation and laying the foundation of a new country. She had started life as Sophia Radergoertgens and had married Jacob Klauten in Oedt in the State of Köln. She had died in Africa as "Fyckje Raderottjes van Ut in 't land van Ceulen", wife of the *landbouer* "Jacob Cloeten". She could never have known the scope of her own contribution to the people of South Africa.

As a thirty-five-year old man, Jacob now had four children to care for in a place like the Cape where there were hardly any women and more than two hundred men, mostly of a younger age. In 1658, shortly after his arrival at the Cape, the entire adult female population of the establishment at the Cape was twelve. Of these only five were of European extraction and they were all married. The situation by 1665 was not much better. He was not going to find a new wife of the calibre of Sophia at the Cape. Moreover, he was a baptised Catholic in a strongly Protestant settlement.

For the next seven years he did his level best as, to our knowledge, the first European single father of four in Africa. His first concern was Elsje. She was still very young, but given the crush of male humanity at the Cape and the predicament he found himself in, working as a supposed Free Burgher, but in reality as little more than a serf to the DEIC, he consented to the marriage of Elsje to Willem Schalksz Van der Merwe on 9 September 1668. Elsje was only little over thirteen years and six months old. Willem, however,

was a very sensible and hardworking man, who did rather well in life. It was a good choice. Elsje would give Willem thirteen children and would become the *Stammoeder* of the large Van der Merwe family in South Africa. Her own daughters would represent the start of a number of family names in South Africa, including Burger, Van Heerden and Janse van Rensburg. The list likely also includes Van As. Her daughter Elisabeth married Albert Lammertsz Meijburg, thereby ensuring that all Myburghs today in South Africa are also descended from Jacob Cloete, as the male line of Albert's older brother, Jan, did not continue much further.

Jacob's return to Europe

By 16 July 1669, Commander Wagenaar was rather unhappy with the meagre supplies of wheat from the Free Burghers and sent commissioners to inspect the farms. When they got to Jacob's home, they found eight *muids* of grain of various types unthreshed, and a reluctant Jacob who claimed he did not have the means to thresh it. The Governor, suspicious that the Free Burghers had been selling the grain behind his back, took possession of the grain,³¹ sent two men over to help Jacob do the threshing, and told him that the Company accepted his grain as part payment against the debts he owed the Company. This event encapsulated all that was wrong in the relationship between the Free Burghers and the Company. And this would later lead to vastly greater problems.

On 2 November 1670, Elsje and Willem baptised their first child, a little girl. Elsje named her Sophia after the most incredible woman she had ever known, *Sophia Radergoertgens van Oedt in 't Land van Ceulen* – her mother. Elsje was little over fifteen years and eight months old.

By 1671 Elsje and Willem had their own Dutch *knecht*, Lucas Harmesz. Gerrit, now twenty, had meanwhile joined the household of Gerrit Pieterse van der Bijl and Fijtje van der Tempell as their *knecht*. Jacob's two eldest were now well on their way in their lives. This left the two youngest, named for his two parents. They were just eight and eleven years old and there was no mother. It was in these circumstances that Jacob placed³² young Coeraad with Wouter Cornelisz Mostert of Mostert's Mill, and young Trijn with Frans

Gerritsz and his wife. Then he asked the Council of Policy to revoke his last short remaining period of originally contracted company service, and he left for Europe.

On or just after 14 June 1671 he arrived in Europe, and, one might imagine, made straight for Oedt and his family he had not seen in more than fourteen years. No confirmed information that the author knows of exists for Jacob over the next few years. However, one intriguing marriage entry stands recorded in the Kirchbücher for the St Vitus Catholic church in Oedt. It is dated just a few months after he would have arrived back in Oedt:

29 October 1671: Jacob Clauten und Entgen Cuipers

There is no direct evidence that this Jacob Clauten was “Jacob Cloeten” from the Cape, other than that the timing of the marriage coincides closely with the return of Jacob of the Cape to Europe. It is indeed not just in his home town, but in his baptism church – the same church in which he had married his beloved Feigen twenty-one years earlier.

Did Jacob return to Europe to find a wife, given the difficulties of his life at the Cape and the need for a mother for his children? If so, why did he not return immediately to the Cape? We can certainly explore this further. To this end we note the following baptism of twin baby girls, a nicely appropriate fifteen months after the above marriage, again in the Catholic parish of St Vitus in Oedt, home of the extended Klauten family:

Father: Jacobi Clauten

Mother: Anne

- Maria Clauten ≈ 23.3.1673
- Anne Clauten ≈ 23.3.1673

One of the witnesses to the baptism of little Maria was a certain Margarita Clauten. As we had seen previously, Jacob Klauten did not have a sister named Margarita. However, let us consider the following. The other Clautens or Klautens who baptised children in

Oedt over this period include Joannis Clauten, who appears to correspond to Jacob's younger brother, Johannes:

The marriage for his brother Johannes is given as follows:

- Johan Clauten und Grietgen Waasen: 20.5.1666

The baptisms follow like clockwork, starting eleven months after the above marriage:

Father: Joannis Clauten

Mother: Margaritae (Grietge is a diminutive³³ for Margarethe/a)

- Conradus Clauten ≈ 11.4.1667 (we note again the presumed husband's father's name)
- Petrus Clauten ≈ 1.12.1669
- Sophia Clauten ≈ 18.3.1672
- Andreas Clauten ≈ 19.3.1676

It seems entirely reasonable to assume that Margarita, the wife of Jacob's presumed brother, Johannes/Joannis, was the same "Margarita Clauten" who served as witness at the baptism of Maria Clauten, one of Jacob Clauten's twin baby daughters. This certainly adds more credence to the notion that Jacob Cloete of the Cape went back to Germany to marry again and had twin baby girls by a lady named Anne "Entgen" Cuipers in Oedt.

In reality we do not have adequate evidence to completely support these conclusions, but the little bit we do have, is certainly intriguing enough to make Jacob a very interesting subject of study.

Jacob returns to the Cape

The next time we meet Jacob, he is back at the Cape after 1680, at the age of fifty or more. If, indeed, Jacob Cloeten of the Cape were the Jacob Clauten who married Anne on 1671 in Oedt, then one might expect to find information about the death of Anne in Oedt, or her possible arrival with him at the Cape. However, the death records in Oedt from that period no longer exist. Also, there is no real clarity on when Jacob arrived back at the Cape. We merely know that he was back at the Cape after 1680 and we know that he ended up

posted to the cattle post at Klapmuts for having yet again got into trouble with the Company.

One might very well ask how it could be that he would leave a wife and children in Germany. In this respect one might equally well ask how it could be that he left his two youngest children at the Cape when he returned to Europe in 1671, yet he did exactly that.

We end, as we had started, with his murder on 23 May 1693 in Cape Town, bringing to a premature end the life of the man who, all considered and based on best information, was the first truly committed European immigrant South African and whose daughter, Adelheidis (Elsje), comes close to being the Mother of the Afrikaner Nation.

Acknowledgment

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Notes

- 1 J Hoge, *Personalia of the Germans at the Cape 1652-1806*, 1946 p 61 (translated by author)
- 2 CCC De Villiers and C Pama, *Geslagsregisters van Ou Kaapse Families*
- 3 E Moritz, *Die Deutschen am Kap*, 1938, p 198
- 4 D Moodie, *The Record I -1959 Edition*, p 97
- 5 HCV Leibbrandt, *Precis of the Archives of the Cape of Good Hope – Letters from the Cape (1652-1662), Vol III*, 1896 p 262
- 6 Ibid, p 264
- 7 Ibid, p 319
- 8 17th Century baptism books of Sankt Kolumba Church in Cologne, Rheinland, Preußen, Germany
- 9 HCV Leibbrandt, *Precis of the Archives of the Cape of Good Hope – Letters from the Cape (1652-1662), Vol III*, (1896), p 283
- 10 JR Bruijn et al in *Dutch-Asiatic Shipping 1595-1795*; see also <http://www.inghist.nl/Onderzoek/Projecten/DAS/>
- 11 D Moodie, *The Record I*, 1959 Edition p 54

- 12 Ibid, p 62
- 13 Ibid, p 93
- 14 Ibid, p 95
- 15 JR Bruijn et al in *Dutch-Asiatic Shipping 1595-1795*; see also <http://www.inghist.nl/Onderzoek/Projecten/DAS/>
- 16 Cape Archives, *Minutes of the Council of Policy of the Cape of Good Hope*, C. 2, pp 155-160
- 17 E Moritz, *Die Deutschen am Kap*, 1938 p 194
- 18 Ibid, p 194
- 19 K Baltus, *Niederrheinische Vornamen unserer Vornamen*, www.genealogienetz.de/vereine/wgff/aachen/Niederrheinische_Vornamen.pdf
- 20 Ibid
- 21 Ibid
- 22 Ibid
- 23 Ibid
- 24 CC De Villiers and C Pama, *Geslagsregisters van Ou Kaapse Families*
- 25 JA Heese, RTJ Lombard, *South African Genealogies: Part I*, 1999
- 26 HCV Leibbrandt, *Riebeeck's Journal, Part III*, 1897 p 145
- 27 Ibid, p 180
- 28 JR Bruijn et al in *Dutch-Asiatic Shipping 1595-1795*; see also <http://www.inghist.nl/Onderzoek/Projecten/DAS/>
- 29 HCV Leibbrandt, *Riebeeck's Journal, Part III*, 1897 p 117
- 30 HCV Leibbrandt, *Precis of the Archives of the Cape of Good Hope 1662-1670*, 1901 p 147
- 31 Ibid, p 293
- 32 GCde Wet, *Die Vryliede en Vryswartes in die Kaapse Nedersetting, 1657-1707*, 1981 p 177
- 33 K Baltus, *Niederrheinische Vornamen unserer Vornamen*, www.genealogienetz.de/vereine/wgff/aachen/Niederrheinische_Vornamen.pdf

