## **TRYN RAS**

In July 1662 the Hof Van Zeeland brought to the Cape, Catharina Ufftincx, a young woman immigrant from Lubeeck in eastern Holstein<sup>1</sup>. Aged twenty-one and already a widow<sup>2</sup> she was to lose three more husbands before marrying the fifth who survived her. She created a considerable impact in her new country home and even impressed the Netherlands Commissioner Hendrik Adriaan van Reede tot Drakestein, Heer van Mijdracht, when he was on an official visit to the Cape in 1685. In his private journal van Reede succinctly describes the tragic deaths of these three men thus:

'den corsten van een leeuw, den tweden door de hottentots en den derden door d' elephanten om hals gebracht'  $^{\rm 3}$ 

Such experiences would have overwhelmed a lesser woman but Catharina Ufftinex was a remarkable person, and, as Tryn Ras, became a legend in her lifetime in the land of her choice. Born in 1641, Ufftinex was in all probability her maiden name for it was then the custom for widows to revert to this. Her name appears in many guises in preserved records, Uftinex, Uftings, Ufftinghs, Oefftinghs and even Kistings. Ustings, the form in general use today is, according to Dr. A. J. Boeseken not correct for the second letter is an 'f' and not an 's'.

What persuaded Catharina to leave Europe? New places, new faces to erase the memory of the early loss of her first consort? In a young settlement such as the Cape she would be assured of another marriage partner for single women were at a premium and appropriated immediately on arrival by unmarried settlers cagey to raid wives. Time and again preserved documents reveal the truth of this assertion. Hoster Weyers van Lier arrived in Table Bay on June 17, 1658 and her marriage to Wouter Cornelisz Mostert was decided and a fait accompli by the fourteenth of the following month.<sup>4</sup> Another young woman, Anna Ru(o)dolphus of Grietrijl in East Friesland set foot on shore in mid-December 1659 from the Gekroon de Leeuw, was betrothed by the twenty-fourth and died of dysentery on 6 January 1660 before her marriage to Gijsbert Aries van Bommel could take place.<sup>5</sup> Had Anna survived she might have proved a rival to Tryn Ras for the prospective bride had spent several months traveling from Europe 'voor soldat in mansklederen'.<sup>6</sup> The manner in which she managed to conceal her sex among her fellow-soldiers on a troopship was sufficient evidence of her enterprise to ensure that she would have played an interesting role at the Cape had she survived.

Germany and adjacent states provided large numbers of soldiers for the use of the Dutch East India Company in her overseas possessions and many natives of Holstein enlisted. Among these were two future husbands of Tryn Ras, Hans Ras of Angel(n) and Matthias (Matthys) Michiels(z) of Glückstadt, towns situated on opposite sides of the Holstein peninsula. Possibly Catharina was aware of what amounted to German

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> C1 p.712-713, 19.8.1662

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Journal om zjjn verblijf aan de Kaap, medegedeeld door A. Halshof, 1941 in Bijdragen en Mededeelingen van Het Historisch Genootschap, part 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> C. 1 p.34 7, 30.6.1658 and C.1 14.7.1658

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Journal of Van Riebeeck and following commanders/governors at the Cape 6.1.1660.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Ibid.

immigration to Dutch colonies overseas and decided to leave her homeland. Whether she was bound for the Cape or for the East is uncertain but when the Hof van Zeeland sailed eastwards from the Cape she 'remained behind'.<sup>7</sup>

The five month voyage from Texel to Table Bay must have been a nightmare experience for the girl with an initial 400 men on board. No other women are mentioned but she surely cannot have been the only one. The ship dropped anchor in the bay on 25 July 1662. Twenty 'recently dead' were still unburied, another 50 sick of the scurvy with almost the entire company 'more or less affected'<sup>8</sup>. How many others had already died and been buried at sea is not stated and those who were landed at the Cape were for the most part too far gone for recovery and the journal mentions their deaths almost daily for some time. One of these landed was a junior merchant, Paulus de Moulier, bound for the east and described as 'very ill'. He too succumbed and the very interesting inventory of his estate has been preserved in the Deeds Office, disclosing that he was evidently a young man of some consequence and wealth'<sup>9</sup>.

Catharina must have stumbled gratefully ashore with the more able-bodied of the ship's complement and less than a month later, on Sunday August 20th her banns of marriage to Hans Ras aged 26 years 'vrylantbouwer alhier' were called for the first time'<sup>10</sup>. On Sunday September 2nd they were pronounced man and wife by Hendrik Lacus, Secretary to the Council of Policy. No permanent minister had as yet been appointed at the Cape and early marriages were solemnised in this manner.

This, her second wedding day also almost spelt the beginning of Catharina's second widowhood. After the ceremony in Table Valley when she and Ras were on the way to his farm on the Liesbeeck at Rondebosch, trouble erupted between Frans Gerrits van Uijthoorn and Thieleman Hendricksz, the drivers of the two wagons carrying the bridal pair and a few guests. Both men were apparently somewhat merry, with the prospect of more cheer at their destination, and they vied with each other for the first place on the primitive track. This resulted in what was probably the first recorded traffic accident at the Cape with one wagon being forced off the road. Ras took strong exception to the abusive language (scheltewoorden) of Hendricksz, the driver of the other wagon, as to the cause of the mishap and in the ensuing brawl he was twice stabbed by Hendricksz. According to the contemporary account in the Court of Justice records, 11 the second thrust broke Hendricksz' knife off in Ras's ribs. Catharina must have taken home an enraged and severely wounded husband. That he survived with such injuries is evidence of his toughness, allied perhaps with some good fortune and the good care of his wife.

Hans Ras arrived at the Cape as a soldier in March 1658 and on the 13th of the same month he attained burger status<sup>12</sup>. He was early associated with Harman Remajenne on the original Groenevelt, land granted in common to a group of farmers and which lay on the east side of the Liesbeek River at Rondebosch. When these agricultural holdings and that of the Hollandsche Thuijn near Mowbray failed to prosper

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Journal 3.7.1662

<sup>8</sup> Journal 25.7.1662

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Transfer deed volume for 1652-1662, 15.11.1662, unpaginated. Deeds Office, C.T.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> C.1 pp. 712-713, 18.8.1662

<sup>11</sup> Attestation 1652-1662 no. 244

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Hoge: Personalia of the Germans at the Cape p.324

as the authorities had hoped the land was divided and rented in freehold to individual selected burgers. Jacob Cloeten received 20 morgen<sup>13</sup> which by Transfer 11/11.6/1660 he transferred to Hans Ras. A 'schuur, en woonhuijs' was already in existence according to this document and here Tryn Ras must have had her first home at the Cape, as a married woman.

This land that Ras then farmed formed the nucleus of Rondebosch and is today contained by Belmont, Camp Ground, College and the Main Roads, straddling the Liesbeek River, an essential requisite for successful agriculture in the area. Two years after his marriage Ras increased his holding by purchasing 11 morgen 400 sq. rds. from Frans Gerrits van Uijthoorn<sup>14</sup>, commonly known as 'Frans de Lapper'<sup>15</sup>. This land lay northwards of Belmont Road, extending to Burg Road along the east bank of the river to the present Fountain.

This embraced SASKO, Mossops tannery, Marist's Brothers College and the residential section up to the Common. His earlier grant, in addition to accommodating today many houses and blocks of flats also holds, Bishop's Prep. School, the Congregational Church, the station, the Rondebosch Town Hall, Robbs' complex together with shops and flats down to the Main Road. The Cape Town Council has seen fit to commemorate this Hans Ras by giving his name to a little lane which lies outside the boundaries of what he once owned.

Ras was an important link in the agricultural chain along the Liesbeek and he was apparently an industrious farmer. In 1661 he is recorded as having 16 morgen sown to grain<sup>16</sup> which for some reason had dropped to 9' morgen by 1663<sup>17</sup>. He did not always find favour with the authorities and on several occasions he was in trouble together with that somewhat unsatisfactory freebarger, Harman Remajenne. The first occasion involved visits that the two men had paid to the female slaves at Bosheuwel in 1661 prior to his marriage to Tryn<sup>18</sup>. Then an incident in July 1660 concerned the illegal purchase of stock from the Hottentots<sup>19</sup> thus breaking a golden rule of the Company that there be no private trading with the indigenous inhabitants. Again in March 1667 he was accused, but acquitted, of the same offence<sup>20</sup>.

Hans and his fellow farmers were required to repair the 'deep and muddy road', the present Main road which in 1664 was of increasing importance to the growing colony. Hans carried an added responsibility for on his land lay the primitive bridge by which the Liesbeek was spanned at this point. Wagenaer in his official instructions left for his succeeding governor described it as 'de brugh van Hans Ras'<sup>21</sup> the forerunner of the Belmont Bridge carrying the road over the Liesbeek canal at roughly the same point today. No doubt the heavy winter rains and the wagon traffic contributed to the poor state of the track but both bridge and road had to be properly maintained as the link with headquarters at the Fort.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> I.C.V. 2, 10.10.1657

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Transfer 28/2.3.1664, Deeds Office, Cape Town

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Journal, 23.5.1665

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Van Riebeeck en sy Gesin, Dr. A.J. Böeseken, p.317

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Dagregister van Zacharias Wagenaer, Dr. A.J. Böeseken, p.317

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Letters Despathed 15.1.1662: Attestation 1652-1662. pp. 157, 206, 224

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Iournal 4.7.1660

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Journal 17.3.1667

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Journal 14.8.1664

For visits to the settlement in Table Valley Hans had an urban *pied-à-terre*, an erf 'na de sandduinen gelegen'<sup>22</sup> on the town side of Seestraat, now Strand Street. This erf was granted on 10.9.1669<sup>23</sup> and by mid 1670 he had a 'nieuw gebouwde woonhuis alhier in d' zeestraat naast d' woning van die vrije cleeremaker Pleter Jansz van Nimmegen staande' and on the other side, towards Signal Hill lay 'd' woeste zantduijnen'<sup>24</sup>. This site may have proved somewhat bleak even for Tryn with the swirling sand and the winter storms driving the waters of the bay perhaps to her very doorstep for at that date the sea practically washed Strand Street and on 3 3.1671 Hans sold the property to Hendrik Evert Smit. He had already bought in its stead 'seker stuck lants met sijn daarop staande wooninge en stallinge' from Jan Reynierse of Amsterdam<sup>25</sup>, a property lying near the old fort with the 'wagenweg' between him and the shore. This he retained until his death, not far distant.

No official record has been found of the actual date of Ras's death nor has a will or any estate papers been located. Neither Court of Justice, Orphan Chamber nor even those wills and inventories filed in the Deeds Office provided any information on the subject. According to the private diary of Baron van Reede already quoted (see 3) he was killed by a lion but no evidence to substantiate this has come to light though it may well have been preserved and not discovered.

One significant fact has however emerged. Filed with the deed of 5.2.1671 transferring Reynierse's erf to Ras, and bearing the same date is an acknowledgment of debt by Ras to Reynierse, for 2 000 guilders. Ras's signature which was necessary for the registration of this document is missing and in its place is the following:

'Alsoo 't solemniseeren deses door 't onverwagte verongelucken van voorn. Hans Rasch acten gebleven is desen bij desselfs huijsvrouw ondereijkent. Ons present als gecomitteerdens: D. Froymanteau, Dircq Jansz Smiendt'

A month later Ras had apparently sufficiently recovered from the accident to sign the transfer deed selling his Zeestraat erf to Smit. Was this 'onverwagte verongelucken' an attack by a lion and did he die later of these injuries between March 1671 and April 1672 when Tryn became the wife of Francois Champelaer? Since no other evidence is available this has been accepted as probable and the forty-five year old farmer left behind a widow and four young children the youngest of whom was not yet a year old.

As far as the writer is aware the descendants of Hans Ras in South Africa today all stem from the second of his two sons, Nicolaas. Of Hendrik, the eldest child little is known except that he went to Ceylon where he married, raised a family and died. His unnamed issue

'de erfgename van Hendrik Ras in voldoening van haar grootvyaderlijk bewijs volgens acte van bewijs ... 167.2 gulders'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> C.700 pp. 161-246, 24.9.1666

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> C.700

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Acknowledgement of Debt, Hans Ras, 22.3.1670, transfer deed vol for 1670 Deeds Office

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Transfer of 5.2.1671, Deeds Office, Cape Town

appear thus in Tryn's estate account of 1709<sup>26</sup>. It is possible that descendants of these may have returned to South Africa.

Nicolaas, commonly known as Claas, was baptised on 12.9.1666 and spent his boyhood at Rondebosch and Tokai. His marriage to Maria van Staden took place after he had left the peninsula and settled on Joostenberg<sup>27</sup>. Their first child, Johannes was baptised on 10.8.1698<sup>28</sup> at the French church in Drakenstein when the father was thirty-two years old. Maria was the Netherlands-born daughter of Martin van Staden of Bloemendal and where she and her husband lived for the first years of their married life has not been established. The baptism of their children and the census of 1703 reveal that it was Drakenstein<sup>29</sup> and possibly on Weltevreeden or on Bloemendal for Claas then owned no property. On the death of his mother, Tryn in 1708 he bought in Weltevreeden<sup>30</sup> but no transfer was registered in his name nor later in the name of his widow. When this property was sold from her estate in 1723<sup>31</sup> the only reference in the deed to a previous registered document is the grant of Weltevreeden to Michelsz on 22.12.1694.

The inventory of Claas estate is not very extensive and the details reveal that he was not apparently a very good farmer<sup>32</sup>. After his death in 1713 his widow married Lambert Engels by whom she had a son and a daughter. The couple seem to have lived on Weltevreeden although Engels did own Cuylenberg which he was granted in 1715.<sup>33</sup> He died c. 1720 and Maria followed three years later. Her estate inventory was taken on Weltevreeden<sup>34</sup> her 'woonplaats' with Waarburg, Hercules Pilaar, Cuylenbergh and Le Roque at Franschock also included in her estate.<sup>35</sup>

Maria Ras, the only **[sic. See footnote 28.]** daughter of Hans and Tryn was baptised on 23.6.1669. She married Joost Strydom and is the ancestress of that family in South Africa.

The last child was Hans Ras who was baptised on 25.6.1671 'een soontje van Hans Ras en Tryn Ras gen. Hans tot getuigen van Hendrik Evertsz en Gerrit en Lysbet Jansz'. The name Johannes assigned to him in De Villiers/Pama is therefore incorrect. He did not marry and died in 1705 on the farm of Martin van Staden at Drakenstein. His will, apparently made on his deathbed, is of considerable genealogical interest as it mentions his brothers, sisters and half-sister. After bequests to all these he left the residue of his estate to 'Tryn, huisyrouw van Matthys Michelsz van Geluckstad'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> MOOC 13/1/1/, no. 63, 29.8.1709

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> This has not been found but the first child was baptised 10.8.1698

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> [DR: Incorrect - their first child was Catarina baptised Cape Town 27 January 1697.]

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> J.184, unpaginated

 $<sup>^{30}</sup>$  MOOC 10/1 no. 46, 18/19.10.1708. Preserved records of Stellenbosch marriages commence only in  $1700\,$ 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> Transfer 1553/24.9.1723. Deeds Office, Cape Town.

<sup>32</sup> MOOC 8/2 no. 91, 30.11.1713

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> I.S.V. 233, 7.6.1715

<sup>34</sup> MOOC '3 @ no. 84, 12.7.1723

<sup>35</sup> Transfer 1554/7.10.1723 to Sophia van der Merwe, Deeds Office, C.T. Transfer 1555/7.10.1723 to Jacob Cloete, Deeds Office, C.Y.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Dutch Reformed Church Archives, C.T. G1 1/1

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> 1/STB, 18/2. no. 22, 18.7.1705

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

## Francois Champelaer

With her second husband, Hans Ras, dead Tryn now appeared in preserved records as 'Tryn Ras' and as such, for the most part she remained even after the death of her two following husbands. However her estate inventory, verkoping and estate account<sup>39</sup> refer to her by her correct name, 'Catharina Uftings'. Whatever she was popularly called, the widow Ras did not long retain her widowhood and on 17.4.1672, not on the 16th she became the wife of François Champelaer of Ghent. No date of arrival or occupation have been found for this man. Up till December 1671 he had been the 'servant of Joris Jansz, an innkeeper at the Cape'40 and during this period he had been involved in trying to save the life of an unfortunate Hottentot woman who hanged herself in an outhouse of one of the freemen. Together with Angela of Bengal, the wife of Amoldus Willemse Basson, he had cut down the woman, known as Sara, whom they thought lived, only to fmd, in the callous words of the Court of Justice that 'Satan had taken possession of her brutal soul'. Sara was one of those who had enjoyed to the full the company of both Dutch and German freemen and for her sins her poor dead body was dragged through the streets of the town to the gallows and 'hanged on a gibbet as carrion to the fowls.<sup>41</sup> No punishment is mentioned as having been meted out to her companions in sin!

Francois obviously possessed attributes that attracted Tryn or propinquity and/or convenience dictated their union. Tryn obtained a father for the children who, hopefully would assume responsibility for their upbringing and Francois became a man of property by acquiring with his wife the erf in Table Valley and the Rondebosch farm, now reduced to 11 morgen 400 sq. rds.<sup>42</sup>

Unfortunately no census returns or similar records are available for this early period to establish where people actually lived when they owned more than one property. Place of residence is normally derived from inventories of deceased estates when the property first mentioned in the document is usually the 'woon huis' or 'woonplaats' occupied by the deceased at his death. Whether the Champelaers lived in their town house near the fort which had belonged to Ras or on the Liesbeek farm is not certain. Considering the 300 sheep and other livestock listed in the inventory it had probably been Rondebosch for to have accommodated these in the embryo town would have posed problems. Judging from available sources Champelaer was not in a financial position to employ a knegt or foreman to take charge in the country whole he lived in the town.

The fact that the inventory is marked on the first page 'Filed 1.1.1675 J. Valkenryck' increased the difficulty for there is no way of knowing whether it was drawn up at the time of Champelaer's death c. 1673 and filed two years later or whether it was both made and filed in 1675.<sup>43</sup> The probabilities are that it was compiled within a short time of his actual death as four pieces of clothing are itemised, 'a black hat somewhat worse for wear, a white shirt with 19 silver buttons and an old shirt and trousers'. The inventory also reveals their poverty with only the bare necessities for

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> MOOC 8/2 no. 26 18.8.1708; MOOC 10/1 no. 46 18 19.10.1708; MOOC 13/1/1 no. 63 29.8.1709

<sup>40</sup> Moodies Record p.315

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Transfer 28/2.3.1669, Deeds Office, C.T.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> MOOC 8/1 no. 1, January 1675

existence. However Francois did own '2 gold rings with imitation stones and 2 paintings' in addition to his buttons.

What also emerges from the document, whatever its date, is that neither the 'huys en stalling' near the fort nor the farm at Rondebosch had been developed to any extent. The former was described as 'niet merckelijk bebouwt ofte betimmert' and the farm seems to have fared even worse, in that it was sown to three bushels of grain and was 'verdere inutile'.<sup>44</sup> This latter was taxed and valued at a mere 100 guilders which was very little for twelve morgen of land along the Liesbeek River.

Documentary evidence does not portray Champelaer as a very successful individual. His entire estate was valued at 2531 guilders of which 2000 was apportioned to the town property. To reconcile this with Van Reede's statement of 1685 that Tryn had been 'drie malen rijk' is difficult even had the estates of Ras and Cornelissen fallen into this category. Unfortunately no papers for either have been found.

The date of Champelaer's death is as uncertain as that of Ras, in fact there is no f'mn death date for any of her four Cape husbands. However, that of Champelaer can be narrowed down to between 6.2.1673 when he is mentioned as fishing in the vicinity of the 'Downs', i.e. in the Strandfontein/Macassar area, and the 29th October of the same year when she married Laurens Cornelis(sen) of Gothenburg.

What had happened to Francois during this period? According to Van Reede he was 'killed by the Hottentots' and this fact is corroborated by his estate inventory which states that he 'onlangs nevens andere borgers in 't landt doord'hottentotten doodgeslagen'. How and when is to be found in the following. The journal for 1673 and the resolution of the Council of Policy for the same date seem to provide the answer. The Journal entry for 29.7.1673 reads as follows:

Some Hottentots of Gonnemes tribe reported to various freemen that Gonnema had surrounded, somewhere on a point of land, whence they could neither retire or advance, eight of our burghers, who, without permission had gone up to shoot some large game for the needs of their families. His object was to cut them off from all supplies, except what they had with them that they might perish in consequence, but, as this rumour seems to be rather untruthful it was accepted as false.

A few days later on July 4th the matter was again discussed.

The rumours spread by the Hottentots regarding the remaining away of the eight freemen mentioned above are still continuing and it is feared, not without reason, that, should they not return shortly or other tidings are obtained of them there may be some truth in the rumours as the privileged time for their staying away will soon be past.

The authorities were eventually convinced that the tales must be taken seriously and on July 11 the entire situation of recent attacks and depredations by the Hottentots on the freeburgers was reviewed with particular reference to the fate of 'andere acht van dese

45 Ibid

<sup>44</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> C.2 pp.675-7, 11.7.1673

Nederlandsche borgeren'<sup>47</sup> mentioned in the journal. A force of thirty-six soldiers and as many freeburgers under the 'vaandrig' Hieronemus Cruse was ordered out as a relief expedition but apparently nothing positive was ever discovered of the facts concerning the complete disappearance of these eight men and it was presumed that they had perished.

Life was cheap in those days and neither the journal nor the resolutions recorded their names although they must have been known. One of the victims was almost certainly Francois Champelaer as this was the only set of circumstances involving the deaths of a plurality of burgers in the period February to October 1673.

Tryn must have entertained very bitter thoughts on her lot but she obvicay did not brood on her miseries and set about remedying the position by marrying the Swede, Laurens Cornelis(sen) of Gothenburg.

## Laurens Cornelis(sen)

Presenting Cornelissen in his true perspective has proved difficult, in fact nothing concerning the story of Tryn Ras has been straightforward. Two men of this same name were resident at the Cape during this same period and problems of identification arose. The problem was to be repeated with Tryn's fifth and last husband, Matthys Michelsz.

According to the muster roll of 1662 Cornelissen was the servant of Thieleman Henrixksz, he, who had almost ended Ras's life on his wedding day. When Laurens arrived at the Cape and when he became a freeburger has not been established, but about three months after the death of Champelaer, on 29.10.1673 he married Tryn Ras.

That the couple lived in Table Valley and not at Rondebosch seems reasonably clear for,- at the end of December 1676 his and several other houses were judged to be too close to the Fort and were demolished. In compensation for the loss sustained the former owners were allowed to sell 'suiker en Caapse gebrouwen bieren'<sup>49</sup>. What other occupation Cornelissen followed has failed to emerge. Nor is there any evidence to what use the 11 morgen 400 sq. rds of land at Rondebosch was put, if indeed any at all, until it was sold to Jan Dirks de Beer in 1689. Did Frans Gerritz use it as an extension of his adjoining 20 morgen or did some other freeburger become an early example of the Cape squatter?

Cornelissen and Tryn had two daughters, Maria in 1675 who apparently died young, and Laurentia in 1677 who married Martin Mecklenburg but left no descendants. The baptismal register of 20.6.1677<sup>50</sup> when Laurentia was baptised has the names of both parents so presumably Laurens was then still alive.

His death, again according to van Reede, was 'probably due to an elephant attack while out shooting hippo'. Some evidence that this animal and not an enraged hippopotamus was responsible for Cornelissen's demise must have been available to van Reede for him to have written thus. Again no date is assigned for his death; no will or inventory has been found and there is no mention of the event in the journal. As was

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> C.3 pp.136-165, 28.12.1666-1.1.1667

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> DRC Archives, G1 1/1, 20.6.1677

the case with his immediate predecessor, Champelaer he probably did not even receive proper burial.

Women in those days were perhaps more reconciled to such violent and sudden deaths of their menfolk than is the case today, but, to have lost three husbands under such circumstances in the space of five years was certainly unusual and must have been a devastating experience. Tryn now had to fend for herself and her children, ranging from the twelve year old Hendrik Ras to Laurentia Cornelissen an infant of a few months. She herself was thirty-six years old.

An approximate date between July 1677 and March 1678 has been assigned as the period during which Cornelissen must have died for by the latter date 'Tryn Ras' was in receipt of a monthly rice ration from the Companys<sup>51</sup>. This she continued to receive until at least August 1679<sup>52</sup> and on January 25 1680 she married her fifth and last husband, Matthys Michelsz.

It is this period between 1678 and 1685, when van Reede recorded his story, that has proved the most difficult to research in the life of Tryn Ras. At Cornelissen's death the 11 morgen 400 sq. rds. of land at Rondebosch was still in Tryn's ownership and she may well have used this as one source of income but did she live there? It seems impossible to determine this. The land remained in trust for the Ras children until 24.11.1689 when transfer was passed to Jan Dirks de Beer by Matthys Michelsz

met gedraage consent der Weescamer hier ter plaats als behuwdt vader der nagelatene kinderen van wylen Hans Ras van Angel. $^{53}$ 

The indications are that Tryn and her family did not remain at Rondebosch but moved away from the farming community scattered along the Liesbeek from Salt River to Bosheuwel (Kirstenbosch) and squatted on land of her own choice below the Steenberg mountains, the Tokai of today, still watered by the streams that flow from the range behind. According to Deeds Office records her grant in this area was dated 1688<sup>54</sup> but van Reede's valuable journal reveals that by 1685 she already had an established farm there with at least 12 morgen sown to grain and that she was self-supporting.

A third set of circumstances demonstrates more clearly that she was, in all probability in the Tokai valley from as early as 1678, just after Comelissen's death and that it was probably then that Michelsz had been engaged to help her with her farming, as revealed by van Reede. This was the census return of 1692<sup>55</sup> which points to the fact that both Matthys and Tryn had been on the same land from 1677 or 1678 for it states that when the census was taken on 31.12.1692 they were man and wife and that the land they then farmed had been in their possession for 15 years and had been cultivated for the same period. It now supported 8 000 vines, produced wheat, rye and barley and 600 sheep with 140 assorted livestock ran on the estate. A labour force of seven male slaves and one woman was available demonstrating that the couple had indeed prospered. Four of these slaves, Daniel, Izaak and Theange of Madagascar and Claas of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> C.3 pp.385-397, 2/7.3.1678

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> C.4 pp.79-83, 30.8.1679

<sup>53</sup> Transfer 264/24.11.1689, Deeds Office, Cape Town

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> I.C.V. 157/23.3.1688

<sup>55</sup> I.183

the Coast had been bought from Jan Dirks de Beer<sup>56</sup>. The land was then held in freehold ownership by them and was the nucleus of the farm today known as Steenberg which has been in the Louw family for several generations.

Who was this Matthys Michelsz who became Tryn's fifth husband on 25 January 1680? The exact date of his arrival at the Cape and his place of origin in Europe presented problems. The former has not been solved but the first reference to date found for him was in early 1677 with the grant to him as

een van de armste en benodigste lantbouwers

of six pairs of company's oxen.<sup>57</sup> Preserved documents mention his home town as Bruckstadt,<sup>58</sup> Luijkstadt,<sup>59</sup> Lipstadt,<sup>60</sup> Gluckstadt<sup>61</sup> and Gelukstadt.<sup>62</sup> The weight of evidence favours Gluckstadt in Holstein on the Elbe estuary which has therefore been accepted.

The succession of events that led to Michelsz and Tryn Ras finally owning the Tokai farm was finding the two of them arriving apparently independently in the area as squatters in 1677-1678, followed by their marriage in 1680. Then on 6.12.1683 'den borger Thys Michelsz van Luijckstadt' asked the authorities for 'seker bouvallige en 't eenmaal vergane schaapstallinge Bommelshoek genaamt omtrent de Steenbergen'<sup>63</sup> which was granted for an annual payment of 10 oxen for the next four years. He had obviously become established and was no longer one of the 'armste en benodigste' farmers. Van Reede's visit confirmed their successful use of the land they occupied but did not as yet own. What this Dutch aristocrat wrote of that occasion is sufficiently interesting to be quoted in full:

Wednesday 30 May 1685. Today we again set out on our horses and arrived at a farm dwelling lying beneath the Steenberg. Here the lady of the house and her marriageable daughter presented us with her compliments some home grown produce consisting of very delicious farm cabbage, freshly baked bread and some radishes. Her name was Kryn Ras and she was then married to her fourth husband (actually her fifth - M.C.). The first had seen killed by a lion, the second by the Hottentots and the third probably by an elephant for he had gone out to shoot hippo for his family and was never heard of again. Here she was with a house full of children and married to her foreman. Her nearest neighbour lived four hours away. Three times she had been comfortably off and well established and three times impoverished. Her farm consisted of 12 morgen of good grainland with sufficient stock for her needs. She was accustomed to ride astride, quite alone, to the Cape settlement and back in a remarkably short time and the manner of so doing would have terrified anyone who met her en route if they had not known who she

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> Slaves and Freeblacks at the Cape 1658-1700, Dr A.J. Böeseken pp. 151 and 153

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> Slaves and Freeblacks at the Cape 1658-1700, Dr A.J. Böeseken pp. 151 and 153

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> Marriage Register Stellenbosch – ex Hoge Personalia of the Germans at the Cape

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> Luijckstadt: C.5 – 195-198, 6.12.1683

<sup>60</sup> Lipstadt: J.184, 1/STB 18/42, 21.4.1713

<sup>61</sup> Gluckstadt: J.184, MOOC 13/1/1 no. 40, R.L.R. 1 p.357, 11.7.1712

<sup>62</sup> Geluckstadt: 1/STB 18/42, 21.4.1713

 $<sup>^{63}</sup>$  C.5 195-198, 6.12.1683. This is not to be confused with the other and better known Bommelshoek, now the farm Welbeloond beyond Milnerton.

was. Her daughter could easily have passed for an Egyptian fortune-teller and the rest of the family could have been wild Indians from Brazil.<sup>64</sup>

Van Reede had certainly been listening to tales of Tryn during his stay at the Cape. His observations on her family were from personal experience with Maria then aged sixteen the 'marriageable daughter'. She became the wife of Joost Strydom a year later.

When researching persons long dead it must be remembered that they and their actions and reactions can be judged only by preserved documentary evidence which may or may not always present a true picture of the individual or the situation in which he or she was involved. As far as is known what appears above is the only unofficial information on Tryn Ras and provides a very clever thumbnail sketch of a remarkable woman.

Five years after the Commissioner's visit on 23.2.1688 a grant of 25 morgen 477 sq. rds. 'land by Steenberg, oost en zuid na vlakkeland, zuid ten wes na sand vallei' was registered in the name of 'Catharina Ras, weduwee Hans Ras' by Simon van der Stel.65 That it was registered in her name at all was unusual in itself and that she was described as the widow Ras when she had for the last eight years been married to Michelsz was more than unusual, it was unique. At that date married women had no legal identity apart from their husbands, unless a measure of male control was excluded by an antenuptial contract. Without this, property both movable and im- movable, owned by the wife at the date of her marriage or accruing to her afterwards fell into the community of goods and could be, and often was, alienated by the husband without the consent of the wife. In Tryn's case there was no antenuptial contract so despite the grant made specifically to her, it immediately fell into the community. It has been suggested that the grant was for the benefit of the four Ras issue but nothing in the document supports this. Was this grant made at the suggestion of Van Reede or was it a neighbourly gesture on the part of Simon van der Stel, for his Constantia was then the nearest farm to Steenberg and he must have been well aware of Tryn and her struggle after Comelissen's death to provide for her family or was it merely a gesture of approval for an intrepid woman?

The position in 1692 was that Michelsz and Tryn lived on their farm Steenberg though not yet found so named. Michelsz also owned Vreedenhof some 31 morgen at Wynberg which he had bought from the landdrost Comelisz Pieter Linnes by T 294/16.8.1691.

In 1694 two documents concerning land belonging to Matthys Michelsz were recorded,' T.270/29.5.1694 and a grant ISV 99/22.12.1694. The transfer deed comes first in point of time and refers to 60 morgen of land seemingly without an origin or a destination. 'Seemingly' is used intentionally for Deeds Office records are remarkably reliable and what may, on the face of it, appear to be an error in recording is generally either an inability of the researcher to locate the 'missing' document or incorrect initial filing of documents, thus making the locating of the 'missing' papers wellnigh impossible. A few cases of genuine error do exist to the writer's personal knowledge but into which of the three above categories Transfer 270 falls is a moot point.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup> See no. 3

<sup>65</sup> See no. 53 (now **54.**)

The details were that on 29.5.1694 by this transfer deed Matthys Michelsz transferred to Hendrik Elberts Jr. 60 morgen of land 'gelegen in de kloof en aan belde seyde van 's Heerenweg die na's Comps. Post de Kuylen na Stellenbosch loopt en strekkende so als de erfbrief (grant) daarvan te vertonen . . .' No date is given for this grant, a fact in itself unusual and no grant or transfer to Matthys Michelsz which would provide his authority to sell to Elberts has been found, thus effectively sealing off the origin.

That there was something irregular about the documents concerning this land seems clear. Firstly T.270/29.5.1694 is filed in the Deeds Office volume devoted to transfer deeds dated 1688-1690 and examination of the document itself revealed that it had originally been correctly filed, for at the bottom of the page the following appears:

Ter Secretarie in 't Casteel de Goede Hoop der 29 Sept. 1689 May 1694
Adriaan van Reede J. G. de Greyvenbrock
Henning Husing Secrets.

The 'Sept. 1689' is clearly visible under the scratching out. The fact that de Greyvenbroek was the secretary of the Council of Policy throughout the period of 1689 to 1694 with Van Reede similarly a member, and Husing also available did increase the difficulties of the situation. Crosswriting on this transfer deed reeds:

Getransporteert T 1553/26.9.1723 to Andries Krugel

This does *not* coincide with the information contained in T1552 namely that the origin of the land so transferred, Weltevreeden aan Joostenberg, was the grant of 22.12.1694 to Michelsz with no reference whatever to Elberts or to his ever having held the land. Transfer 1553 was a transfer from the deceased estate of Maria van Staden, widow of Claas Ras who had purchased Weltevreeden in 1709 from the common estate of his mother Tryn Ras and his stepfather Michelsz who had received the 1694 grant.

The problem has two possible solutions, neither of which is really satisfactory, either the 60 morgen of Transfer 270 to Elberts and the 60 morgan 30 sq. rds. granted to Michelsz in 1694 are one and the same land which on the face of it does not seem probable although the possibility of a pre-1689 missing grant cannot be ruled out, or the crosswriting that the following transfer was T.1553 to Krugel is erroneous. This latter seems the more tenable solution but as far as the writer is concerned it is 'non proven' and requires considerably more study.

The grant 1 SV 99/22.12.1694 of 60 morgen 30 sq. rds. 'Weltevreeden aan Joostenberg op verzoek van den vryburger Matthys Michelsz' presents no difficulty in itself but the identity of the grantee has been questioned. Fransen and Cook on p.75 of The Old Houses of the Cape state that:

This farm (Joostenberg) was granted to Matthys Michels(en) of Stockholm in 1694. This man, a Swede, is not to be confused with another Matthys Michels who was living in Cape Town at the same time ...

This is not correct. The grantee of 1694 was indeed the German Matthys Michelsz of Gluckstadt (and variations). He was illiterate and 'signed' his name when necessary

with a distinctive mark or symbol which remained reasonably constant from 1689 to 1719<sup>66</sup> whereas the Swedish Michels signed in the conventional manner. When Tryn Ras, the wife of the German died in 1708 on Joostenberg her estate inventory was signed with this symbol with the remark 'dit is die merk van Mattys Michelsz.<sup>67</sup> By that date the Swede had been dead for eight years for by T 485 19.1.1700 his only land, an erf near the Castle in Cape Town, was divided between his three married daughters.

If further evidence be necessary to demonstrate the truth of the assertion that the German and not the Swede was Joostenberg's owner, the sale of Tryn's estate reveals that 'een hofstede aan Joostenberg' was bought by her son, Claas Ras.<sup>68</sup>

On his death in 1713<sup>69</sup> the farm passed to his widow Maria van Staden with no transfer deed registered in her name<sup>70</sup> and when she died in 1723<sup>71</sup> having survived her second husband Lambert Engels, 'seker plaats ofte hofstede gelegen aan Joostenberg onder het district van Stellenbosch genaamt Weltevreeden' was sold from her estate<sup>72</sup> to Andries Krugel. This transfer deed mentions no intervening transfer after the grant of 1594 [sic. 1694?] and this alone is sufficient evidence that the farm had been granted to Matthys Michelsz of Gluckstadt and that it had remained in the Ras family, that of his deceased wife, until 1723 with, however no registration in Ras's name or in that of his widow. From that date an uncomplicated succession of transfer deeds of Weltevreeden, now officially called 'Joostenberg' follow to the present day.

That Michelsz has some connection with the Stellenbosch district has already been shown by the Elberts affair but nothing has been found to suggest why, in 1694-1695 he sold Steenberg to Frederick Russouw.<sup>73</sup> By then it must have been a reasonably well-developed estate. He did retain the 31 morgen farm Vredenhof at Wynberg until 1700<sup>74</sup> but no evidence has been found to determine whether he farmed there or at Klapmuts during the interim.

The census return for 1703 places him in the Stellenbosch/Drakenstein district<sup>75</sup> presumably on Joostenberg but no farm names appear in the census for the next one hundred years. Michelsz then had 16 horses, 30 oxen, 100 cows, 50 calves and 700 sheep. His sons Claas and Hans are also recorded each with a few head of stock, it is supposed on the same farm. By that date too Claas was married to Maria van Staden<sup>76</sup> and their first three children had been baptised at the French church at Drakenstein.<sup>77</sup> However neither Tryn, nor Maria and her children were mentioned in the roll. This 1703 return does not compare favourably with those of other years, even that of 1692

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>66</sup> Transfer 264/24.11.1689, Deeds Office C.T.: Sale of Paulus of Mallabar to Simon van der Stel, 26.1.1690:
 Transfer 270/29.5.1694; Transfer 489/1.5.1700: Bond repayment to Vlok - 1702: MOOC 8/2 no.26
 18.8.1708: 1/STB 18/42, 21.3.1713 17.12.1718, 2.5.1719

<sup>67</sup> MOOC 8/2 no. 26 18.8.1708

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>68</sup> MOOC 10/1 no. 46 18/29.10.1708

<sup>69</sup> MOOC 8/2 no. 91 30.11.1713

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup> See Genealogy and Deeds Registry, Familia 2/3 1977 p.27 Margaret Cairns.

<sup>71</sup> MOOC 8/4 no. 84 12.7.1723

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> See no. 30 (now 31)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup> Transfer 371/20.5.1695, Deeds Office, C.T.

<sup>74</sup> Transfer 489/1.5.1700

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>75</sup> I.184

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>76</sup> See no. 27

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>77</sup> Hugenote-Familieboek, A.J. Kannemeyer p.267, extracts from the baptisms in the 'eglise françois de drakestein'.

lists details omitted in 1703, where no members of the household, slaves, field crops, vines or weapons appear at all.

Presumably then Tryn was also on Joostenberg. By 1703 she was sixty-two years old which in those days was considered an advanced age, moreover her life had not been an easy one. What had induced Michelsz to sell the Peninsula farm and transfer his activities and an elderly wife to the barren waste that Weltevreeden probably then was? No further census returns for this district are preserved at the Cape until after the death of Tryn Ras therefore there is little known to add to her picture except that she was still apparently known by that name. An official document in connection with the examination of Jacobus van der Heiden on 28.5.1706 during the troubled times of Willem Adriaan van der Stel<sup>78</sup> mentions 'de plaats van Tryn Ras over de Berg river'. It surely must have been particularly galling to Matthys Michelsz that after twenty-five years as her husband his wife was commonly referred to by the name of Ras, a man who had been dead for over thirty-five years.

By 18.8.1708 Tryn Ras too was dead. As is the case with most of her contemporaries only after death was it possible to determine their life style when living. These facts are revealed by estate inventories, accounts and vendurolls and in Tryn's case three are available.<sup>79</sup> Once again problems arose on the identification of both the farms in the estate, including that on which the document was compiled. This was recorded as:

een hofstede aan Joostenberg genaamt Welvernoegt

In the first place there is no such word in Nederlands, it should have been Welvergenoegt. Even if this corrected version is substituted no farm of this name was ever registered in the name of either Matthys or Tryn. A piece of land so called was granted in 1707 to Hendrik Moller and was described as 'Welvergenoegt aan Paardeberg oorkant Dieprivier'<sup>80</sup> and lay between the western boundary of his farm Kuiperskraal and the sea at the present Melkbosstrand. This could not possibly be described as 'aan Joostenberg'. Secondly the sale of this 'hofstede aan Joostenberg' from Tryn's estate to her son Claas Ras with the subsequent proven and uncomplicated ownership of what is today known as Joostenberg provides adequate proof that the 'Welvernoegt' was indeed this farm.

The other farm of the inventory also presented an identity problem which has not to date been solved and the writer would welcome any information that might help to do so. This farm was referred to as 'een hofstede over de berg rivier'. The locality could have been anywhere from Franschhock to Twenty-four Rivers downstream but scarcely, at that date, beyond this point. The verkoping, two months later<sup>81</sup> adds that the farm was called 'Geeleblomsvallei'. This does not exist in the Deeds Office farm register nor was it found in the R.L.R. series in the Cape Archives, but the register volumes in the Deeds Office refer to a grant, 1 SV 353/9.9.1693 to Hendrik Rodenberg of '58 morgen 50

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup> Tydskrif van Wetenskap en Kuns vol. VI p.151

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> See no. 38 (now 39)

<sup>80 1</sup> SV 521/1707

<sup>81</sup> See no. 67 (now 68)

sq. rds., binnen de paalen van Drakenstein' which was traced via the Geeleblomsvallei Rodenberg sold to Coenraad Cyffer by T.48410.1.1700 and described 'zuid zuidoost na Drakensberg' and finally, with the selfsame details to Matthys Michelsz by T.517/15.2.1701. The original grant has apparently not been preserved and cannot be found, the subsequent transfer deeds add nothing to the location of the farm and no diagrams have been found. The Register volumes tersely state 'no trace' after its transfer from Tryn's estate to the purchaser, Jacob Pinard [sic]<sup>82</sup> which was strangely almost three years after the sale. Pienaar's estate papers reveal nothing, for there is no inventory merely a 'generaale rekening'<sup>83</sup> and an unnamed farm valued at 6405 guilders. This was probably Lustig Aan granted to him by 1/SV 375/27.8.1694. As far as the writer is concerned there is still 'no trace' of 'Geeleblomsvallei' but the matter is open to further research with a hopeful successful outcome.

Tryn's inventory, sale, and accounts provide a picture of the primitive life she must have led on the farm. 'Drie oud kadels' with bedding and two kists seem to have been the only furniture they possessed, although surely a table and some chairs were found even in the poorest homes? Kitchen and farming equipment seem to have been adequate. Almost 100 sheep and other stock obviously supplied their main income with wine and grain subsidiary sources. There were 12 slaves, only four of whom, Cupido van Mallebaar, and Louis, Titus and Marius of no origin, were mentioned in the venduroll. She owed de Heer van der Poll 615 guilders with amounts under thirty guilders to de Smit, Gerrit Basson and de Timmerman whereas Arend Gildenhuys, her son-in-law Jan Lorensz, and her son Claas Ras owed her estate 400, 300 and 48 guilders respectively.

Life was difficult for the pioneers of our country particularly the women who had to perform the multitudinous tasks demanded of them despite the burden of almost continuous pregnancy. It is small wonder that so many died, together with their children, in giving birth. Tryn seems to have been fortunate in this respect for the loss of only one child, Maria, daughter of Cornellissen is recorded and to have attained the age of sixty-seven years was not common for the period.

Where she was buried is not known but probably on the farm that she helped to establish together with her husband and which almost three hundred years later is still an agricultural force in the district. Tryn's genealogical contribution to the South African nation has also been a considerable one through her son Claas Ras and her daughter Maria the 'stammoeder' of the Strydoms but in addition she will always have a place among the pioneer women of the country for her personal contribution to its history.

Her fifth and last husband, Matthys Michelsz too contributed his share and survived her by about 23 years. After her death he appears to have left Weltevreeden to Claas Ras and by T.800/11.6.1710 he bought Bergenhenegouwen, now Donkergat, from Jan Durand. When Daniel Nortier who farmed nearby on La Motte died, allegedly early in 1711<sup>84</sup> Michelsz married his widow, Maria Vitout and brought her to Bergenhenegouwen where she died within three months.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>82</sup> Transfer 853/21.4.1711 Deeds Office, Cape Town.

<sup>83</sup> MOOC 8/2 no. 2. 30.9.1714

<sup>84</sup> Only reference to this was found in *De Villiers/Pama* p.656.

<sup>85</sup> MOOC 10/1 no. 68, 27.4.1711

Michelsz seems to have suffered doubly in the deaths of his two wives, for not only did he loose two consorts but he also lost two farms. In each case the community of property demanded division of the common assets and the payment to the heirs of their 'erfportie' and in each case he was unable to find sufficient cash to buy in what was actually his own farm and fulfill these obligations. As was Weltevreeden, Bergenhenegouwen too was sold, with the new owner Pieter Lombard<sup>86</sup>. The four Nortier children, Elisabeth aged twenty and married to Matthys Strydom, Anthony eighteen, Johans sixteen and Jan fourteen were paid their inheritance from the proceeds and Matthys, with his portion in his pocket, was homeless once again. No further landed property has been found registered in his name.

Exactly how old Michelsz was is not known. When Maria Vitout died thirty-four years had elapsed since he was described as 'one of the poorest farmers' and by 1711 the wheel had turned full circle and here he was with no farm and three stepchildren under twenty-one on his hands. Allowing that he was twenty-five on the first occasion, and this is a mere supposition, he would now have been just on sixty years old, not a good age to start anew.

On 11.7.1712, to provide for his household, the governor Willem Helot granted Michelsz a licence

omme aan de grooterivier te moegen schieten een vragt zeekoespek of andere wilt vleis $^{87}$ .

What the authorities meant by permitting him to shoot a 'load of hippo' has puzzled even the expert consulted. Was one beast reckoned as one load? The 'grooterivier' was probably the Olifants not the Orange (not yet of course so named). At this stage Michelsz was still a 'lantbouwer' but by 1713 his position had changed and he entered into a five-year contract with Claas Vegtman to carry on a blacksmith's business seemingly in Stellenbosch itself. Vechtmann, to give him his correct name, had already practised this trade for many years in the town, but possibly he, like his partner, had fallen on hard times or his physical handicap was now making work more difficult. In 1705 Adam Tas called him 'de kreupele vulkaan' because of his infirmity<sup>88</sup>. Matthys contributed 400 guilders towards the partnership and this Vechtmann had to repay out of his earnings, work under Matthys, together with a slave to be provided by Matthys. The latter too held the purse strings and acted as manager/foreman according to this very interesting document which is again signed with Matthys's characteristic symbol<sup>89</sup>.

How Michelsz earned his living after the contract had expired is unknown but in May the year after its expiration a most interesting contract between him and the 'oud heemraad Jan Botma' has come to light. Botma, who had a very poor handwriting agreed to use Matthys's services in an unspecified capacity for as long as he, Matthys was able to perform them in return for the provision of 'huisvesting, kledinge en verdre lewens benodigheded'90. A further stipulation was that Matthys would institute Botma

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>86</sup> Transfer 859/27.4.1711 Deeds Office, Cape Town.

<sup>87</sup> R.L.R.I. p.357, 11.7.1712

<sup>88</sup> Diary of Adam Tas, VRS 11-1 p.60

<sup>89 1/</sup>STB 18/42, 21.4.1713

<sup>90 1/</sup>STB 18/42, 2.5.1719

and his heirs as universal heir to whatever Michelsz might leave. The contract did not have long to run and by August of the same year 1719 Botma was dead<sup>91</sup>.

Most surprisingly Michelsz is found intermittently in the census right up to 1731 then recorded as possessing only two weapons (J.188)<sup>92</sup>. The fact that in this his final census he appears immediately after Jan Botma and Anna Maria Cruygsman, son and daughter-in-law to Jan Botma Sr. encourages the belief that the sons had assumed responsibility for the old man in place of his father. Michelsz must by now have been well over seventy and it is hoped that he ended his days in the comparative comfort of their home.

**Margaret Cairns** 

<sup>91</sup> Die Kerk van Stellenbosch, A.M. Hugo en J. Van der Bijl, p.211

<sup>92</sup> J.188 unpaginated