

Caspar van Wittel's family ties

Caspar van Wittel – the Dutch painter who left for Rome and never came back (fig. 1). Or so we thought. New archival evidence demonstrates that the vedute painter did undertake a journey home, in the winter of 1684-1685, and also adds significantly to our knowledge of his family and roots.

Born in Amersfoort to Catholic parents, Caspar van Wittel (1652/1653-1736) first traveled to Rome in 1674.¹ In Italy he prospered, developing into a cityscape specialist, capturing squares and ‘palazzi’, rivers and canals in his vedute for the Italian nobility. In the Netherlands, however, he remained largely unknown in his lifetime, which has led to considerable lacunae in our knowledge of his Dutch past.

Map Heijenga-Klomp – the only scholar to have made a serious study of Van Wittel’s Dutch descent – hypothesized that the surname ‘van ten Wietel’ (the original Dutch spelling variation of Van Wittel, eventually Italianized as Vanvitelli) possibly denoted German roots.² This was perhaps reiterated a bit too decisively when in a 2013 exhibition catalogue it was deduced that Caspar’s father, Adriaen Jaspersz van ten Wietel,

¹ Luigi Vanvitelli, *Portrait of Caspar van Wittel*, 1750-1800, oil on canvas, 66.6 x 49.8 cm, Rome, Accademia Nazionale di San Luca, inv. 0455.



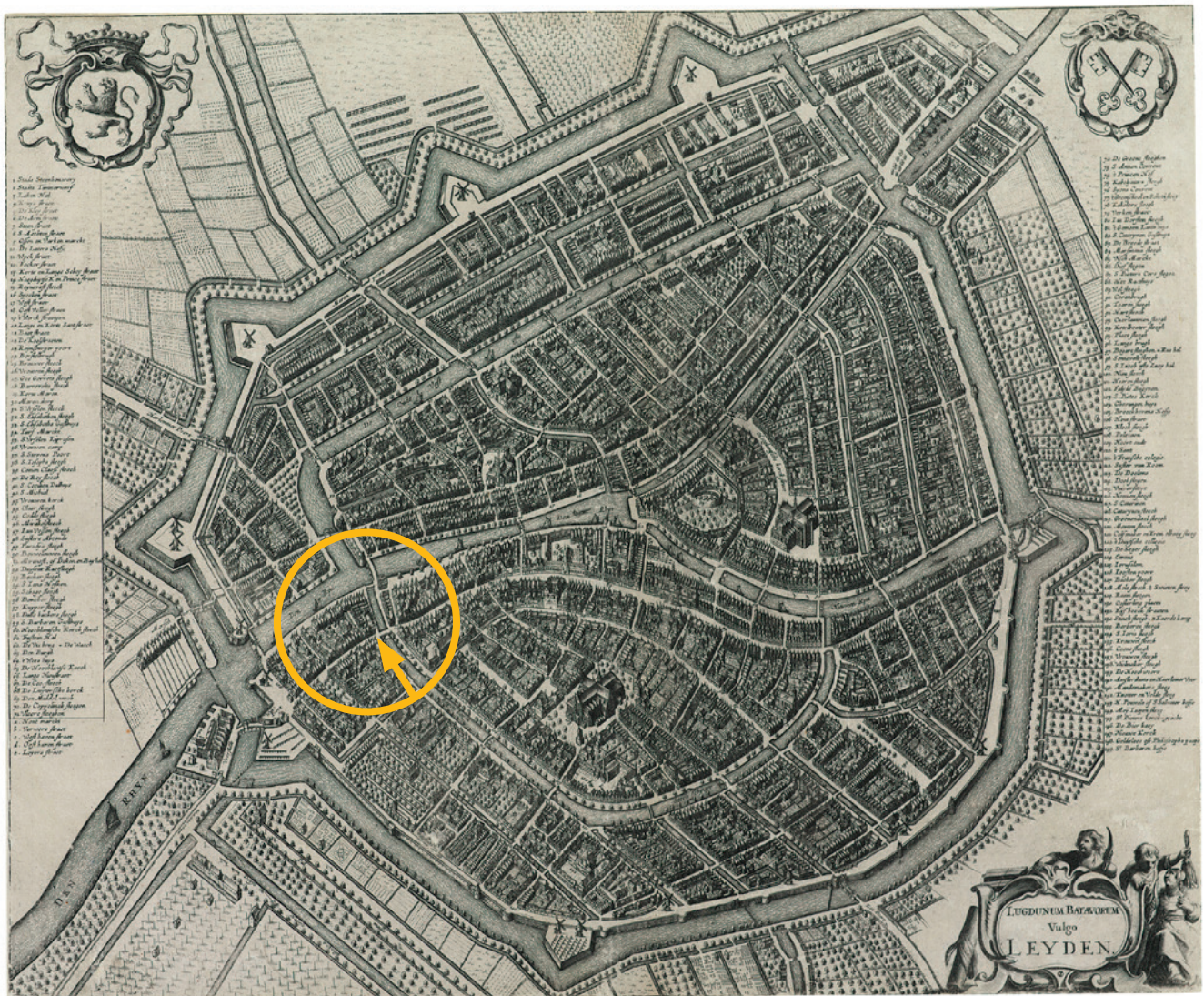
had been a German migrant, ‘who travelled with his wife Mayken to Amersfoort where in 1652 they bought a house near the Utrechtse Poort’.³ They did buy a house in Amersfoort in 1652, but they had not come from Germany.⁴ In fact, as will become apparent, Adriaen Jaspersz van ten Wietel had grown up in a nearby village, just north of Utrecht: Breukelen.

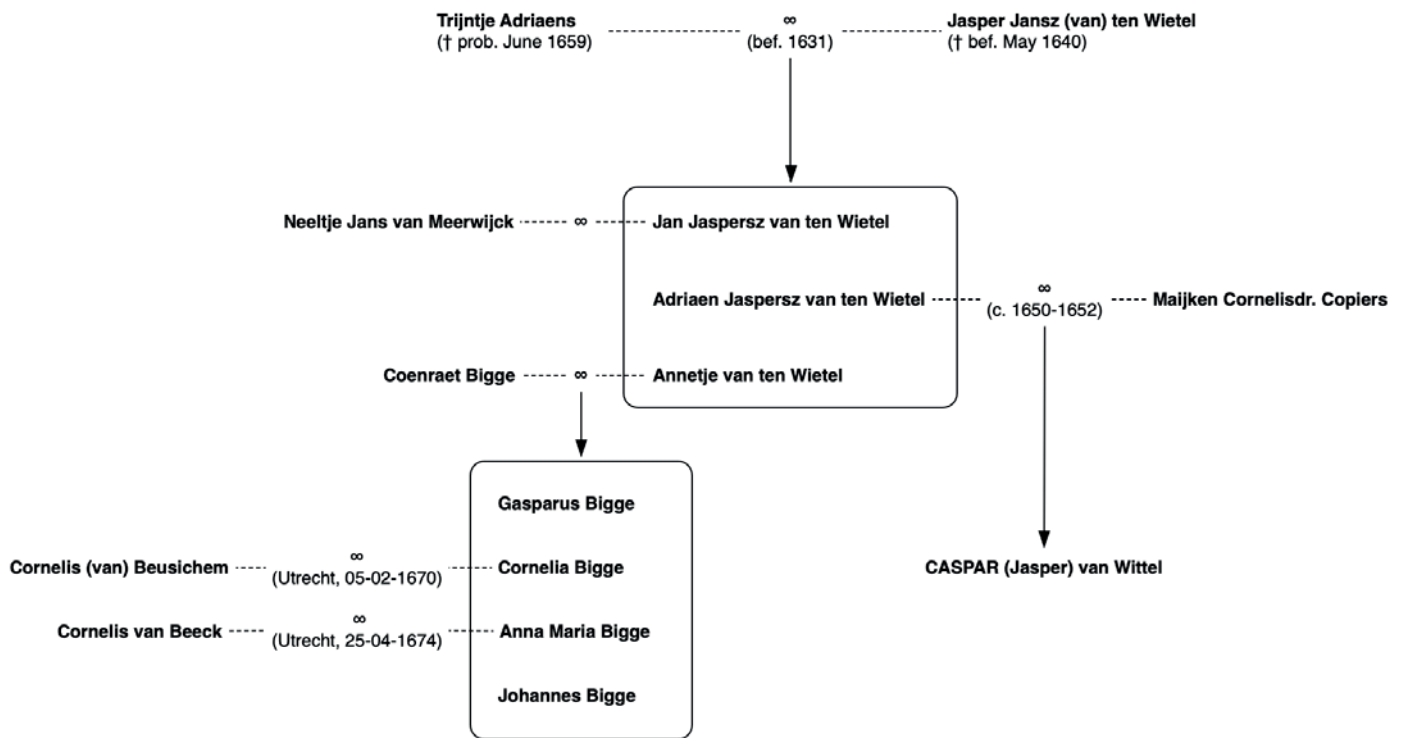
From Breukelen, via Leiden, to Amersfoort

On 18 February 1650, two years prior to buying the house ‘with the peacock’ in Amersfoort, Adriaen Jaspersz van ten Wietel signed a rental agreement in Leiden.⁵ The house, which was weatherproof (‘glasdicht’) and came with a stone floor that the tenant was allowed to replace with wood at his own cost should he so wish, was located on the Noordeinde, close to the Korte Rapenburg.⁶ The address, ‘Noorteijnde, Noortsijde, in de poort’, must refer to the row of houses inside the center of the block, accessible only via an archway (‘poort’) on the Noordeinde (fig. 2).⁷ This same block was where the painter Gerrit Dou worked at the same time, and merely a stone’s throw from the place where Rembrandt had been born some decades earlier – but, this is of no immediate relevance because Adriaen Jaspersz was a wheelwright and his son Caspar, the painter, had yet to be born.⁸

The rental agreement was effective for at least one year, at 275 guilders annually. It was signed by the landlord (Esaias van Reeck), the witnesses (Coenraet Bigge and Claes van Willick), and by the tenant, who, in his characteristically scrawling hand, spelled his name meticulously, as always, ‘Adriaen Jaspersen van ten Wietel.’

2
Joan Blaeu, *Map of Leiden*, detail, 1649, engraving, 45 x 53 cm, Leiden, Erfgoed Leiden en Omstreken, Topografisch Historische Atlas, inv. PV350.1.





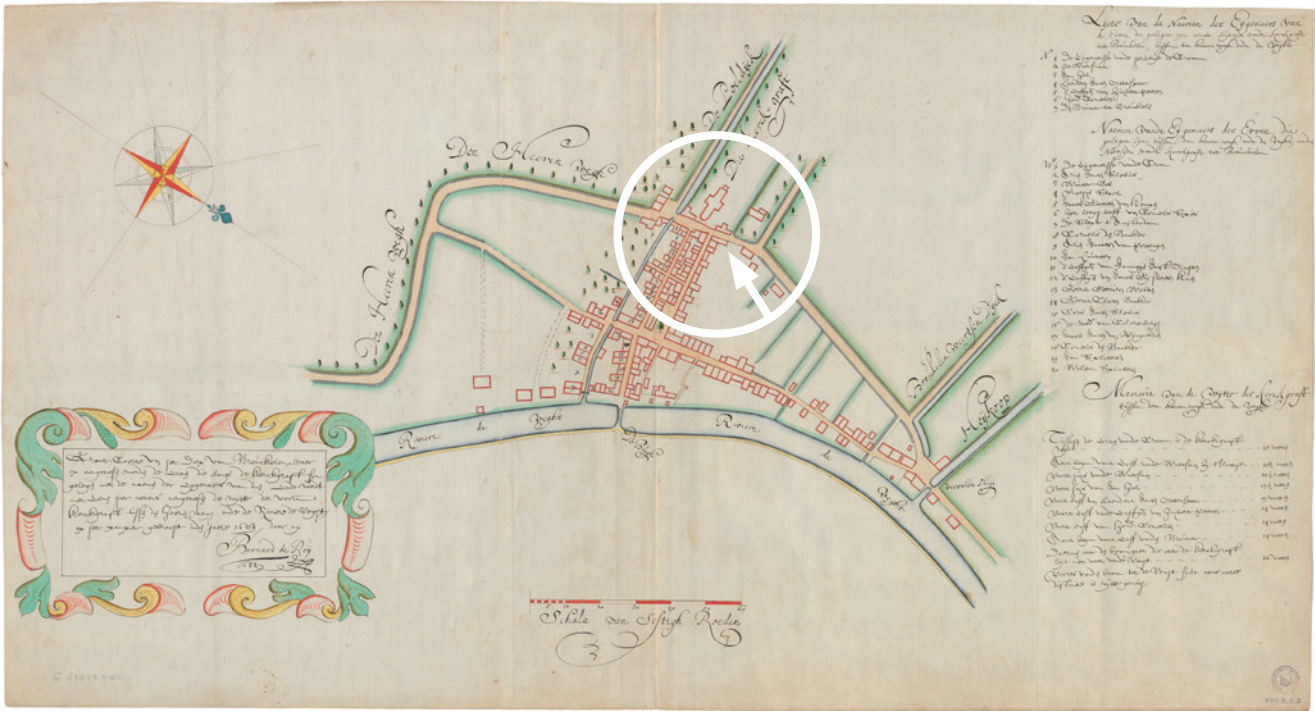
3
Family tree of Caspar van Wittel.

Heijenga-Klomp certainly would have been pleased to know about this document, for it confirms her supposition that Caspar's father had come to Amersfoort via Leiden. One of the sources on which she had based her argument was a 1667 document in which Adriaen Jaspersz authorized his brother-in-law, 'Coenraet Piggen' (the same, despite the difference in spelling, as his 1650 witness) to collect any outstanding debts in and around Leiden.⁹ That city in Zuid Holland, however, was only a temporary residence for Adriaen. His actual hometown was indicated by the notary in the 1650 lease: 'Arent Jaspersen vandten Wijtel wagemaecker woonende tot Breukel' – he was a cartwright from Breukelen.¹⁰

Unfortunately, the Catholic community in Breukelen – to which the Van Wittel family seem to have belonged – is scarcely documented for the period when Adriaen would have been born. But, although we have no dates of birth or marriage, we can deduce more about the family from notarial records in Utrecht and Leiden, which will be further discussed below: Adriaen Jaspersz was the second son of Jasper Jansz van ten Wietel and Trijntje Adriaens; like Adriaen, both his father and older brother, Jan Jaspersz, were wheelwrights; and there was a sister, Annetje (or Anna), who would marry the tailor Coenraet Bigge (fig. 3).

Aunts, uncles, and cousins

The earliest trace of the family dates to 1631, when 'Jasper Jansz ter Wietel, Raeymaecker' and Trijntje Adriaens, his wife, bought the leasehold of a house and homestead ('huys[ing] e en hofstede') belonging to the nearby fiefdom of Nijenrode near Breukelen. The final payment was made by Trijntje in 1640, who, by then, had apparently become a widow.¹¹ Based on descriptions of the house in this document and another from 1659, the building must have stood on the elongated corner plot, opposite and just north of the church, as recorded on the 1681 surveyor's map drawn by Bernard de Roij (fig 4).¹² This was undoubtedly



4 Bernard de Roij, *Map of the village of Breukelen*, 1681, Utrecht, Utrecht University Library, inv. KAART: *VIII*.B.h.2.

5 Theodor Matham, *View of Nijenrode*, ca. 1646-1676, engraving, 23.8 x 50 cm, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. RP-P-OB-23.316.



a favorable spot for a wheelwright, given its proximity to the Herenwech, which functioned as a throughway leading from one estate to the next. Breukelen was, and is, a small village along the Vecht river, but the area had turned into a relatively wealthy 'garden of Amsterdam' after being discovered by the urban elite from the 1630s onwards – many of whom had their country houses built there, all of whom would have brought plenty a carriage to the region (fig. 5).¹³

The inheritance of this house seems to have caused some tension between the three siblings, which is why Trijntje approached a notary in 1645, stipulating the terms under which her eldest son, Jan Jaspersz, would come into the leasehold. For a total of 1600 guilders, to be added to her inheritance, he would become the lawful owner of the leasehold when he either married, or when his mother deceased – at which time her inheritance would be split in three equal parts.¹⁴ In the following years circumstances must have changed, for in 1657 Trijntje made another will, and Jan Jaspersz had yet to become the owner of the

leasehold even though he had by then married Neeltje Jans van Meerwijck. Trijntje gave her eldest son two options: either he could inherit his rightful share (equaling three quarters of a third of her inheritance), or he could opt for a lifelong usufruct of the entire third of her properties, including the leasehold, while transferring the ownership of the goods to his children or grandchildren, or, if he remained childless, to his two siblings.¹⁵

Two years later, in July 1659, Jan Jaspersz opted for the latter – which must mean that Trijntje had passed away within the previous six weeks (when Caspar was around six or seven years old).¹⁶ The most likely explanation is that Jan Jaspersz had debts and by not legally owning the leasehold it was possible to keep it in the family. He and his wife Neeltje Jans granted each other lifelong usufruct of the leasehold, but instead of transferring the ownership of their unspecified goods and leasehold to their children or his siblings (as Trijntje had desired), it went to Jan's 'neef' (cousin or nephew), Dirck Dirkszen Achtienhoven, also a wheelwright, and Jan Cornelis de Rijck, son of Cornelis Jans de Rijck. Jan Jaspersz had probably received a significant sum of money from De Rijck – who was a member of an influential and wealthy family in the Breukelen area – in exchange for partial ownership of the leasehold.¹⁷ With that sum, Jan Jaspersz was presumably able to pay off his putative debt, as well as to buy out his two siblings Adriaen and Annetje (via her husband), who agreed to this new ownership of the leasehold in August 1659.¹⁸ With Dirck Dircksz, half of the property did remain in the family.¹⁹

It is unclear how exactly Dirck Dircksz was related. The same is true for the relationship between Adriaen Jaspersz and the Marcus family in Amersfoort – for whom he officiated on a number of occasions.²⁰ It is unlikely that the family connection can be found in the Van ten Wietel line – a distinct last name that neither Dirck Dircksz, nor any member of the Marcus descendants used. But a common ancestor in the lineage of Caspar's grandmother, Trijntje Adriaens, is entirely possible.²¹ Either way, the Van ten Wietels maintained close family ties, and this may have been the reason that Adriaen Jaspersz and his wife Maijken Cornelis Copiers had moved (via Leiden) to Amersfoort.

Jan Jaspersz, in the meantime, continued to live in Breukelen, together with his wife Neeltje Jans, making his living as a wheelwright.²² Their sister, Anna, had also moved to Leiden, where her husband, Coenraet Bigge, had become a citizen ('poorter') in 1652, and where they bought a house in the centrally located Wolhuijs neighborhood in 1680.²³

A newborn niece

Anna and Coenraet, Caspar's aunt and uncle, had at least four children: Casparus, Cornelia, Anna Maria, and Johannes.²⁴ While Anna Maria is relevant here because she married the Utrecht silversmith Cornelis van Beeck, who was authorized by Adriaen Jaspersz van ten Wietel in 1681 to collect an outstanding debt in Utrecht, Cornelia interests us the most.²⁵ She moved to Utrecht and married the merchant Cornelis van Beusichem (or Beusekom) on 5 February 1670, and gave birth to at least eleven children.²⁶ Unlike many of the earlier events taking place in Catholic communities in the Netherlands, their children's baptismal records have been preserved. Among them is that of 'Maria van Beusichem,' baptized on 27 January 1685 in the presence of her parents, Cornelis Beusichem and Cornelia Bigge, and her godfather ('patri[nus]'): Gasparus ten Witel (fig. 6).²⁷

There can be little doubt that this 'Gasparus ten Witel' was, in fact, the painter, who had been living in Rome. But in order for him to be named in this document, he must have been physically present in Utrecht in January 1685. Apart from the now obvious family ties – after all, Caspar was a full (and, it seems, only) cousin of Cornelia Bigge – there are a number of factors that corroborate this deduction.

First, Caspar van Wittel had no living namesakes in 1685. His grandfather, after whom he was named, had been dead since at least 1640. And we can be fairly certain that his uncle, Jan Jaspersz, did not have a son, given that his 1659 testament did not name any offspring as the inheritors of the leasehold. Second, the surname 'van ten Wietel', in all its spelling

28 Sep.

48

Joed pater Bartel van Kuyk mater
Henriëke Habelaar
patri: Joed Hadeluyn.

29 Octob.

Maximilianus pater Paulus
Levi mater Cornelia
hared, matrina Marie
Levi.

29 Octob.

Judith mater Annichie de
groot pater Bartho
Thomeüs van Wyngert
matri: Johanna Kobbum

31 Octob.

Willim pater Woudert van herfoe
mater Grietie Willem's
matri: Gerrigie Rigter

10 Novemb.

Arnoldus pater Joed Stijse
mater Tryntje Huyberts.

16 Novemb.

Elisabetha pater Leendert van
Kuyk mater Janneke
Seck.

16 Novemb.

Maria pater Jan Steuense ma,
mater Marie Mynders

18 Novemb.

Megtel pater Floris van der
Boom mater Janneke
de Wit

20 Novemb.

Joed pater Hermannus mater
Cornelia.

23 Novemb.

Ariaentie pater Augustyn
Jansen mater Lyset
Boenen matri: Cunora
werk hoven

24 Novemb.

Joed pater Jobrant Bos, mater
Aeltje Flaes patrinus
Jobrant.

1 Decemb.

Bastiaen pater Jan de Wit
mater Jygie Arents

7 Decemb.

49

Arnolda pater Antonie mater
Deternelligie

10 Decemb.

Maria pater Gerrit meynderse
mater Magdalena Adams.

11 Decemb.

Joed pater Hermannus mater Joh^{na},
ma.

27 Decemb.

Petrus pater Franciscus Pourier
mater Magdalena Motte

28 Decemb.

Gerardus pater Petrus werlde mater.

28 Decemb.

Anna maria pater Arnoldus Lam,
"brigs mater Anna datelbeek
matri: Lyset van de vecht.
1685

2 Januarij

Aleidis pater Fredericus verkerk mater
Wilmina Braunsder matri:
Anna Brouwer.

15 Januarij

Joed pater Hendrik Pit mater Susan,
na.

15 Januarij

Henricus pater Jan van Haute mater
Hiltschje Wessels. matri:
elcie Wessels.

22 Januarij

Cornelius pater Willem van mare
mater Annigie vandeneng.
matri: maie Cornelis

23 Januarij

Beatrice pater Hendrik mater
marie van Seake.

25 Januarij

Willemynthe pater Jacot de Lang
mater Margie Jans.

27 Januarij

Maria pater Cornelis Beusekom
mater Cornelia Bigge
patri: Gasparus ten wite

variants, is very rare. Every record that has surfaced in Dutch archives has so far concerned a member of this particular family as described in this article.²⁸ Third, Roman records do not foreclose the possibility of a trip to The Netherlands in 1685. Van Wittel's first biographer, Lione Pascoli (1674-1744), wrote that the artist accepted an invitation from the Sacchetti family to live with them, which he supposedly did for six years, from 1682 onwards.²⁹ Other than that, we know of no evidence that places him in Italy around that time. Even though this biography was written around or shortly after Van Wittel's death, and despite the friendship between Pascoli and Caspar's son Luigi, this information does leave room for interpretation. It has previously been argued that the Sacchetti gave Van Wittel a great deal of freedom, allowing him to work for other families simultaneously.³⁰ But even if he did spend most of those six years with the Sacchetti, it is not impossible that he may have been away for a period of time to visit his family in and nearby Amersfoort.

Homecoming

All things considered, it seems safe to say that Van Wittel spent the winter of 1685 in the vicinity of his native Amersfoort. Why Van Wittel came back we do not know – his father was certainly still alive, and we know very little about his mother. The family home was not sold until 1698, when Caspar asked Cornelis Beusichem, the husband of his cousin Cornelia Bigge, to act as his proxy.³¹ Heijenga-Klomp previously suggested that Van Wittel might have returned to the Netherlands on a farewell trip in 1687. Interestingly, part of the evidence, which she admits to be circumstantial, holds up for 1685. She based her hypothesis of a 1687 trip on the fact that there are no known works by Van Wittel from that year and on archival evidence that places his friend, colleague, travel companion, roommate, and fellow Amersfoorter, Jacob van Staverden (1656-1716), in their hometown during March 1686 and January 1687.³² For the winter of 1685 there are no known documents that locate Van Staverden in the Netherlands, but we also know of none that place him in Italy, or elsewhere, making it still possible (if unnecessary) that they came back together. On the other hand, there is no dearth of dated work by Van Wittel during this period, although the total of four known works dated 1684 perhaps suggests that he was less productive that year.³³ While most of these works were small and executed in tempera on parchment, it may have been just around this time that Van Wittel switched to oil paint – inviting further hypotheses about his career trajectory and success in Rome and, consequently, his motivation to undertake a journey home.

Although we do not know what brought him home, Van Wittel's role at the baptism in Utrecht was probably not the main reason. Cornelis Beusichem and Cornelia Bigge had (at least) eleven children, and there is, it seems, no discernable reasoning behind their choice of particular family members to be their children's godparents. It is more likely that Van Wittel happened to be present when Maria was born, and so was granted the honor. Furthermore, the journey between Rome and the Netherlands was lengthy. It took Van Wittel's friend Abraham Genoels about two months to travel from Antwerp to Rome, and midwinter would not have been an ideal time for such a journey, making it likely that Van Wittel spent that entire winter in the North.³⁴ Despite the open questions, Van Wittel's involvement at the baptism demonstrates that he clearly maintained bonds not only with his former teacher Matthias Withoos, but also with his extended family after he had moved to Rome. His relatives, therefore, remained a more important part of his life than has previously been assumed.

Implications and conclusion

This information about Van Wittel's whereabouts sheds new light on the artist's development and oeuvre. By the winter of 1684-1685, he had just established himself as a cityscape painter in Rome. Although no obvious effects of the trip on his painted output immediately



7
Caspar van Wittel, *View of Amersfoort*, undated, pencil, pen and ink, and grey wash, 27 x 40 cm, Naples, Museo Nazionale di San Martino, inv. 20894.

present themselves, we might at least reconsider the genesis of a number of undated drawings (and, less immediate, gouaches) that depict Dutch cities (figs. 7, 8). There is no evidence that Van Wittel was particularly interested in cityscapes prior to moving to Rome, which has resulted in unconvincing speculation about the creation of these works. It is unlikely that he would have brought the sheets with him to Rome in 1674 and stylistic characteristics suggest a significantly later date. Consequently, it has traditionally been believed that the sketches were drawn from memory and that they do not represent any specific location, even though some of them appear to have been quickly drawn from life.³⁵ A third option should be added: Van Wittel may have made these drawings on or following his 1684-1685 trip, after he had found his calling as a painter of vedute.

An understanding of the family ties examined in this article were necessary to demonstrate that the 1685 document did, in fact, refer to Caspar. But learning more about them also enables us to better understand Van Wittel's relationships, knowledge, interests, and skills. In Rome, the most important figure for Van Wittel's development as a cityscape painter was the Dutch engineer Cornelis Meijer (1629-1701), who happened also to be the son of a wheelwright. The importance of that coincidence may easily be overestimated, but Van Wittel's descent of a family of wheelwrights also suggests an affinity for technology, a handy talent for a painter interested in architecture and perspective.³⁶

Caspar van Wittel became a sought-after painter, at ease in elite Roman circles. In the family picture painted by the archival materials presented in this article, we see a well-respected family of craftsmen (apart from, maybe, Caspar's impecunious uncle), with each generation somewhat better off than the previous. Unlike Van Wittel's grandmother, Trijntje, who signed her name with a cross, all of her and Jasper Jansz' children could sign with their proper names, in similar hands, indicating that education was valued in the Van ten Wietel family.³⁷ Thus, the seeds for Caspar van Wittel's often lauded social skills, which ultimately allowed him to ascend the Italian social ladder so successfully, seem to have been planted by his grandparents, in Breukelen.

8
Caspar van Wittel, *View of Hoorn*, undated, pencil, pen and ink, 27 x 40.5 cm, Naples, Museo Nazionale di San Martino, inv. 23907.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rozemarijn Landsman (1984) is a PhD candidate in the Department of Art History and Archaeology at Columbia University, New York. In her dissertation, she examines the relationships between art, technology, and urban development in the multifaceted work of the Amsterdam-based artist and inventor Jan van der Heyden (1637-1712).

NOTES

I would like to thank, first and foremost, Dirk Steenbeek, senior collection manager at Archief Eemland, for his indispensable help and encouragement. I am equally grateful for the guidance of Gregor Weber and David Freedberg and for the institutional support from Kunsthall KAdE and Museum Flehite. Finally, I wish to thank Daniel S. Ralston for his attentive comments.

1 Although there is no known evidence informing us about his departure from Amersfoort or his journey to Rome, this date – based on Van Wittel's presence at Abraham Genoels' Bentvueghel initiation dinner in Rome on

3 January 1675 (as recorded by Arnold Houbraken) – seems plausible. Lione Pascoli wrote around 1730 that Van Wittel arrived in 1677, at the age of 21, but this cannot have been the case. Pascoli was also about three to four years off with regard to Van Wittel's year of birth; see L. Pascoli, 'Gaspere Vanvitelli', in *Vite de pittori, scultori, ed architetti viventi*, Treviso 1981, pp. 3-24; A. Houbraken, *De groote schouburgh der Nederlantsche konstschilders en schilderessen*, vol 3, Amsterdam 1721, pp. 96-105. A printer's error must have slipped into Houbraken's account, who says on page 101 that the initiation took place in 1674,

which is contradictory to the rest of his text. The presence of Cornelis de Bruyn at Genoels' initiation – who joined the 'Bent' in December 1674 – corroborates that Genoels' initiation took place in 1675.

2 Heijenga-Klomp hypothesized that Van Wittel's ancestors came from a village called Wietel, near Bad Oeynhausen in Volmerdingen, Germany, based on research conducted by the Meertens Institute in Amsterdam, see M.W. Heijenga-Klomp, 'Jacob van Staverden en Caspar van Wittel, twee schilders van Amersfoort te Rome', *Flehite: Tijdschrift voor verleden en heden*

- van *Oost Utrecht* 21 (1991), nr 3/4, p. 42.
- 3 B. van Steenberghe, 'Caspar (or Jasper?) van Wittel: The connection with his hometown, the city of Amersfoort', in P. Puglisi e.a., *Gaspar van Wittel: I disegni: La collezione della Biblioteca Nazionale di Roma*, Rome 2013, pp. 39-40.
 - 4 About the purchase of this house see Heijenga-Klomp 1991 (note 2), pp. 42-43, 49 n74; M.W. Heijenga-Klomp, 'Jasper van Wittel (ca. 1652-1736): Een Amersfoortse schilder in Italië', *Jaarboek Flehite* (2005), pp. 133, 134 n5. The archival record is kept in Amersfoort, Archief Eemland, 0012 Stadsrecht Amersfoort, 1435-1811, inv. 436-22, 26-08-1652.
 - 5 Leiden, Erfgoed Leiden en Omstreken, 0506 Inventaris van de oude notariële archieven van Leiden, 1564-1811, XXXVIII Archief van notaris Jacob Jansz de Haes, 1630-1656, inv. 483, 18-02-1650. There is no mention of a spouse at this time.
 - 6 '[...] den huijrdre sal op zijen costen mogen / wech nemen de steene vloer die int / voorhuijs leijt, ende in plaets vandien mogen / leggen, een houtte vloer, maer ter / expiratie vande huijrtijt sal de // huijrdre int voors voorhuijs wederomme / moeten leggen een bequame vloer gel[ijck] als / aldaer iegenwoordig leijt [...]' The address corresponds to what is today Noordeinde 44-50. Ownership of those properties can be followed from ca. 1650 (Esaias van Reeck) to around 1800 (Arnoldus Theodorus Prijn, Jacobus Logger, and Thomas van Bergen). Thomas van Bergen was the last to be recorded in the so-called 'bonboeken', the early modern housing registry of Leiden. The 1814 tax register indicates that, at that time, those properties were numbered as Noordeinde nrs 32-35 (Leiden, Erfgoed Leiden en Omstreken, 0516 Inventaris van het Stadsarchief van Leiden (SA III), (1359) 1816-1929 (1963), inv. 980, part 1, fol 2v). These numbers correspond with Noordeinde nrs 44-50 in the 1871 'huisnummerboek' – which are equal to the current addresses, see *Huisnummerboek van de Gemeente Leiden naar de officiële bescheiden gedrukt* Leiden 1871, p. 91.
 - 7 The 'bonboeken' of Leiden indicate that most of the real estate of Van Reeck (elsewhere spelled as Van Reijck) – a wealthy saddler and horsebreaker ('piqueur') – was located along and behind the northside of the Noordeinde, near the corner with the Korte Rapenburg, see Leiden, Erfgoed Leiden en Omstreken, 0501A Inventaris van het stadsarchief van Leiden, (1253) 1574-1816 (1897), inv. 6616, fol 255r-256v. Additionally, these 'bonboeken' indicate that he owned a number of houses facing the river on the 'Nedergeleijde Walle', also known as the Korte Vest, nowadays referred to as Galgewater (NL-LdnRAL_0501A_6616_277r-274v).
 - 8 'Gerard Douw schilder' was the owner of a house on the 'Nedergeleijde Walle' (also known as the Korte Vest), close to the Korte Rapenburg; Leiden, Erfgoed Leiden en Omstreken, 0501A Stukken betreffende afzonderlijke onderwerpen; Registratie van onroerend goed 1585-1816 (1819), inv. 6616, Derde Register, Noord Rapenburg, fol. 269v.
 - 9 Amersfoort, Archief Eemland, 0083 Notarissen te Amersfoort, 1604-1925, 013a0001 Gerardus van Swijnevoort, 11-01-1667. The other clue was provided by the 1654 registry that documented Adriaen paying taxes ('huisgeld'), in which he was referred to as 'from Leiden', Amersfoort, Archief Eemland, 0001.01 Stadsbestuur Amersfoort, 1300-1810, inv. 1465, huisgeldregister of 1654. The patronym of this 'Ariaen Jansen tot Leijden' is incorrect, but based on the address and neighbors it certainly concerns Van Wittel's father. See also Heijenga-Klomp 2005 (note 4), pp. 133, 134 n3.
 - 10 NL-LdnRAL-0506-483, 18-2-1650.
 - 11 Utrecht, Het Utrechts Archief, 34-4 Notarissen in de stad Utrecht 1560-1905, inv. U019a003 G. van Waey, nr 199, fol 184r-185r, 21-09-1631. They bought the leasehold from Claes Jacobsz van Werckhoven. The owner of the land was Wilhelmina van Bronckhorst, who is mentioned in (and whose coat of arms adorns?) the print depicting Nijenrode by Theodor Matham (Fig. 4).
 - 12 NL-UtHUA_34-4_U019a003_0199, fol. 184r: '[...] huysinge ende hofstede staende en gelegen tot Breuckelen, daer oostwärts Jacob Joostens met zijn huis, zuytwaert Jan Petersz van Vijanen, westwärts den Herenwech, en noortwärts Ruwiels acker [...]'. In the 1659 notarial record the 'house, farmstead, and yard' are described as being situated 'opposite the church', NL-UtHUA_34-4_U021a025_000203_0198.
 - 13 See, for instance, Gary Schwartz's article about the growing popularity and importance of Maarsseveen – a village in between Breukelen and Utrecht – during the seventeenth century, to an important degree due to the efforts of the Amsterdam burgo-master family De Huydecoper: G. Schwartz, 'Jan van der Heyden and the Huydecopers of Maarsseveen', *The J. Paul Getty Museum journal* 11 (1983), pp. 197-220. An indication of the economic growth taking place in the Breukelen area, and possibly also of the favourable location for a wheelwright's shop, is the increase in value of the leasehold of the house and land that Jasper Jansz and Trijntje had bought for 600 guilders in 1631, but for which their eldest son, Jan, had to value at 1600 in 1645. See also notes 12 and 15.
 - 14 I would like to thank Dirk Steenbeek and Aart Veldhuizen for their assistance with the interpretation of the notarial documents. '[...] Jan Jaspersz haren oudsten, en hare vordere kinderen algeereets eenige moeijlichheden waren ontstaen, dwelcke zij comparante van tijt tot tijt getracht hebbende, als behoort, te prevenirien en wech te nemen [...]'. cited from NL-UtHUA_34-4_U021a012_19, 8-03-1645.
 - 15 NL-LdnRAL-0506_715_103_166-167, 12-05-1657.
 - 16 Because Trijntje's 1657 will stipulated that if Jan Jaspersz wanted to use this usufruct construction, he had to appear in front of a notary to do so within six weeks after her death, see note 16.
 - 17 NL-UtHUA_34-4_U021a025_000182_184, 30-07-1659 (will of Jan Jaspersz and Neeltje Jans). It would also have made sense if, instead of Cornelis Jansz de Rijck, it had been Cornelis Jansz van Meerwijck who inherited half of the property – the brother of Neeltje Jansz (see also note 23). But, since the document really spells 'De Rijck' (twice), and such a person existed, it is more likely that it was in fact Cornelis Jansz de Rijck who became involved because of his money. Perhaps it was even him, to whom Jan Jaspersz had been in debt.
 - 18 NL-UtHUA_34-4_U021a025_000203_0198, 18-08-1659 (consent of Adriaen Jaspersz and Coenraet Bigge).
 - 19 The 1659 will of Jan Jaspersz and Neeltje Jans further stipulates that, if Dirck Dircksz died childless, a quarter of that inheritance would be passed on to the poor in Breukelen. The future of

- the part of Jan Cornelis de Rijck – no longer in the family – could not be determined by the previous owners.
- 20 In 1674 Adriaen Jaspersz was present at a wedding as witness and cousin of the bride, Elisabeth Peters, daughter of Gerritje (Gerbrich) Markensen (NL-AmfAE_0083_013b001, not. Swijnevoort, 27-10-1674 – also in Heijenga-Klomp 1991 (note 2), pp. 43, 49n79). She married Jan Dircksz Bos and she was further assisted by her mother Gerritje Markensen, her brother Marcus Petersz, and Thomas Jansen her stepfather – his relationship to the bride is described as ‘behoutvader’, which is derived from ‘behuwdvader’, which is usually used to refer to a father-in-law but literally means ‘father related by marriage’, and so, in this case, seems to refer to Elisabeth’s stepfather. Gerritje Marcus seems to have married twice – first to P(i)eter Harmensz, with whom she had at least two children (Elisabeth and Marcus), and second – apparently – to Thomas Jansen. This is corroborated by the fact that a ‘Thomas Jansen de Vries’ was the guardian of the children of Gerritje’s brother, Adriaen Marcusz, in the capacity of uncle, ‘oom’ – together with Adriaen Jaspersz, who was their ‘neef’, NL-AmfAE_0083_015b007, not. Brinckesteijn, 16-09-1678, see Heijenga-Klomp 1991 (note 2), pp. 43, 49 n80; and NL-AmfAE_0012_436-28_278v-279r, 09-11-1681. Gerritje and Adriaen Marcus had three more siblings: Dirck (also a waggoner, like their father), Johannes, and Anna. The family lived in the Hellesteeg, around the corner from the Van Wittels in the Utrechtse Straat in Amersfoort. This Marcus family reconstruction is largely derived from NL-AftAE_0012_436-18_51r, 27-06-1637. In that document Marcus’ widow is Theuntgen Bartsen (Berts), represented by her two brothers, whom he had married on 16 October 1625, so it seems that the mother of his children had been his previous wife, Maria (Marritgen/Maeiken) Arijaens (Aris).
- 21 Perhaps the first wife of Marcus Dircksz, Maria Arijaens, and Trijntje were sisters – daughters of an Adriaen, but these are all very common and unspecific names. Or, perhaps Marcus Dircksz was a brother of Trijntje’s father, Adriaen? These seem to be the most plausible scenarios – in which Dirck Dircksz could be a descendant of Marcus Dircksz’ eldest son Dirck (whom married Weijntgen Cornelis and who certainly had children), or of a hypothetical brother of Trijntje or her father. Either way, Adriaen Jaspersz would have been the (second or third) cousin of Elisabeth Peters and (the children of) Adriaen Marcus.
- 22 Both their 1659 will (see note 18) and a 1653 document (NL-UtHUA_34-4_U036a007_112, 5-03-1653) confirm this. In this document, Jan Jaspersz functions as guarantor for Cornelis Janss from Galekop, who must have been his brother-in-law, taking into account that such a role often indicates family ties and the existence of another document (dated 1655) in which a ‘Cornelis Janss van Meerwyck from Galecop’ is mentioned – signed by the same hand as the 1653 contract (NL-UtHUA_34-4_U021a021_062, 21-04-1655) – there can be no doubt that this was the brother of Jan Jaspersz wife, who, in 1659, appeared in their will as Neeltge Jans van Meerwijck (NL-UtHUA_34-4_U021a025_000182-184, 30-07-1659).
- 23 It is unclear when she moved, or when they married, but it is not unlikely that this happened prior to 1650, when Coenraet functioned as a witness in Adriaen Jaspersz’ rental agreement. Her presence there may also have persuaded Adriaen to try his luck in that city. For Coenraet Biggen’s registration as a citizen in Leiden: NL-LdnRAL_AR_0501a_1268_0113: ‘Coenraet Biggen cleermaecker uijt Den Haech, is onder de / Borchtochte van Ende op de getuijchenisse van Cornelis Barentszde Haen ende Carel de Meester knoopmaecker als poorer deser Stede aengenomen actum den 18:5:1652’. They moved to a house on what used to be the Vollersgracht, but is nowadays known as Langebrug. NL-LdnRAL_0601A_6611_161, 1st reg., fol. 145v.
- 24 Casparus Bigge died in 1717, upon which Anna Maria Bigge and her husband Cornelis van Beeck declined his inheritance (which probably did not consist of much). Johannes Bigge had exchanged the Netherlands for the East Indies by 1712.
- 25 NL-AmfAE_0083_013a002, 05-06-1681, see Heijenga-Klomp 2005 (note 4), pp. 133, 134 n7. Anna Maria, who lived the longest of them all (d. after 1727) had at least four children with Van Beeck: Cornelis, Adrianus, Anna Johanna, and Johannes. The eldest, Cornelis, married Zwaantje Meyer, with whom he had two children: Anna Catharina and Bernardus van Beeck.
- 26 They married on 5 February 1670 (Utrecht, Het Utrechts Archief, 711 Burgerlijke stand gemeente Utrecht en van de voormalige gemeente Zuilen retroacta doop- trouwe- begraafregisters, inv 86, fol 113r). For records of their eleven children’s births (plus possibly a twelfth), NL-UtHUA_0711_35.
- 27 NL-UtHUA_0711_35_49, 27-01-1685.
- 28 Including another baptismal record, concerning the birth of Anna van Beusekom in 1678 – another child of Cornelia Bigge and Cornelis Beusekom – of whom Annichie (Anna) van ter Witel was the ‘patrina’, NL-UtHUA_0711_00_00035_22, 22-03-1678.
- 29 Pascoli ca. 1730 (note 1).
- 30 S. Guarino, ‘Gaspar van Wittel e la famiglia Sacchetti’, in Rome 2013 (note 3), pp. 79-82; L. H. Zirpolo, *Ave papa ave papabile: The Sacchetti family: Their art patronage, and political aspirations*, Toronto 2005, pp. 131-139.
- 31 Heijenga-Klomp referred to Van Wittel’s 1698 proxy as ‘a certain Cornelis Beusichem’, but we have seen that he was part of the family, having married Caspar’s full cousin Cornelia Bigge – see full archival record, NL-AmfAE_0012_436-31, 7-09-1698; Heijenga-Klomp 1991 (note 2), pp. 46, 49 n94.
- 32 Heijenga-Klomp 2005 (note 4), p. 141.
- 33 Compared to the eight and eleven works dated 1683 and 1685, respectively. See G. Briganti, *Gaspar van Wittel*, Milan 1996. The four known works from 1684 are the *Piazza del Popolo* (cat 6), *Piazza San Pietro* (cat 101), *Piazza e il palazzo di Montecavallo* (cat 30), *Ponte Rotto* (cat 173).
- 34 Heijenga-Klomp 1991 (note 2), p. 39, based on Houbraken 1721 (note 1), pp. 96-105.
- 35 Among them Briganti 1996 (note 34), cat D263, D266, D283v, D357. In the entry accompanying D357 Briganti stated that nothing in these sheets indicates that they were drawn in Van Wittel’s youth (even arguing for an eighteenth-century date based on stylistic grounds), and therefore, he concluded, they must have been drawn from memory. Robbert Roos, in conversation with the author, recently noticed the similarities between the city profiles in these drawings and the landmark buildings of Amersfoort.

36 R. Landsman, 'Caspar van Wittel: Bridge between Dutch and Italian traditions', in R. Roos e.a., *Maestro Van Wittel: Dutch master of the Italian cityscape*,

Amersfoort 2019, pp. 24-49.

37 Jasper Jansz signed in 1631 (see note 12) with 'Bei min ijasper ijanssen tten vitell

rademacker ttot Bröckllen' – could these peculiarities in the spelling indicate a German origin, after all?

SUMMARY

New archival evidence demonstrates that the Dutch painter of Italian cityscapes, Caspar van Wittel (1652/1653-1736), undertook a previously unknown journey to the Netherlands after his move to Rome. In January 1685 Van Wittel was named godfather to a niece, born in Utrecht. The fact that he came back to the Netherlands, at least once, after he had established himself as a vedute painter in Rome, allows us to reconsider his artistic development and the chronology of his drawings with Dutch townscapes.

The baptismal record, which led to a number of previously unknown wills and other family-related notarial documents, also adds significantly to our understanding of Van Wittel's family background. The painter of cityscapes came from a Dutch family of wheelwrights and craftsman. His father, Adriaen Jaspersz van ten Wietel, had grown up in Breukelen and had lived briefly in Leiden around 1650, before settling in Amersfoort in 1652. Caspar evidently maintained contact with his extended family after his departure. Taken together, the documents discussed in this article reveal a well-respected family, paving the way for Van Wittel's success.