

Serendipity - ‘Governor’ Joan Bax, and the Herentals connection

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Three goodly young princes were traveling {sic} the world in hopes of being educated to take their proper position upon their return. On their journey they happened upon a camel driver who inquired if they had seen his missing camel. As sport, they claimed to have seen the camel, reporting correctly that the camel was blind in one eye, missing a tooth, and lame. From these accurate details, the owner assumed that the three had surely stolen the camel, and they were subsequently thrown into jail. Soon the wayward camel was discovered, and the princes brought to the perplexed Emperor of the land, who inquired of them how they had learned these facts. That the grass was eaten on one side of the road suggested that camel had one eye, the cuds of grass on the ground indicated a tooth gap, and the traces of a dragged hoof revealed the camel’s lameness. (Adapted from *The Peregrinaggio* [1557] in Remer, 1965)¹

Introduction

The term ‘serendipity’ seems to be unique to the English language.² It does not appear in current Dutch³ or Afrikaans dictionaries although the adjective

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1. T.G. REMER, *Serendipity and the three princes*, (University of Oklahoma Press, Norman OK, 1965), quoted in G.A. FINE and J.G. DEEGAN, ‘Three principles of Serendip: Insight, Chance and Discovery in qualitative research’, <http://www.ul.ie/~philos/vol2/deegan.html> originally appeared in *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 9(4), 1996.
2. The authors thank Adv. Mansell Upham for making transcriptions from the pertinent Day Registers in the CAR, as well as drawing their attention to the 1678 sale of slaves by Aletta Hinlopen. They thank Dr. Rob van Drie of the *Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie* for sending a copy of the *Jaarboek 2000* to SA. They also thank Dr Jochem Kroes (also of the CBG) for providing a copy of his article on armorial porcelain, which in turn clarified heraldic practice on quartering in the period of investigation. The translations are by Laing, however the research effort into ‘Bax and the Herentals connection’ is equal. It will be seen that the word ‘serendipity’ is uniquely English. Joe Garmeson of the English Academy of Southern Africa is thanked for his patient review and suggested amendments.
3. See: A.F.M. DE KNEGT (red.), ‘(Prisma) Engels Nederlands’ (Woordenboek), 31e druk, (Uitgeverij Het Spectrum, B.V., Utrecht, 1996.)

‘serendipitous’ does appear in the latter with the meaning “gelukkig-toevallig”.⁴ An Afrikaans meaning of ‘serendipity’ could thus be ‘gelukkige toeval’.⁵ A conflated definition of serendipity might be considered as being ‘the faculty of making fortunate (or happy and unexpected) discoveries by accident’.⁶ Laing feels strongly that many of the findings made in research are serendipitous.⁷ For the past few years he has been doing qualitative research on the use of heraldry at the Cape under the Dutch East India Company and has often experienced the intervention of serendipity. It seems that qualitative data are prone to ‘serendipitous findings’.

Qualitative data, according to Miles and Huberman, have always been the staple of certain social sciences, notably anthropology, history, and political science. However, in the past ... many researchers in fields with a traditional quantitative emphasis have shifted to a more qualitative paradigm.⁸ They further declare that:

Qualitative data are attractive. They are a source of well-grounded, rich descriptions and explanations of processes occurring in local contexts. With qualitative data one can preserve chronological flow, assess local causality, and derive fruitful explanations. Then, too, qualitative data are more likely to lead to serendipitous findings and to new theoretical integrations; they help researchers go beyond initial preconceptions and frameworks.⁹

The term ‘serendipity’ was coined by Horace Walpole (1717-1797), social historian, English novelist, politician, and belle lettrist: Inspired by the exotic tale told of ancient princes of Sri Lanka (then known as Serendip), he first used the term in a letter to the British diplomat, Horace Mann (1754-01-28). “Serendip is a corruption of the Hindustani name for Ceylon, *Saradip*, meaning ‘Golden Isle,’

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4. D.B. BOSMAN (et al.), *Tweetalige Woordeboek / Bilingual Dictionary*, (8ste uitgawe deur P.A. Joubert & J.J. Spies, Tafelberg, Kaapstad, 1984).
 5. Prof J.S. Bergh (U.P.) agreed that this is an acceptable translation – Personal discussion J.S. Bergh and R.A. Laing, U.P., 2000-05-15.
 6. *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 3rd ed. Uses the term “fortunate”, whereas the *Oxford English Dictionary* uses the terms “happy and unexpected”; Both quoted in an article about Serendip from the University of Brynmawr; <http://serendip.brynmawr.edu/serendip/about.html>.
 7. Finding the paper by Fine and Deegan was, in itself, totally serendipitous. Laing was busy editing (2000-04-19) the footnotes of the present article when an accidental ‘click’ on the address in footnote 6 took him into the Internet where there was a new ‘related’ site not visited before. A further click led to the fascinating paper of Fine and Deegan and the rest is serendipity.
 8. M.B. MILES and A.M. HUBERMAN, *Qualitative data analysis: A sourcebook of new methods*, (Sage Publications, California & London, 1984), p. 1.
 9. *Ibid.*, p. 1. Emphasis Laing.

where according to legend a city of gold was built.”¹⁰ “Walpole created serendipity to refer to the combination of accident and sagacity in recognizing the significance of a discovery.”¹¹

Fine and Deegan define serendipity “... as the unique and contingent mix of insight coupled with chance.”¹² “It is conclusions that are defined as surprising, yet obvious, that contribute to the presentation of ‘interesting’ research.”¹³ The same authors explored the work of several writers, hoping to discover the conditions under which ‘classic status’ was granted to research documents. They noticed a pattern in these writings in which “happenstance was linked to the [researcher’s]¹⁴ ability to make sense of seemingly chance events; that is, these scholars were able to ‘keep their wits about them,’ finding, in the rush of ongoing events, meanings and opportunities that might escape others.” Their conclusion was that qualitative research inevitably contained such ‘good fortune,’ but serendipity consisted in how one transformed one’s fortune into substantive discovery.¹⁵ They identified the work of Robert Merton¹⁶ as the most influential attempt to apply the concept of serendipity to social scientific theorising.

(Merton) provided a systematic attempt to make sense of serendipity in sociology, speaking of the serendipity pattern, whereby unexpected data provide the spark for the creation of theoretical analysis.¹⁷

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10. L.A. GOODMAN, ‘Notes on the etymology of serendipity and some related philological observations.’ *Modern Language Notes*, 76, 1961, p. 456. Quoted in an endnote in G.A. FINE and J.G. DEEGAN, ‘Three principles of Serendip: Insight, Chance and Discovery in qualitative research’, <http://www.ul.ie/~philos/vol2/deegan.html>, p. 11.
 11. T.G. REMER, *Serendipity and the three princes*, pp. 6-7, quoted in G.A. FINE and J.G. DEEGAN, ‘Three principles of Serendip: Insight, Chance and Discovery in qualitative research’, <http://www.ul.ie/~philos/vol2/deegan.html>, p. 1.
 12. G.A. FINE and J.G. DEEGAN, ‘Three principles of Serendip: Insight, Chance and Discovery in qualitative research’, <http://www.ul.ie/~philos/vol2/deegan.html>, p. 2. Emphasis Laing.
 13. *Ibid.* p. 2. It seems the authors are citing M. DAVIS, ‘That’s interesting! Toward a phenomenology of sociology and a sociology of phenomenology,’ *Philosophy of Social Science*, 1, pp. 309-344.
 14. Although Fine and Deegan investigated serendipity within the context of ethnographic research it seems as if their findings are equally valid in the field of historical research – In the quote ‘ethnographer’ i.e. ethnographic researcher has been replaced with the more generic word ‘researcher’.
 15. G.A. FINE and J.G. DEEGAN, ‘Three principles of Serendip: Insight, Chance and Discovery in qualitative research’, <http://www.ul.ie/~philos/vol2/deegan.html>, pp. 2-3.
 16. R.K. MERTON, *Social theory and social structure*. (Free Press, New York, 1968).
 17. G.A. FINE and J.G. DEEGAN, ‘Three principles of Serendip: Insight, Chance and Discovery in qualitative research’, <http://www.ul.ie/~philos/vol2/deegan.html>, p. 4.

It seems that for Merton three features characterised datum that fitted into the serendipity pattern: it had to be ‘unanticipated’, ‘anomalous’, and ‘strategic’ (i.e., with implications for the development of theory).¹⁸

Fine and Deegan also suggest that serendipitous insight provides the opportunity for constructing a plausible story. They do not deny the reality of an external world, but only suggest that numerous possible explanations exist and that chance events can be made serendipitous if the events provide the opportunity for story building. In that way, story telling was a means, not an end. They use stories in much the same way as researchers might use a case to illustrate a statistical study. These stories are intended as supporting evidence for a paper’s conclusions and permit readers to experience an abbreviated version of the *verstehen* and inference processes of the researcher/s.¹⁹ They extended Merton’s serendipity pattern into their own field of research and focussed on the opportunities that chance provided. Specifically, they examined

a trio of analytically distinct components of research: temporal serendipity (happening upon a dramatic instance), serendipity relations (the unplanned building of social networks), and analytic serendipity (discovering concepts or theories that produce compelling claims).²⁰

Each depended on the readiness to seize upon chance events; that is, the unstructured, inductive quality of fieldwork often provided leeway to incorporate the power of serendipitous findings into the core of a research report.

On numerous occasions serendipity has provided Laing with fascinating insights.²¹ Whilst working through a book on *Cape silver and silversmiths* to find evidence of heraldry on silver at the Cape, he came across a section on commemorative medals. This phenomenon was explored and resulted in a research paper on the subject.²²

18. R.K. MERTON, *Social theory and social structure*, p. 157; Cited in Fine & Deegan, (op. cit.) p. 4.

19. G.A. FINE and J.G. DEEGAN, ‘Three principles of Serendip: Insight, Chance and Discovery in qualitative research’, <http://www.ul.ie/~philos/vol2/deegan.html>, pp. 4-5.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

21. Once in the Cape Archives, Laing requested a volume of Death Notices - what was delivered was a volume of Notarial Protocols. The MS were not of particular interest, however each protocol was sealed and the seals were of major interest, especially the armorial seals which assisted Laing in completing a catalogue of the seal collection (Accession A1396) in the Cape Town Archives Repository.

22. R.A. LAING, ‘Commemorative family medals during the DEIC period’, *Historia*, 45 (2) 2000.

Commemorative medal of Joan Bax

There is a medal made to mark the death of Joan Bax “*genaamt van Heerentals*”,²³ who died 29 June and was buried in Cape Town on 4 July 1678. **(Figure 1)** This medal has an inscription on one side and armorial bearings on the other.²⁴ The inscription reads:

Ter gedachtenis van Den Wel Edelen Gestrengen en Manhaften Heer Joan Bax genaamt van Heerentals. In sijn leven nu Jongst Gouverneur wegens d'E: gener. Nederl: O: Indis: Cony van de Caap de goede Hoop, 't Eijland Mauritius en onderhorigeplaatsen. Overleden den 29 Junij mitsgaders Solemnelijk ter aarde Gestiedt den vierden Julij Ao 1678 aangemelde Caap de goede Hoop.²⁵

At the age of 32, Bax (1637-1678) married Aletta, the 18-year-old daughter of the Merchant-Prince Jacob Frans Hinlopen/Hinloopen. Picard seems to have felt, that as it was

Appropriate to his elevated status as the consort of a Hinlopen, he had soon after the wedding added the suffix ‘Van Herenthals’ to his own good name of Bax which made it even sound better than that of his wife and, moreover, was a tribute to his father Maurits who, while settled in s’Hertogenbosch at the time of Johan’s birth, actually hailed from Herenthals in Flanders where his family had occupied a respected social position.²⁶

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23. The current spelling of the name is Herentals, whereas older sources refer to Heerentals and Herenthals. The first will be used unless quoted in a reference. See also J. HELSEN, *De naam ‘Herentals’*, (Herentals I), nr. 1, Augustus 1934, pp. 1-9.
 24. With many commemorative medals it is difficult to establish which side is obverse and which is reverse.
 25. S. WELZ, *Cape silver and silversmiths: the work of silversmiths at the Cape of Good Hope, from late 17th to mid 19th century; early problems, training, output, marking, quality; with a definitive list of smiths and their marks*, (A.A. Balkema, Cape Town, 1976), p. 81. Welz does not give the source of this illustration. A.J. BEMOLT VAN LOGHUM SLATERUS, *Nederlandse familiepenningen tot 1813*, (Zutphen: Walberg Pers, Utrecht, Universiteitsmuseum, 1981): states that an example of this unmarked medal (90 x 110 mm) is in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, Medal 321, p. 69. He incorrectly gives part of the inscription as ‘generaal van Heerentals’.
 26. H.W.J. PICARD, *Masters of the castle: a portrait gallery of the Dutch commanders and governors of the Cape of Good Hope, 1652-1795, 1803-1806*, (C. Struik, Cape Town, 1972), p. 74. The Herentals connection is also mentioned by: G.J.SCHUTTE, ‘Joan Bax entitled Van Herenthals’, W.J. DE KOCK (Ed.), *Dictionary of South African Biography, I*, (Tafelberg - HSRC, Cape Town, 1st edition, 2nd printing, 1976), p. 59. A.A. VORSTERMAN VAN OIJEN, *Stam- en wapenboek van aanzienlijke Nederlandsche familiën, met genealogische en heraldische aantekeningen*, (B.J. Wolters, Groningen, 1885-1890, 3 vols.) No mention of Joan Bax was found in the section on Bax although the marriage between “Jan Bax van Herenthals” and Aletta Hinlopen, appears in the section on Hinlopen in Vorsterman van Oijen, volume II, p. 64.

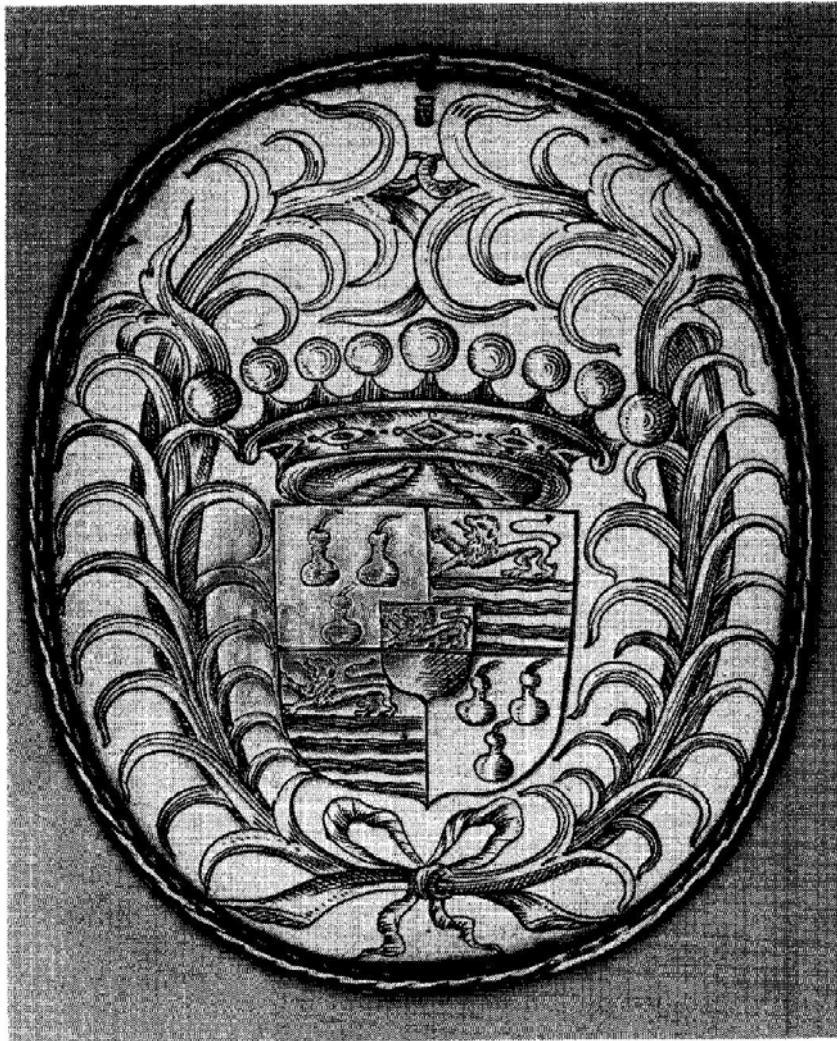


Figure 1 - Medal showing the arms of Joan Bax (Source: Welz).

It is interesting to note that, prior to Laing's investigation, no coat of arms for Bax had been identified in any of the heraldic writing in South Africa. Cornelis Pama wrote an article in *Historia* about the coats of arms of the Commanders, Governors and Commissioners-General at the Cape.²⁷ This was written to explain a stained glass window in the building housing the offices of the Dutch Consul General in Cape Town. This window depicted the shields of arms of all those covered by the title and it seems likely that Pama also undertook the heraldic research. Pama gave him as "Johan Bax. Goewerneur 1676-1678. Wapen onbekend."²⁸ In a footnote he mentioned that there were several families with this name in the Netherlands, with

27. C. PAMA, 'Die wapens van die Kommandeurs, Goewerneurs en Kommissarisse-Generaal aan die Kaap, 1652-1806'. *Historia*, 3 (3) 1958.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 8. Pama also could not establish coats of arms for Zacharias Wagenaer, Johannes Cornelis d'Ableing and Willem Helot.

different arms. However, he could not establish to which of these families the Governor belonged.

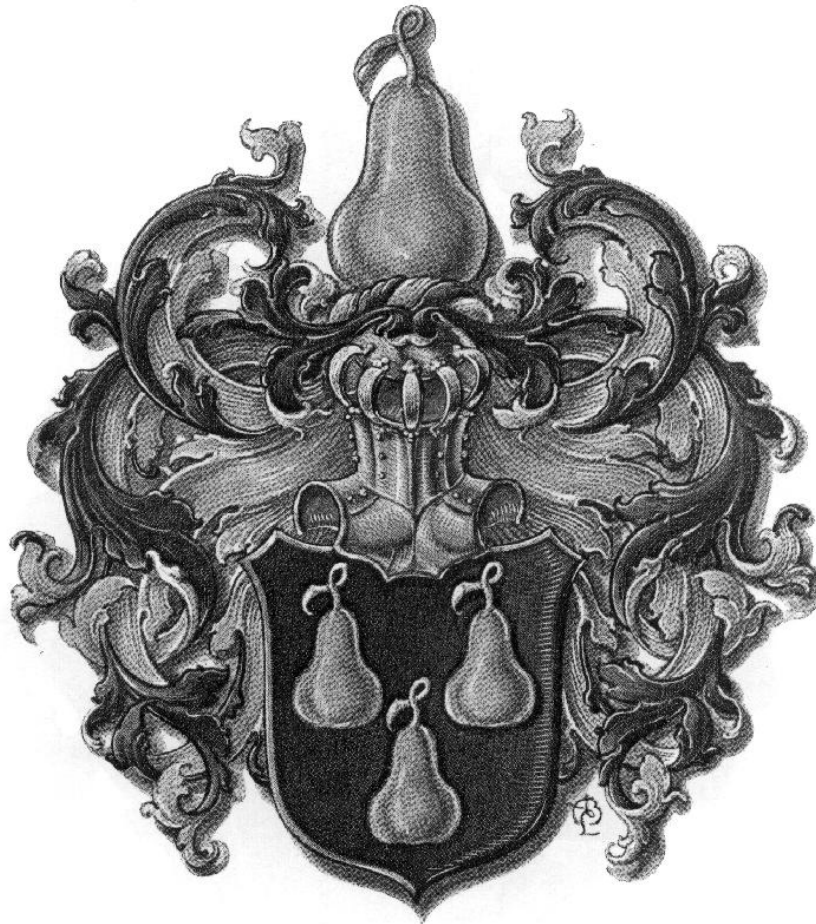


Figure 2 - Bax arms with Gourds (Source: Boeree)

The arms on the medal are: Quarterly 1st and 4th *three gourds*, 2nd and 3rd *per fess in chief a lion passant and in base three barrulets wavy*; an inescutcheon:²⁹ *per fess a lion passant in chief*. Above the shield is a Count's coronet. No special significance should be seen in this as coronets were assumed at will.

By 1789 [the Comte de] Mirabeau complained that, as a true gentleman, he had to have a ducal coronet engraved on his signet ring, since any commoner used a count's coronet.³⁰

29. A small shield placed in the centre of the coat of arms, sometimes obscuring the design behind it.

30. F. VAN VELDE, 'The Right to bear arms.' Website: <http://www.heraldica.org/topics/right.htm>. The Comte de Mirabeau was a French revolutionary statesman who was elected president of the French National Assembly in 1791, but died shortly afterwards.

Laing saw the aforementioned window in September 1998 and the shield of Bax then appeared in the window showing *Sable, three gourds Or*. (Cf. **Figure 2**)

The arms in the first and fourth quarters were easily identified as those of Bax. Rolland depicted three variants in different colour combinations for different branches of the family.³¹ Following heraldic principles, it was presumed that the coat of arms in the second and third quarters indicated arms, either of inheritance or of assumption to honour a wife or mother. Although there was a practice in the past, in the Netherlands, where the coats of arms of a couple were quartered,³² it was known that these were not the arms of Hinlopen.³³ An inescutcheon was often used to indicate a dignity *heerlijkheid* appertaining to the bearer of the arms.³⁴ Such is the case with Pieter, *Baron van Reede van Oudtshoorn* (1714-1773)³⁵ – where his big seal has the quartered arms of van Reede and Boesses (his wife), with an inescutcheon for his ‘Lordship’ of Oudtshoorn. In the case of Willem Adriaan van der Stel (1664-1733) the arms of van der Stel are quartered with those of Six (his mother’s family), with an inescutcheon indicating his dignity as Lord of Oud-Vossemeer.³⁶ It was a not unrealistic hypothesis that the inescutcheon on the shield of Bax had either a connection with or a reference to Herentals. Further research was required.

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31. J.B. RIETSTAP, *Armorial Général, I*. (Second edition, G.R. van Goor Zonen, Gouda, n.d.), p. 137. Also in V. ROLLAND, *Armoiries des familles contenues dans l’Armorial général de J. B. Rietstap* (6 volumes), (L’Institut Héraldique Universel, Paris, 1903-1926), plate CXLVII. The *Armorial Général* only mentions two coats of arms, whereas Rolland illustrates three with the three gourds in the combinations *Or & Vert*, *Sable & Or* and *Or & Sable*.
 32. J. KROES, ‘Unieke typen van Chinees wapenporselein van Nederlandse families: Serviezen met kwartierwapens van de families Van Reverhorst, Feith en Van Hardenbroek.’ *De Nederlandsche Leeuw*, 115 (1998), nr. 11-12, p. 306. “... dat de wapens van een echtpaar werden samengevoegd in een zogenaamd gedeeld wapen.” Quartering is the practice where a shield is divided into four (or more) ‘quarters’, with the male arms generally in positions 1 & 4, and the female arms in positions 2 & 3.
 33. R.A. LAING, ‘Commemorative family medals during the DEIC period’, *Historia*, 45 (2) 2000, pp. 447-448 – where the arms of Hinlopen are discussed.
 34. R.H. ALMA, ‘De vroegste ontwikkeling van der Groninger heraldiek’, *Jaarboek van het Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie 2000*, Den Haag – Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie, 2000, p. 32. Alma also mentions that the arms of the ‘*heerlijkheid*’ sometimes appeared in the 2nd and 3rd quarters.
 35. R.A. LAING, ‘The Governor who never was.’ *Africana Notes and News*, 21 (1) March 1974.
 36. C. PAMA, ‘Postscript to Simon’s Town’s Arms.’ *ARMA*, No. 62, 1973 II, pp. 550-552.

In the library of the SA Bureau of Heraldry in Pretoria there is the invaluable Muschart Collection.³⁷ This contains entries on myriads of Dutch coats of arms found on monuments, seals and in other sources. On 1999-10-22 Laing made a visit to the Bureau to see if the collection would shed any light on the correct colours of the arms of Bax and more specifically to establish whether the arms on the inescutcheon were those of Herentals. There were arms recorded for various Backx, Bacx, Bakx and Bax families, many with three gourds. However, nowhere was there sufficient genealogical information to prove a connection with Governor Bax. In addition, no information could be found concerning the Herentals connection or any arms that may have been associated with it.

Sadly disappointed Laing made his way to Hatfield in Pretoria where a favoured restaurant and bookshop are side by side. After lunch he went to collect a book he had ordered. On his way out he heard a gentleman speaking Dutch to the owner of the store. It was someone who had been eating at the same restaurant and was enquiring about what would be the quickest way to get to the University of Pretoria. Laing mentioned that he was on his way there and could give the stranger a lift. Introductions were exchanged – the stranger was a certain Jan Goris. ‘Mr’ Goris was asked if he had a special appointment. Yes, he was going to visit the history department – which is where Laing is doing his doctorate. It transpired that ‘Mr’ Goris had an interest in the Anglo-Boer War. Laing suggested an exchange of addresses and could not believe his eyes when he saw that his new acquaintance was Dr. Jan-Modest Goris, City Archivist of Herentals in Belgium. When Laing explained that the main reason for his being in Pretoria that day was to confirm the Bax coat of arms and establish a possible Herentals connection there was a stunned silence.³⁸ Even more incredible was when Dr Goris said that he had written an article on the arms of his city some years before.³⁹ Laing wanted to know if there was any connection between the arms of Bax and those of Herentals. Goris promised to send a copy of his article to South Africa as soon as he arrived at home. This was not the end, Goris also mentioned that there was a relatively rare

37. The Bureau purchased this hand-written MS, prepared for publication by Rudolphe Theodore Muschart and supplemented by his friend Dr A.R. Kleyn (1909-1979), from Dr Kleyn’s widow. The original card index on which this manuscript is based is held in the Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie, The Hague. See also: R. VAN DRIE and A.G VAN STEUR, ‘De liefde zijt ‘t beginsel, de orde zij de grondslag en de vooruitgang het doel; Leven en werk van de heraldikus R.T. Muschart (1873-1955)’ in *Jaarboek van het Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie 2000*, Den Haag – Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie, 2000, pp. 113-147.

38. Letter: J.-M. Goris to R.A. Laing, 2000-05-17: ““k Herinner mij nog levendig onze toevallige ontmoeting in Hatfield (Pretoria) ...” and “Ik ben ons gesprek van 22 oktober beslist nog niet vergeten.”

39. J.-M. GORIS, ‘De oorsprong en de evolutie van het Herentalse stadswapen’, *Historisch Jaarboek van Herentals*, 1(1) Herentalse Geschiedkundige Kring, Herentals, 1986, pp. 5-28, 185-189.

book about the Bax family – off the top of his head he could not give the precise title. Even more amazing was the fact that he had purchased the book for the city archives in 1983. His motivation at that time had been twofold; firstly he had a fascination for the character Joan Bax ‘entitled Van Herentals’; and secondly because he wanted to know more about the notorious cavalry commanders’ Bax. It seems as though as though there were several ‘aspects of serendipity’ at work here.

Aspects of serendipity

We have seen that Fine and Deegan identified three aspects of serendipity. In the aspect ‘temporal serendipity’, they

enshrine the power of ‘being in the right place at the right time,’ even while realizing the number of potentially right places and times.⁴⁰

The chance meeting of Laing and Goris definitely qualifies as an example of ‘temporal serendipity.’ With ‘serendipity relations’ the

direction of a course of analysis and the research questions asked can be influenced by the alliances a researcher makes in the early stages of a project. It is not sufficient that one makes contact (good fortune), but one must also be able to capitalize on this contact (serendipity).⁴¹

‘Analytical serendipity’ – the third serendipitous feature of qualitative research involves the ability to establish connections between data and theory.⁴²

Fine and Deegan defined four features, which helped to explain the process of analytical serendipity – firstly, the researcher must have previously been exposed to the relevant literature.

The chance publication of an article or a hallway conversation in the midst of a research endeavour may have an enormous effect in altering one’s theoretical analysis. The researcher who is open to those new sources has an advantage in creating new theoretical models.⁴³

Secondly,

the data themselves speak to the researcher. On occasion portions of the data play off each other. The unexpected similarity or dissimilarity may provoke an ‘Ah-ha!’ response. Suddenly, as in scientific revolutions, anomalous data fit, because of their relations to each other or to some aspect of the literature.⁴⁴

40. G.A. FINE and J.G. DEEGAN, ‘Three principles of Serendip: Insight, Chance and Discovery in qualitative research’, <http://www.ul.ie/~philos/vol2/deegan.html>, p. 5.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

Thirdly, the researcher may discover a dramatic metaphor or narrative strategy that permits him or her to conceptualise and present the problem in a novel light.⁴⁵ Fourthly, being part of a scholarly world may influence research.

The production of knowledge operates through this set of social ties. Through these ties, a shared intellectual community, fresh insights may arise.⁴⁶

Laing wrote to Goris on 2000-01-21 enclosing a copy of his proposed article on commemorative family medals. Thereafter followed an interminable wait until a hefty envelope arrived in early June 2000. In a letter dated 2000-05-17 Goris apologised for taking so long, explaining that he had been doing some research. He included eleven enclosures incorporating his monograph on the origin and evolution of the arms of Herentals, extracts from the Bax chronicle plus the heraldry associated with the family, histories of various aspects of the city of Herentals and much more besides. This was a regular treasure trove. The information supplied by Goris was both fascinating and of great interest but would have been excessive if included in Laing's article on commemorative family medals. In any event that article had already been accepted for publication. Hence the decision was made to collaborate and co-author an article, which would investigate the Bax family and the arms associated with them, as well as attempting to resolve the Herentals connection. This paper hopes to show that the so-called Herentals connection is very dubious.

Herentals and its coat of arms⁴⁷

By virtue of an amicable agreement, reached with the Chapter of the Canonesses of Bergen (Mons), Duke Henry I [of Brabant] received the right in October 1209 to erect a *burgesia* at Herentals. This marked the official foundation of the city. In the following year, 1210, the aldermen *schepenen* of Antwerp confirmed that Herentals was in possession of the *jus Antverpiense* and hence had received the same rights of freedom as Antwerp had. In 1213 Herentals is named (together with Arendonk, Hoogstraten, Oosterwijk and Turnhout) as one of five recently

45. *Ibid.*, p. 8. According to Miles & Huberman, metaphors are “data reducing devices, taking several particulars and making a single generality of them.” In addition they are also “pattern-making” and “excellent decentering devices.” “Finally, metaphors or analogies are ways of connecting findings to theory.” M.B. MILES and A.M. HUBERMAN, *Qualitative data analysis: A sourcebook of new methods*, p. 221.

46. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

47. J.-M. GORIS, ‘De oorsprong en de evolutie van het Herentalse stadswapen’, *Historisch Jaarboek van Herentals*, 1(1) Herentalse Geschiedkundige Kring, Herentals, 1986. This monograph provides a detailed analysis of the evolution of the arms of Herentals, together with 20+ illustrations. Only a synopsis will be given here; translation Laing. Laing's interpolations appear in [square] brackets.

privileged settlements *oppida quae de novo feceramus*.⁴⁸ This appears in a treaty between the Duke and Godfried van Schoten, Lord of Breda. Of these five *oppida* or fortified settlements, Herentals was the only one that developed into a real city.⁴⁹ This, in the sense that it stood alone amongst localities in the Kempen⁵⁰ during the Ancien Régime in that it possessed all the constituent elements of a historic city.⁵¹

As early as 1262 Herentals was in possession of its own seal, which was used to seal a treaty with the city of Leuven (1262-01-28).⁵² In 1303 Herentals received a charter *stadskeure* from its Duke. This served as the basis for all municipal administration, legislation and justice until the end of the Ancien Régime. The cloth industry and the trade therein laid the foundation of the medieval political

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48. De term *oppida nova* werd gebruikt om Arendonk, Herentals, Turnhout enz. te onderscheiden van de *oppida nostra ab antiquo fundata* (= 's-Hertogenbosch, Zichem, Lier, Aarschot, Antwerpen, Leuven e.a.). De term *nova* (nieuw) verwijst hier niet naar nieuwe nederzettingen als dusdanig, maar duidt er alleen op dat deze nederzettingen later dan de *oppida nostra ab antiquo fundata* voorrechten hadden verkregen van de Brabantse hertog.
49. De eigentijdse terminologieën ('urbs', 'civitas', 'burgesia', 'oppidum', 'stad', 'stad en vrijheid' e.a.) bieden geen houvast om te bepalen of een plaats ja dan nee een stad is. In die 13de eeuw betekende de term 'oppidum' een min of meer versterkte plaats. In de 13de eeuw bezat het 'oppidum' Herentals hoofzakelijk houten versterkingen; pas in 1400 kreeg Herentals een stedelijke omwalling met stadspoorten.
50. "Kempen, French *La Campine*, historically *Taxandria* - plateau region of northeastern Belgium occupying most of Antwerp province and northern Limburg province" [and also North Brabant]. <http://www.britannica.com>
51. J.-M. GORIS, '*n Stad maakt geschiedenis. Bijdrage tot de aloude geschiedenis van de Stad Herentals* (Herentals, 1969), p. 392. Vgl. J.-M. GORIS, *De historische stad in de Antwerpse Kempen*. Dit boek zal eerlang verschijnen. De Kempen is een *geografisch* begrip. Het is een zandgebied dat zich sedert 1830 - 1839 situeert in de provincies Antwerpen, Belgisch Limburg en Noord-Brabant (Nederland). In het verleden heeft de Kempen nooit een politieke, administratief-juridische of economische eenheid gevormd. Tijdens het Ancien Régime maakte de huidige Limburgse Kempen deel uit van het graafschap Loon, dat tussen 1150 en 1190 een leen word van het prinsbisdom Luik en in 1366 door Luik helemaal word opgeslorpt; in 1795 word het prinsbisdom Luik bij Frankrijk geannexeerd. Tot 1648 strekten de Brabantse Kempen (de tegenwoordige Antwerpse Kempen en Noord-Brabant) zich uit tussen de vier Brabantse hoofdsteden Leuven, Brussel, Antwerpen en 's-Hertogenbosch. Na de vrede van Münster (1648) behoorde de huidige Noord-Brabantse Kempen tot Staats-Brabant, dat onder de Verenigde Provinciën ressorteerde, terwijl de huidige Antwerpse Kempen verder tot de Spaanse (1648 - 1713) en Oostenrijkse Nederlanden (1713 - 1794) bleven behoren. Tot dusver is men er nog niet in geslaagd om de grenzen van de Kempen op een sluitende wijze te definiëren.
52. Het originele zegel hangt o.a. aan het wederzijds stedenverbond dat Leuven en Herentals op 28 januari 1262 n.st. afsloten. Dit stuk berust op het Stadsarchief te Leuven. J. CUVÉLIER, *Inventaire des archives de la ville de Louvain*, dl. I, Leuven, 1929, p. 29, nr. 230.

power and prosperity of the city. In 1322 they received, from the Duke, the right to establish a Clothmakers Guild and to seal their wares [with their coat of arms].⁵³

During the *Ancien Régime* seals and coats of arms were undoubtedly important symbols of municipal autonomy.⁵⁴ Herentals' 1262 seal was circular with a stylised tree without roots. [This should not be surprising as the tree issues from the base. In true medieval fashion the tree fills the available space. The tree has remained as the basis for the current arms]. From 1355 the seal, still circular, once again has a tree *sans* roots, plus the addition of four birds.⁵⁵ [This may well be due to an error of the seal engraver, who working from a worn matrix, may have mistaken 'certain' leaves for birds.] This seal was still in use in the 17th century. The *sigillum ad causas* of Herentals was also circular showing the patroness St Waldetrudis flanked by two trees – between 1374 and 1479 the trees were planted oaks [thus no roots], with well-defined crowns.⁵⁶ In the period 1578-1635 the trees were stylised and look much like heraldic linden with two branches which double back and cross over each other. The first time that the Herentals' tree appears on a seal as a proper coat of arms is found on a seal of 1604. This has a stylised tree with five roots, displayed on a shield.

The earliest examples of the coat of arms of Herentals date from the 16th century. These appear on a bell and a single stained glass window (formerly known to be) in the St Waldetrudis church, in documents, in a presentation of the 'Cauwoerde' (the local chamber of rhetoric *rederijkerskamer*⁵⁷ of which more later) and a single medal of a local charitable institution. Any earlier evidence is unknown. There are several 17th and 18th century examples of the arms on buildings and engravings. Documents of the period have dozens of references to the use and spread of the arms of Herentals. There is still some doubt about the symbolism. The 16th century examples all depict a stylised tree with the two crossed branches.

The earliest representation of the coat of arms of Herentals appears on the 'Maria' bell in St Waldetrudis church. Made in 1533 it has the shield supported by two lions. [The casting has the arms depicted with *petra sancta* hatching. Under this

53. W. VAN SPILBEECK, *Geschiedenis van Herentals*, 1938, pp. 51-53.

54. Volgens R. van Uytven gold de toekenning van een stadszegel bijna als een officiële erkenning van het stedelijk bestaan. R. VAN UYTVEN, *Stadsgeschiedenis in het Noorden en het Zuiden, (Algemene Geschiedenis der Nederlanden, II)*, tweede uitgave, Haarlem, 1982. p. 221.

55. J.TH. DE RAADT, *Sceaux Armoriés des Pays-Bas et des pays avoisinants. Recueil historique et héraldique*, deel II, Brussel, 1899, p. 69.

56. STADSARCHIEF HERENTALS, nr. 238, *Stadszegels; Kerkarchief St.-Waldetrudis Herentals, Schepenbrieven 1347-1499*.

57. The word does not appear in current dictionaries; L. DUERLOO, 'The unfinished product', *Coat of Arms*, N.S. Vol II, No. 98, Summer 1976, p. 36 uses the term 'chamber of rhetoric'.

method of depicting arms the metals: *Argent* (silver or white) is shown blank and *Or* (gold or yellow) with little dots. The colours: *Azure* (blue) has horizontal lines; *Gules* (red) has vertical lines; *Vert* (green) has diagonal lines from left to right and *Sable* has crossed horizontal and vertical lines.]

An attractive stylised tree appears on the earliest depiction of the shield in colour, circa 1536. This is found in a manuscript in the Royal Library of Albert I in Brussels. Formerly in the Burgundian library, this MS contains a list of *Oppida Brabantiae cum villis liberis atque pagis seriatim descripta*.⁵⁸ This contains a list of 27 Brabantine cities; of these 24 have their arms illustrated in colour. Here the arms of Herentals are depicted as *Gules, a tree eradicated Argent*. **(Figure 3)**

The use of heraldic symbols was banned in the Southern Netherlands (1795-11-08) when the decree of the National Convention of 19/23 June 1790 was implemented. Under the Napoleonic Empire noble titles and heraldic emblems were reinstated and in 1809 civic authorities were once again given the right to use coats of arms.

King William I of the Netherlands, who consciously wished to restore the *Ancien Régime*, established the *Hoge Raad van Adel* on 1814-06-24 by ‘Decision of the Sovereign Monarch’. On Christmas Eve 1814 (1814-12-24), he issued a Royal Decree at Brussels whereby municipalities were compelled to have their arms confirmed. If they had no arms they were obliged to have new arms created for them. The *Hoge Raad* was soon snowed under with requests from municipalities.⁵⁹

On 1819-10-06 the ‘Hoge Raad’ registered the following arms for Herentals, viz.: *Gules, a tree Or*. The tree was drawn in a natural and luxuriant manner, however without roots. Where they [i.e. de Nederlandse *Hoge Raad van Adel*] found this ‘golden’ tree is not quite clear. In a manuscript (around the middle of the 17th century), of the King of Arms Henry Prévost, alias de Leval, the arms of Herentals are recorded as having a ‘gold’ tree. If the *Hoge Raad* had used Prévost as their reference this might explain the incorrect colour [metal] of the tree. In every

58. KONINKLIJKE BIBLIOTHEEK VAN BRUSSEL, AFDELING HANDSCHRIFTEN, nr. 2.088-2.098, *Oppida Brabantiae cum villis liberis atque pagis seriatum descripta*, folio 88 recto – 93 verso. Het wapenschild van Herentals staat afgebeeld op folio 92 recto.

59. Vgl. M. SERVAIS, *Wapenboek van de provincien en gemeenten van België*, 1955, p. 35.

respect this is one of the many errors made by the *Hoge Raad* working under the pressure of the day.⁶⁰

After the revolution *omwenteling* of 1830 the Belgian government, inspired by a passionate hatred of the Dutch *emotionele Hollanderhaat*, chose a seal with the lion of Belgium *Leo Belgica* and encouraged municipalities to follow their example in rejecting those arms granted by the *Hoge Raad van Adel*. In 1837 the Belgian government returned to this political [hobbyhorse]. A royal decree (1837-02-06) provided much more positive measures regarding the use of municipal arms. All those municipalities with a 'right' to arms could display these arms on their municipal seal. Those that wished to could have their coat of arms ratified.⁶¹



Figure 3 - Elegant stylised Herentals' tree

(Copyright: Royal Library Albert I, Brussels, Hs. no. 2.088-2.098 folio 92 recto)

60. STADTSARCHIEF TE HERENTALS (S.A.He.), nr. 2.071.34, *Naam, Wapen en zegel der gemeente (1819 e.v.)*. KONINKLIJKE BIBLIOTHEEK VAN BRUSSEL, afdeling handschriften, nr. 19.194 - nr. 19.204, Henry Prévost alias de Leval, *Armorial des Pays-Bays, de France et d'Italie*, folio 7 verso. - Henry Prévost alias de Leval is een bekend genealoog en heraldicus uit de XVIIde eeuw. Zijn juiste geboortedatum en datum van overlijden zijn onbekend. Op 9 februari 1637 werd hij tot wapenkoning 'à titre d'Artois' benoemd en hij vervulde deze functie tot 1663, de vermoedelijke datum van zijn overlijden. A. DE RIDDER, *Henry Prévost de Leval*, (*Biographie Nationale*, XVIII), Brussel, 1905, kolom 223-224.

61. M. SERVAIS, *Wapenboek van de provincien en gemeenten van Belgie*, pp. 35-36.

As a direct consequence of the aforementioned Royal decree, the municipal council of Herentals decided (1837-11-30) to approach the **[Belgian]** Minister of Internal Affairs - (who was at that stage in charge of such matters) to confirm their use of the arms with the ‘golden’ tree formerly ratified by the **[Dutch]** ‘Hoge Raad van Adel’.⁶²

A Royal decree (1841-01-09), officially assigned to Herentals a shield that was “*de gueules à l’arbre d’argent avec trois racines et des branches sans nombre, pendantes de même*”, i.e. *Gules, a tree Argent with three roots and numerous hanging branches of the same*.⁶³ [In effect these were the same arms that appeared in the 1536 manuscript mentioned earlier. Since that time there have been many variations on a theme, however in essence the same arms are still in use today. This includes their appearance on the notepaper of the current City Archivist of Herentals. Few of these variants come close to the elegant simplicity of the 1536 drawing.]

[One thing is now absolutely certain, viz. Laing’s earlier hypothesis that the inescutcheon in the arms of Joan Bax might have some reference to Herentals is definitely disproved.]

The family of Joan Bax

A chronicle of the Bax family, that was published in 1943, concentrated in the main on the involvement of the prominent Bax’ cavalry commanders in the struggle against Spain during the Eighty Years War.⁶⁴ In the introduction, the author, Boeree commented that in his day the name Bax (and its variants Bacs, Baks, Bacx and Backx) was to be found spread across the Netherlands. He named seven centres starting with ‘s-Hertogenbosch and ending with “Herenthals”. The extant genealogical evidence indicates that the various branches had their roots in East Brabant, where a Bac family had been resident in the Middle Ages. By the middle of the 13th century one found members of the family mentioned as vassals

62. In the original endnote Goris gave an extensive analysis of the correspondence and council decisions. The analysis was not deemed pertinent here. The original source documents cited are: S.A.He., *Verslagen van de Gemeenteraad van de stad Herentals, 3 oktober 1836 - 19 september 1845*, folio 20 verso – folio 21 recto; S.A.He., *Uitgaande briefwisseling van de stad Herentals, 2 januari 1836 - 8 maart 1839*, nrs. 523-524. Zie bijlage I: Herbevestiging van het Herentalse wapen 1837-1841).

63. S.A.He., nr. 2.071.34. *Naam, wapen en zegel der gemeente (1819 e.v.)*, afschrift van het Koninklijk Besluit van 9 januari 1841. De originele akte werd ingekaderd en opgehangen in het bureel van de gemeentesecretaris op het Stadhuis. Zie ook: M. SERVAIS, *Wapenboek van de provincien en gemeenten van Belgie*, pp. 118, 958-959.

64. TH. A. BOEREE, *De Kroniek van het geslacht BACKX (Bax, Bacx, Bakx en Baks) – Een episode uit den strijd tegen Spanje*, (Drukkerij Vada, Wageningen, 1943.) This source seems to have escaped both G.J. Schutte and H.W.J. Picard.

of the Duke of Brabant.⁶⁵ Brabant was a feudal duchy that emerged after the decline and collapse of the Frankish Carolingian Empire in the mid-9th century. Centred in Louvain (now Leuven) and Brussels, it was a division of the former duchy of Lower Lorraine, which was split up into Brabant, Luxembourg, Hainaut, Namur, and other small feudal states in the 11th century. It has been mentioned that Henry I, Duke of Brabant granted Herentals its rights of freedom *vrijheidsrechten* in 1209.⁶⁶

Boeree mentioned that although much had been written about the Eighty Years War, historians had however limited their work – by painting only the broadest picture. The minutiae of the exploits of individuals were often lost to sight. These individuals had experienced the period as their ‘current reality’.⁶⁷ Boeree’s intention seems to have been to write the story observed from under a magnifying glass, whereby the detail would become visible. A disadvantage of this [methodology] is that peripheral details disappear. Boeree glosses over the ‘great deeds of prominent figures’,⁶⁸ concentrating on the particular participation of one family. Specifically the family under consideration is that of the ‘s-Hertogenbosch aristocrat Jacob Bax, “a loyal servant of the Spanish King and a true child of the mother church” (i.e. Catholic).⁶⁹ Unfortunately the historical details end circa 1620,⁷⁰ with some of the genealogies in the Appendix continuing to the end of the Seventeenth century.

Jacob Bax (who married Anna Hack), was the son of Jan Bax and Heylwich van den Hove[n]. In St. John’s church⁷¹ at ‘s-Hertogenbosch is a tombstone

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65. *Ibid.*, p. vii. See also: A. KOYEN, ‘De slag op Tielenheide (1597) in het kader van de 80-jarige oorlog,’ *TAXANDRIA (Jaarboek van de Koninklijke geschied- en oudheidkundige kring v.d. Antwerpse kempen)*, 1982 – Nieuwe Reeks LIV, p. 30.
66. J.-M. GORIS, ‘Herentals: van welvarend industrieel centrum tot arme garnizoenstad (1560-1650)’, *Herentalse Bijdragen*, nr. 8, Herentals, 1992 – provides a synthesis of the period when the Bax cavalry commanders were active in the Kempen and at pp. 212-217 gives a succinct history of the growth of the city from the 14th to the 16th centuries.
67. TH. A. BOEREE, *De Kroniek van het geslacht BACKX (Bax, Bacx, Bakx en Baks) – Een episode uit den strijd tegen Spanje*, p. viii, “... als een heden ...”. This echoes Benedetto Croce: “all history is contemporary history.” Cited in J.A. DU PISANI, ‘Fact and fiction: Representations of the South African War in Afrikaans history writing and literature’, *New Contree*, No. 45 (September 1999), p. 166.
68. TH. A. BOEREE, *De Kroniek van het geslacht BACKX (Bax, Bacx, Bakx en Baks) – Een episode uit den strijd tegen Spanje*, p. viii. “... de groote daden van vooraanstaande figuren ...”
69. *Ibid.*, p. viii, “... den toegewijden dienaar van den Spaanschen koning en trouwe zoon van de Moederkerk.”
70. Letter: J.-M. Goris to R.A. Laing, 2000-05-17, “Spijtig genoeg behandelt Th. A. Boeree in zijn studie de geschiedenis van het geslacht Bax slechts tot ca. 1620.”
71. TH. A. BOEREE, *De Kroniek van het geslacht BACKX (Bax, Bacx, Bakx en Baks) – Een episode uit den strijd tegen Spanje*, p. 95, “St. Janskerk”.

commemorating these four individuals, as well as two other members of the family. **(Figure 4)** The older part of the inscription is difficult to decipher not only because of the script, but also because there are many contractions used. As a result it has been transcribed here with the contractions expanded in square brackets.

Hier leget beg[ra]ven Jan bax hoichrentmeester was va[n] d[en] bosche die sterft a[nn]o xv.lii de xxii dah jun En heylwiche va[n] de[n] how zij[ne] huysvr[ouw]e sterft a[nn]o xv.lv de ?18/28 {looks like 87 upside down} Avri[e]le En Jacob bax syen sone Rentmeest va[n] de drie State va[n] braba[n]t sterft de Lelte {sic} marti 1521 En offrouwe Anna hacl sy[en] huysvr[ouw]e sterft ir 18 iuny {?may} a[nn]o 1604.

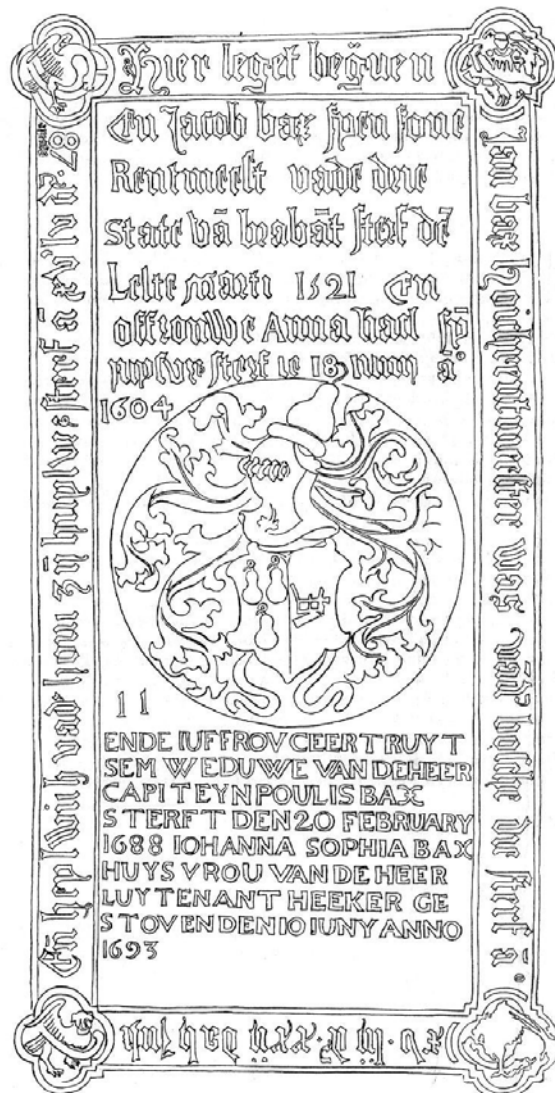


Figure 4 - Bax Tombstone in St John's Church at 's-Hertogenbosch
(Source: Boeree)

In total six people are mentioned in the epitaphs, viz.:

1. Jan Bax, High Treasurer of Den Bosch ('s-Hertogenbosch), who died anno 1552 on the 22nd day of June;
2. Heylwich van den Hove his wife, died anno 1555 the (?) 18th / 28th April;⁷²
3. Jacob Bax his son, Treasurer of the three states of Brabant, died March 1521⁷³;
4. Anna Hack, his wife died here {sic 's-Hertogenbosch} 18 June 1604;
5. Geertuyd Sem, widow of the gentleman Captain Paul Bax,⁷⁴ died 20 February 1688;
6. Johanna Sophia Bax, wife of the gentleman Lieutenant Heeker, died 10 June anno 1693.

The relationships between the various parties can be determined from the simplified genealogical table. **Figure 5)**

The inscriptions would in all likelihood have been executed in three phases. The first phase would presumably have been for 1&2 above with the arms being part of the original design. Thus it is most likely that the armorial bearings on the tombstone are those of Jan Bax and Heylwich van den Hove.⁷⁵ The shield contains the three gourds of Bax impaled⁷⁶ with what seems to be either a 'plough' or a 'harrow'. Presumably this was meant to represent van den Hove. These arms could not be correlated with other Hove, Hoven, How, van den Hove variants in either Rietstap or the Muschart Collection at the SA Bureau of Heraldry.

Jacob's death date of 1521 as given on the tombstone is patently incorrect and has probably arisen either from an error in the inscription, later decomposition or an error made in transcription. Vorsterman van Oijen gives the year as 1591 and this

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72. A.A. VORSTERMAN VAN OIJEN, *Stam- en wapenboek van aanzienlijke Nederlandsche familiën, met genealogische en heraldische aantekeningen, I*, p. 30 has the date as 28 Aug 1555. It seems as though van Oijen had seen the tombstone; Laing disagrees, the month is definitely 'Avrile'.
 73. This has to be an error in the transcription – death dates of 1621, 1591 or 1581 are more likely (if one assumes that only one numeral is incorrect). A.A. VORSTERMAN VAN OIJEN, *Stam- en wapenboek van aanzienlijke Nederlandsche familiën, met genealogische en heraldische aantekeningen, I*, p. 30 gives the date as 31 Mar 1591. Laing thinks the year is totally acceptable.
 74. A.A. VORSTERMAN VAN OIJEN, *Stam- en wapenboek van aanzienlijke Nederlandsche familiën, met genealogische en heraldische aantekeningen, I*, p. 30 names Paul as a grandson of Paul and not of Simon. There are some blatant errors in the genealogy and it is likely that this is also one.
 75. The inscriptions 3&4 for Jacob Bax and Anna Hack are in the style of 1&2, but must have been added later (Phase 2). It seems unlikely that a competent stonemason would have planned the layout so badly if the first four inscriptions and the arms had been planned as a whole. Phase 3 is in a totally different style of lettering.
 76. Impalement is when the shield is divided by a vertical division down the centre; the husband's arms are placed on the left – heraldically called *dexter* and the wife's arms on the *sinister*. The Latin terms relate to the person holding the shield.

would fit the facts. If one uses a figure of 25-30 years for a generation, and works back from known birth dates, then it seems likely that Jacob was born in the period 1520-1540. Jacob and Anna had four known children, viz. Simon, Johan, Paul and

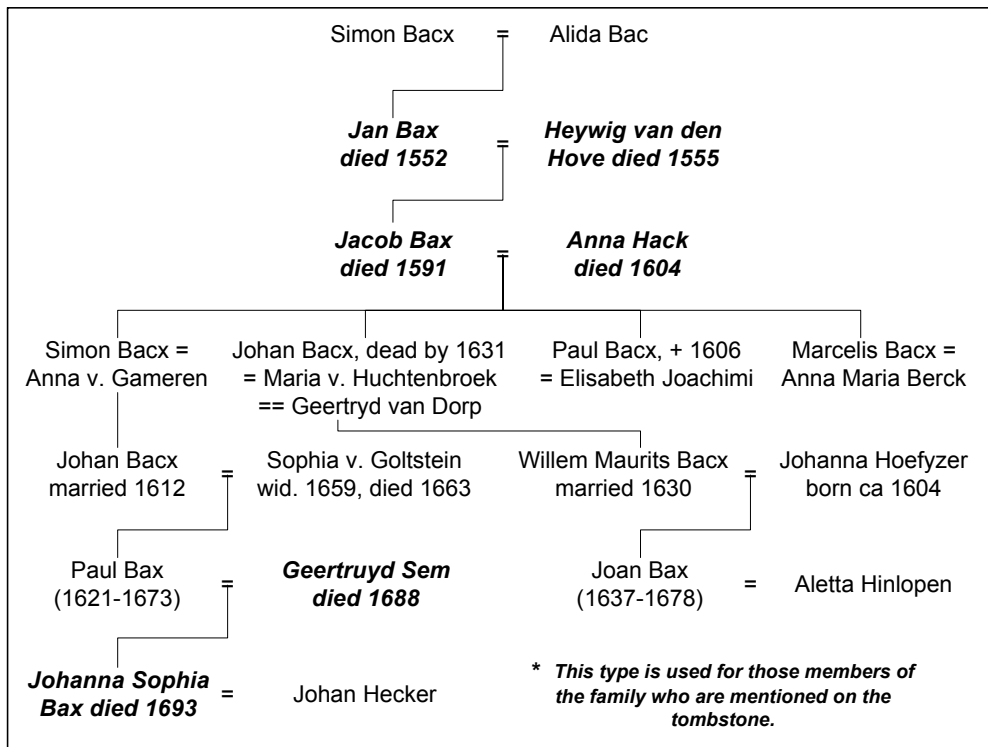


Figure 5 - Simplified Bax family tree. (Source: Laing – derived from Boeree and Koyen)

Marcelis.⁷⁷ According to Boeree, Jacob was abandoned by his children, who foreswore not only their religion but also their king, and took up arms in the struggle under the banner of the Prince of Orange. They later became loyal counsellors to Prince Maurice.⁷⁸

As early as the Seventeenth century there had been interest in the brothers Bax and their activities during the Eighty Years' War. Boeree cites a certain Jacobus Baselius who produced a work in Breda in 1615 entitled "Historisch verhael inhoudende sekere notable exploits van oorloge in de Nederlanden, sedert het oprichten van der Companien der Heeren goeverneurs ende ritmeesteren van Paulis

77. TH. A. BOEREE, *De Kroniek van het geslacht BACKX (Bax, Bacx, Bakx en Baks) – Een episode uit den strijd tegen Spanje*, pp. xiii-xiv, also Deel III, p. 485: Sequence as Boeree. A.A. VORSTERMAN VAN OIJEN, *Stam- en wapenboek van aanzienlijke Nederlandsche familiën, met genealogische en heraldische aantekeningen*, I, p. 31 does not mention Simon.

78. TH. A. BOEREE, *De Kroniek van het geslacht BACKX (Bax, Bacx, Bakx en Baks) – Een episode uit den strijd tegen Spanje*, p. viii.

ende Marcelis Bax.⁷⁹ Paul and Marcelis had both been troop captains who subsequently became governors of Bergen op Zoom. Paul was governor from 1592 until his death in 1606.⁸⁰

He was succeeded by Marcelis,

whose often reckless intervention in numerous actions (particularly around Bergen op Zoom, Hulst and Sluis, but also on other battlefronts in the Netherlands) made him so renowned and formidable that the Archduke Albrecht [of Austria] had him approached with appealing promises should he cross over to the Spanish Camp.⁸¹

Their grand tombs *praalgraven* could formerly be found in the main church at Bergen op Zoom. Koyen stated that these were destroyed in the invasion of 1747.⁸²

Boeree produced an illustration of a seal/seals used by Paul and Marcelis Bax. These could still be found on correspondence to the States General and the Council of State, but in a damaged state.⁸³ The arms on the seals are quartered with the 1st & 4th quarters *three gourds* (Bax) and the 2nd and 3rd quarter *tierced*⁸⁴, *three birds in chief, a ?fleur-de-lis in fess and three pallets Vair in base*. It seems as though Boeree copied the seal from Baselius as he states that Baselius drew an inescutcheon patently *kennelijk* meant as the arms of the family Bac {sic}. This does not appear on the drawing at Boeree: p. XIV. **(Figure 6)** As both brothers used the same arms, the arms in the 2nd & 3rd quarter could not be those of their

79. TH. A. BOEREE, *De Kroniek van het geslacht BACKX (Bax, Bacx, Bakx en Baks) – Een episode uit den strijd tegen Spanje*, p. vii – The publisher of Baselius was possibly Isaac Schilders (from Bibliography pp. 471-472).

80. A. KOYEN, 'De slag op Tielensheide (1597) in het kader van de 80-jarige oorlog,' p. 31. Koyen gives two different dates, viz. 1606 & 1616. The earlier date of 1606 is given in A.A. VORSTERMAN VAN OIJEN, *Stam- en wapenboek van aanzienlijke Nederlandsche familiën, met genealogische en heraldische aantekeningen, I*, p. 31.

81. A. KOYEN, 'De slag op Tielensheide (1597) in het kader van de 80-jarige oorlog,' p. 30. Translation by Laing; A.A. VORSTERMAN VAN OIJEN, *Stam- en wapenboek van aanzienlijke Nederlandsche familiën, met genealogische en heraldische aantekeningen, I*, p. 31 states that Marcelus {sic} died in October 1617 and was buried in the church of St. Geertruida – he also mentions that the tomb was woefully *jammerlijk* damaged by French bullets.

82. A. KOYEN, 'De slag op Tielensheide (1597) in het kader van de 80-jarige oorlog,' p. 31; K.H.D. HALEY, *The Dutch in the Seventeenth Century* (Thames and Hudson, London, 1972), p. 94. This French invasion led to anti-Papist riots, which may have been the cause of the destruction of their tombs. See also: J.-M. GORIS, 'Plunderde wethouder Constantijn Rubens de Sint-Waldetrudiskerk te Herentals uit Calvinistische overtuiging?', *Herentalse Bijdragen*, nr. 4, Herentals, 1978 – where the Calvinistic reaction to Catholicism is discussed.

83. TH. A. BOEREE, *De Kroniek van het geslacht BACKX (Bax, Bacx, Bakx en Baks) – Een episode uit den strijd tegen Spanje*, p. xiii.

84. Divided horizontally into three equal parts; the top is known as the 'chief', the middle as the 'fess' and the bottom the 'base'.

wives. Boeree postulates that the arms might be those of their mother Anna Hack.⁸⁵ The Muschart collection in Pretoria provided many variants of Hack arms with a general pattern that would accord with the bottom two-thirds of the shield. The top third with the three birds accords with Boeree, who gives the arms of Hack as *Or, three birds Vert*. This composition is unusual. However, all the elements can be traced back to Hack.



Figure 6 - Impression of the seal/s of Paul and Marcelis Bax (Source: Boeree)

In 1847 the Provincial Society for Arts and Sciences of North Brabant held a prize contest for a life history of the wartime activities of Paul, Marcelis and Johan Bax.⁸⁶ The single entry that was received in 1850 did not find acceptance. Later in 1859 a certain C.P.F.G. van Emde, Captain Adjutant of the 6th Infantry Regiment delivered a lecture to the Historical Society at Utrecht on the wartime activities and unique recollections of the Dutch war heroes the nobles *jonckheeren* Johan, Paul

85. TH. A. BOEREE, *De Kroniek van het geslacht BACKX (Bax, Bacx, Bakx en Baks) – Een episode uit den strijd tegen Spanje*, pp. xiii-xiv.

86. *Ibid.*, p. vii. Boeree consistently uses the form ‘Bacx’.

and Marcelis Bax.⁸⁷ Boeree mentions that although this lecture appeared in the proceedings of the society, it seems that it was derived from the work of Baselius aforementioned.

Johan Bax gets little mention in Boeree, and none in Koyen, thus it is difficult to establish his part in the Eighty years war. Koyen refers to Paul as Marcelis' oldest brother *oudste broer* and not as his elder brother; he does not mention either Simon or Johan.⁸⁸ Vorsterman van Oijen mentions that Johan was knighted in 1578 and was Castellan or Governor of Heusden until 1584. In 1587 he was governor of Muiden, in 1601 he was a colonel at the siege of Ostende and was still alive in 1619.⁸⁹ Johan was the father of Willem Maurits and grandfather of 'Governor' Joan Bax. The use of the name Maurits seems to confirm allegiance to the House of Orange. Johan was married twice and it seems likely that the second wife Geertruyd van Dorp was the mother of Willem Maurits.⁹⁰ In 1635 she transferred property to him and he is named as *haar zoon*. Johan died before 1631 for when his grandson Marcelis was christened in that year, Geertruyd van Dorp (as the widow Bax) was one of the witnesses.

Johan also had a daughter Anna Catharina, who was twice married but seems to have had no children. When she drew up her will in 1672 she names as her sole heirs Jhr. (i.e. jonckheer) Johan, Anna Catharina and Geertruijd Bax, the children of her brother Willem Maurits. She must have died before 1672-04-01, for on that date the inventory of her estate was made. Included in the inventory were ten portraits. Amongst these were those of her grandfather Jacob Bax, her parents,⁹¹ her brother Willem Maurits and strangely there were portraits of her uncles Paul and Marcelis Bax. Boeree raises the question of how she came into possession of

87. *Ibid.*, p. vii. "Krijgsbedrijven en eenige levensberichten der Nederlandsche krijgshelden Jonckheeren Johan, Paul en Marcellis Bacx." The title *jon[c]kheer* is often found associated with men of the Bax family. Today it is the lowest rank in the nobility of the Netherlands, being that of 'hereditary knight' – the closest equivalent is the British title of 'Baronet'.

88. A. KOYEN, 'De slag op Tielensheide (1597) in het kader van de 80-jarige oorlog,' p. 31.

89. A.A. VORSTERMAN VAN OIJEN, *Stam- en wapenboek van aanzienlijke Nederlandsche familiën, met genealogische en heraldische aantekeningen, I*, p. 31.

90. *Ibid.*, p. 31 only mentions Maria van Huchtenbroek and names her as mother of Willem Maurits and Anna Catharina. This seems to be in error when viewed in the light of footnote 91. Van Oijen cites P.C. MOLHUYSEN and P.J. BLOK, *Nieuw Nederlandsch Biografisch Woordenboek*, as a source. This is presumably the 'Eerste Deel', (A.W. Sijthoff, Leiden, 1911) – where the biography of Johan is incomplete.

91. TH. A. BOEREE, *De Kroniek van het geslacht BACKX (Bax, Bacx, Bakx en Baks) – Een episode uit den strijd tegen Spanje*, p. 488 – mentions a portrait of her father, his two wives (viz. Maria v. Huchtenbroek & Geertruyd v. Dorp) and then "Mevr. Coops moeder van de testatrice (?)." Presumably Geertruyd van Dorp remarried a Mr. Coops and there are thus two portraits of her.

these, if one considers that they both had descendants. More puzzling is what eventually happened to all these portraits?⁹²

Willem Maurits upheld the military tradition of his family. At the time of his marriage to Johanna Hoefyzer/Houffijser⁹³ in 1630 he was attached to the garrison at Deventer. In 1631 he was mentioned as a troop captain *ritmeester* and again as such in 1638. In 1644 he still appeared on the Council of War *Staat van Oorlog*.⁹⁴ Willem Maurits and Johanna had seven children, of whom Marcelis – appears above, and two further mentioned here. These are Johan/Joan and Anna Catharina.⁹⁵

Joan Bax (1637-1678) continued the military tradition by entering the service of the DEIC as a soldier.

In 1659 he became an ensign and in 1662 a captain, and with this rank served in Ceylon and on the Malabar coast, where he was wounded at the occupation of Cochin in 1663. In 1669 he went on to Macassar as a major, and in 1672 was appointed governor of Galle, in Ceylon.⁹⁶

As mentioned, Joan Bax married Aletta Hinlopen (in Batavia 1669-07-11). They had two known children viz. Willem Constantijn and Johanna Maria. When the son was baptised at Colombo (1670-05-29), one sponsor *doopheffer* was his aunt “Anna Catharina Bacx, genaamd van Herenthals”.⁹⁷ It seems that she was unmarried at that stage and had accompanied her brother to the East Indies. Nothing further about her life is found in Boeree. She is not known to have come to the Cape. Jean Gelman Taylor in *The Social World of Batavia* makes mention of

92. *Ibid.*, p. 488, “Waar zijn deze stukken gebleven?”

93. No coat of arms could be established for this family in either Muschart or Rietstap.

94. TH. A. BOEREE, *De Kroniek van het geslacht BACKX (Bax, Bacx, Bakx en Baks) – Een episode uit den strijd tegen Spanje*, p. 487.

95. A.A. VORSTERMAN VAN OIJEN, *Stam- en wapenboek van aanzienlijke Nederlandsche familiën, met genealogische en heraldische aantekeningen, I*, p. 31 does not mention any children. Laing first used this source in 1998. As there was no mention of Joan Bax and both Schutte and Picard gave the father as Maurits the connection between Maurits and Willem Maurits was missed.

96. G.J. SCHUTTE, ‘JOAN BAX entitled Van Herenthals’, W.J. DE KOCK (Ed.), *Dictionary of South African Biography, I*, p. 59; TH. A. BOEREE, *De Kroniek van het geslacht BACKX (Bax, Bacx, Bakx en Baks) – Een episode uit den strijd tegen Spanje*, p. 489 gives the date as 1673-10-20. This conflicts with the tombstone of his daughter, which places Bax in Galle 1673-08-28.

97. TH. A. BOEREE, *De Kroniek van het geslacht BACKX (Bax, Bacx, Bakx en Baks) – Een episode uit den strijd tegen Spanje*, p. 489. Emphasis Laing. The other sponsors were: “Constantijn Ranst, directeur van Bengalen. Willem van den Heuvel genaamd Bartolotti.”

the shortage of acceptable brides in Batavia;⁹⁸ it is thus possible that she married there.

Joan and Aletta's daughter Johanna Maria, was also baptised at Colombo (1672-10-27). She died in infancy and is buried at Galle. On her tomb is the inscription:

Hier rust Johanna Maria Bacx.

Gen[aa]md] van Herenthals sterff 28 Aug. 1673.

Oud 10 maanden en 5 dagen.⁹⁹

Boeree (p. 489) mentions that the two coats of arms of 'Bacx' appeared on the tomb, the first being the coat with the three gourds "*Met de 3 Kaauwoerden*", (**Figure 2**) and the second with the lion in the chief "*Met de leeuw in het schildhoof*". (**Figure 7**)

There are two different dates given for the arrival at the Cape of Bax, his wife and young son. Raven-Hart mentions that they landed in False Bay 1676-01-01 because Bax and his wife were ill. The family travelled overland, and is said to have arrived in Cape Town 1676-01-03.¹⁰⁰ Schutte has them arriving in Table Bay on 1676-02-04.¹⁰¹ Whatever the case, Bax only took over office from Goske on 1676-03-14, four days before the return fleet left for the Netherlands.¹⁰² Boeree does not explicitly state that Bax became governor of the Cape, although this is inferred in his quote from Valentijn:

Zijn Ed. (de heer Gosken) bleef hier tot tjaer 1676, vertrok met de retourvloot naar 't vaderlandt, nadat Zijn Ed. dat gouvernement bevorens aen den Ed. heer Joan Bacx van 's-Hertogenbosch, Heere van Herenthals, die met die Ceijlonsche retourvloot van Gale met het jacht Voorhout aenlandde, overgegevens had.¹⁰³

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98. J.G. TAYLOR, *The Social World of Batavia – European and Eurasian in Dutch Asia*, (University of Wisconsin Press, Wisconsin, 1983).
99. TH. A. BOEREE, *De Kroniek van het geslacht BACKX (Bax, Bacx, Bakx en Baks) – Een episode uit den strijd tegen Spanje*, p. 489. Emphasis Laing.
100. F. VALENTYN, *Description of the Cape of Good Hope with the matters concerning it*. Part II (Raidt, E.H. ed. – English trans. by Major R. Raven-Hart), (V.R.S., Cape Town, 1973), p. 198, Footnote 212 [RH].
101. G.J.SCHUTTE, 'JOAN BAX entitled Van Herenthals', W.J. DE KOCK (Ed.), *Dictionary of South African Biography*, I, p. 59.
102. *Ibid.*, p. 59; See also F. VALENTYN, *Description ...* Part II, p. 198, Footnote 212. Raven-Hart cites the reference to the departure from the 'dagregister' DR 17/3/1676.
103. TH. A. BOEREE, *De Kroniek van het geslacht BACKX (Bax, Bacx, Bakx en Baks) – Een episode uit den strijd tegen Spanje*, p. 489. Boeree does not mention Valentyn in the bibliography so it is unknown which edition he used. A slightly different version appears in F. Valentyn, *Description ...* Part II, p. 198.



Figure 7 - Bax arms with ‘the Lion in chief’. (Source: Boeree)

Both Schutte and Picard mention an incident (1677-01-25); here Bax, his wife and son carried out baskets of soil from the moat around the castle at the Cape. This served as an example to the populace, who were asked to assist in this phase of construction of the new castle.¹⁰⁴ Bax was governor for just over two years; he died of a chest ailment,¹⁰⁵ after an illness that lasted some days. He was buried in solemn state in the new church that was being erected.¹⁰⁶ Initially Laing presumed that the widow Aletta Hinlopen might still have been at the Cape in 1681 when her cousin, Cornelia Six, was buried.¹⁰⁷ This no longer seems likely as both Schutte and Boeree mention the burial of a son in Batavia in 1680.¹⁰⁸ This must have been

104. G.J. SCHUTTE, ‘JOAN BAX entitled Van Herentals’, W.J. DE KOCK (Ed.), *Dictionary of South African Biography, I*, p. 59; H.W.J. PICARD, *Masters of the castle...*p. 75.

105. Cape Town Archives Repository (CA): VC20 – DR pp. 677-678, 1678-06-29, “borstsicckte” {sic}.

106. *Ibid.*, “met de behoorlijcke lijckstatie in de nieuw geprojecteerde kerk ter aarde gebragt, ...”

107. R.A. LAING, ‘Commemorative family medals...’ *Historia*, 45 (2) 2000, p. 449.

108. G.J.SCHUTTE, ‘JOAN BAX entitled Van Herentals’, W.J. DE KOCK (Ed.), *Dictionary of South African Biography, I*, p. 59; TH. A. BOEREE, *De Kroniek van het geslacht BACKX (Bax, Bacx, Bakx en Baks) – Een episode uit den strijd tegen Spanje*, p. 489. Aletta Hinlopen may have left the Cape even earlier. During the period July-October 1678 she sold some nine slaves. See A.J. BÖESEKEN, *Slaves and Free Blacks at the Cape 1658-1700*, (Tafelberg, Cape Town, 1977), pp. 86-87, 94-95 & 136.

Willem Constantijn; it is unlikely that his mother would not have been there as well. Boeree mentions that he was the last of his line and that the coat of arms appeared on the coffin. Aletta remarried 1682-06-25 Jan van Leenen, extraordinary Counsellor for India, Ambassador to the court of Persia and had a son from that marriage.¹⁰⁹

Returning to the arms on the tombstone of the infant Johanna Maria Bax ‘genaamd van Herenthals’ - one now has a clue to the coat of arms on the inescutcheon on the medal of Joan Bax. It seems likely that this was meant to represent the original arms of Bax (or Bac). Laing’s original hypothesis that these were arms associated with Herentals has been disproved. These might be the same arms as appeared on the seals of Paul and Marcellis Bax, mentioned by Boeree. One will see that these arms do appear in several variants. The arms in Figure 7 have the lion on a chief (i.e. the top third of the shield). On an early 17th century tombstone in the Grote Kerk at Breda are the arms of Johannes Backx and his wife Elisabeth Kieboom. There the Backx arms have the lion occupying the top two-thirds of the shield. On the commemorative medal the shield is halved with the lion occupying the top half.

Two of the coats of arms on the commemorative medal can now be identified. The arms in the 1st and 4th quarter are *Sable, three gourds Or* and represent Bax (modern). The arms on the inescutcheon are: *Per fess Gules and Argent, in chief a lion passant also Argent* (presumably Bax ancient). The coat of arms in the 2nd and 3rd quarter have not been identified – they might be the arms of Joan Bax’s mother or grandmother, however no information could be found to clarify the matter.

The Bax arms with the lion have been in existence since as early as the 14th century. Matthijs Bac van Corvel seals with these arms in 1349 and Hendrik Bac does the same at Leuven (1375-12-21).¹¹⁰ Christiaan Huygens, whose mother was a Bac, says,

as a result [of this union] my father quartered his arms with the crowned {sic} lion of Back, which I still use....¹¹¹

At some time the branch of the ‘s-Hertogenbosch High Treasurer Jan Bax changed their coat of arms to that with three gourds. Researchers have variously identified

109. TH. A. BOEREE, *De Kroniek van het geslacht BACKX (Bax, Bacx, Bakx en Baks) – Een episode uit den strijd tegen Spanje*, p. 489.

110. *Ibid.*, p. XIII.

111. *Ibid.*, p. XIII. Boeree cites Huygens but omits the source from his bibliography. If this refers to Christiaan H. (1625-1695), the renowned Dutch physicist, there is an error for it was the grandfather Christiaan H. (1551-1624) who was a son of Cornelis Huygens and Geertruy Bax. See: P.C. P.C. MOLHUYSEN and P.J. BLOK, *Nieuw Nederlandsch Biografisch Woordenboek*, p. 1179.

the charges as bells *klokken*,¹¹² brushes *kwasten*, large-bellied flasks *dikbuikige flesschen* and hand-grenades.¹¹³ According to a tradition in the family these objects were gourds *kauwoerden*. This Southern Netherlands word has two meanings – the first being a calabash or gourd and the second being a field-flask in the shape of a gourd. This is sometimes found in illustrations of early pilgrims.

Boeree seems to feel that “it will remain an unsolved riddle why the grandfather of the cavalry commanders *ruiteraervoerders* used a different coat of arms [from that with the lion]. Christiaan Huygens wrote about this:

There are others of the name Bax, like those in ‘s-Hertogenbosch, who use another coat of arms, namely three gold double-bellied flasks on black.

Some feel that they are all one house and give reasons for the change in arms. Whatever the case, these Baxes ‘*deze Baxen*’ in Den Bosch had great amity with my late father and with our house as well as being proud of their relationship with Jan, Paul and Marcellis Bax...’

It is sad that Huygens does not inform us what the reasons were for the change of arms.¹¹⁴

Bax and the Herentals connection

Boeree is contradictory about the connection between Bax and Herentals. In the entry for Joan Bax he states that he was the only one [of the family] to assume the title of Herentals.

Johan Bacx, was blijkbaar die eenige die den titel Herenthals aannam.

Later on the same page he mentions

Anna Catharina Bacx, genaamd van Herenthals

and gives the tombstone inscription of

Johanna Maria Bacx. Gen. van Herenthals.¹¹⁵

There is nothing in the various arms of the Bax family that can be related back to the municipal arms or seals of Herentals. Nevertheless it is interesting that the calabashes (a type of pumpkin), which appear in the arms of Bax, are also to be

112. A.A. VORSTERMAN VAN OIJEN, *Stam- en wapenboek van aanzienlijke Nederlandsche familiën, met genealogische en heraldische aantekeningen, I*, plate 6. The gourds look like bells.

113. TH. A. BOEREE, *De Kroniek van het geslacht BACKX (Bax, Bacx, Bakx en Baks) – Een episode uit den strijd tegen Spanje*, p. xiii.

114. *Ibid.*, pp. xiii-xiv. See also R.H. ALMA, ‘De vroegste ontwikkeling van der Groninger heraldiek’, *Jaarboek van het Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie 2000*, p. 31, which mentions that a complete change of arms by a family was not unusual in the late 16th century.

115. *Ibid.*, p. 489.

found in the badge of the Herentals chamber of rhetoric - the St Waldetrudis guild, generally called the 'Cauwoerde'. This badge was used at the seventh (and last) competition of the Brabantine regional drama festival *landjuweel* held at Antwerp in 1561.¹¹⁶ (Figure 8) Because of the increasing sympathy of the rhetoricians towards Protestantism, the authorities deemed it wise that no further competitions would be held after Antwerp. We have seen that the Bax family referred to these elements on their arms as *kauwoerden*. However, is this coincidence sufficient to link 'Joan Bax genaamd Van Herentals' with Goris' mother city of Herentals? After all the nouns calabash *kalebas* and *kauwoerde* are synonyms. This serendipitous journey has shown that there is no apparent connection between the coat of arms of this Cape Governor and that of the Brabantine City of Herentals.



Figure 8 - Badge of the Cauwoerde (Source: Goris)

Besides the fact that there is no armorial connection between Joan Bax and the City of Herentals, there also seems to be very little, either historically or genealogically, to connect the family to the city during the 16th and 17th century. Goris perused the alderman registers *schepenregisters* of Herentals (preserved from 1507). Although the registers were not investigated in great depth it seems apparent that the name Bax (and its variants) is not one that appears in the records with any frequency. Where Boeree obtained the information that allowed him to claim, in his introduction, that the name Bax was widespread in Herentals is a total

116. J.-M. GORIS, '*n Stad maakt geschiedenis. Bijdrage tot de aloude geschiedenis van de Stad Herentals*, pp. 211-213.

mystery. Goris also worked through the parish registers (1581-1796) (baptismal-, marriage- and burial registers) of the St Waldetrudis church. Very few occurrences of the name Bax and its variants were found. After the pacification of Ghent (1576) a *Staatse* (Calvinist) magistrate came into power in Herentals and he remained in office until the city once again fell into Spanish hands (1584).¹¹⁷ Throughout this period no one called Bax is a member of the administration *van de weth*. During the period 1576-1584 there was also a Calvinist congregation in Herentals. Sadly, not a single document survives about this congregation, either in the archives of Herentals, or elsewhere. After the city returned to Spanish control (1584) a large number of well-qualified Herentals craftsmen, amongst whom were linen-weavers of Calvinist persuasion, emigrated to the North. Insofar as Herentals is concerned the subject of this emigration to the United Provinces has not been studied. It is thus unknown if there were members of the Bax family amongst the emigrants.

Laing feels it unlikely that there would have been members of the Bax family amongst these emigrants. The available genealogical data provides evidence of an aristocratic family with strong military roots – hardly a family to be found amongst linen-weavers. The same data shows a family that originated in Brabant but by the 16th century had strong ties to ‘s-Hertogenbosch and the United Provinces.

In summary it must be stated that the historical, heraldic and genealogical data which we possess does not permit many conclusions to be drawn about the relationship between Joan Bax and the small Brabant City of Herentals. It is strange that this Cape Governor was destined to enter the history books as Bax ‘entitled Van Herenthals.’

Het is eigenaardig dat deze Kaapse gouverneur met ‘genaamd Van Herentals’ de geschiedenis is ingegaan.¹¹⁸

Conclusion

Fine and Deegan seem to feel that there is a

need to embrace the chance component of research as being central to the collection and interpretation of data.¹¹⁹

They go on to state that:

117. J.-M. GORIS, ‘Plunderde wethouder Constantijn Rubens de Sint-Waldetrudiskerk te Herentals uit Calvinistische overtuiging?’, *Herentalse Bijdragen*, nr. 4, Herentals, 1978.

118. Letter: J.-M. Goris to R.A. Laing, 2000-05-17.

119. G.A. FINE and J.G. DEEGAN, ‘Three principles of Serendip: Insight, Chance and Discovery in qualitative research’, <http://www.ul.ie/~philos/vol2/deegan.html>, p. 10.

Serendipity involves planned insight coupled with unplanned events, core to the philosophy of qualitative research. By recognizing the centrality of serendipitous findings and events in qualitative research, we come closer to understanding how research products are created and appreciated in practice. In a methodology that so values insight, the thin line between brilliance and nothingness is both a powerful image and vast chasm: our fear and our salvation. When a researcher prepares to enter a field setting, the worry exists that nothing interesting will be discovered. Such fear, however, fails to reckon with the intellectual preparedness necessary to make sense of the power of an ongoing social reality.¹²⁰

The chance meeting of Laing and Goris in a bookstore in Pretoria fulfils the requirements of an encounter of ‘temporal serendipity’. The fact that they collaborated to produce this research report is evidence of the success of ‘serendipity relations’. The data found falls well within Merton’s ‘serendipity pattern’. Both the quality and quantity were unanticipated and the anomalous parts forced a process of reassessment. The results may be strategic in that the connection between Joan Bax and the small Brabant city of Herentals has been shown to stand on the flimsiest of foundations. Fine and Deegan suggested that serendipitous insight provided the opportunity for constructing a plausible story; thereby enabling readers to comprehend the *verstehen* and inference processes of the researchers.

Each researcher must be ready to seize the clues on the road to discovery. We need to consider the fullness of the markings of serendipity, just as the ancient Princes of Serendip did.¹²¹

The formal model of deductive research assumes that one knows what one is looking for before one has ‘found’ it. Inductive research elevates ‘insight’ or serendipity into the chosen stance of analysis, permitting numerous conclusions from the same data. We are each a Prince of Serendip.¹²²

The data shows that Joan Bax, who married the daughter of a ‘merchant-prince’, definitely added the suffix ‘Van Herentals’ to his own good name of Bax. Whether this was to make it sound better than that of his wife is unknown. Picard’s statement that this was done as a tribute to his father Maurits who “actually hailed from Herentals in Flanders” seems to be without foundation.¹²³ The final irony of this tale is that six months after his death at the Cape the news arrived there that he had been appointed “governor of Ceylon and councillor extraordinary of India.”¹²⁴ Should he have lived, Joan Bax would thus have become a ‘merchant’ Prince of Serendip.

120. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

121. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

122. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

123. H.W.J. PICARD, *Masters of the castle:...*, p. 74.

124. G.J.SCHUTTE, ‘JOAN BAX entitled Van Herentals’, W.J. DE KOCK (Ed.), *Dictionary of South African Biography, I*, p. 59.

Opsomming

Gelukkige toeval – Goewerneur Joan Bax en die verbintenis met Herentals

Dit wil voorkom asof heelwat van die ontdekkings wat in navorsing gemaak word gelukkige-toeval is. Die toevallige publikasie van 'n artikel of boek, of die aanhoor van 'n gesprek in 'n hyser of gang mag die trant van 'n navorsingsprojek totaal verander. Dat die skrywers van hierdie artikel per abuis sou ontmoet kon byvoorbeeld nooit voorsien gewees het nie. Voor hulle 'gelukkige' ontmoeting was beide onbewus van mekaar. 'n Heeltemal toevallige sameloop van omstandighede het aanleiding gegee tot die uitklaring van daardie problematiese dele van die verhaal van Joan Bax (1637-1678), Goewerneur van die Kaap van Goeie Hoop. Bax was tot nou toe maar 'n minder bekende figuur in die geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika. As Laing en Goris nie deur die gelukkige-toeval by mekaar uitgekome het nie, sou hierdie ontleding nooit plaasgevind het nie. Dié navorsing het wel afgedwaal in die periode van die Tagtigjarige oorlog en die betrekking van die Bax familie in hierdie tydperk. Daar is op drie vlakke gewerk – heraldies, histories en genealogies. Albei skrywers het hulle eie kundigheid saamgebring om 'n antwoord te vind oor hierdie raaisel-agtige figuur in die Kaapse geskiedenis. "Het is eigenaardig dat deze Kaapse gouverneur met 'genaamd Van Herentals' de geschiedenis is ingegaan." Hierdie studie poog om te wys dat die sogenaamde Herentals verbintenis baie twyfelagtig is.