

Notes on the Pedigree of Abel Eppens tho Equart

Abel Eppens became renowned because he wrote a chronicle, in which he described the happenings of the 2nd half of the 16th century. He was born on the 29th March 1534 in "Bolhuis" at Eekwerd (a village - in middelfegegraven - in the parish of Wirdum at present in the municipality of Loppersum). He was in 1569 a candidate at Wirdum and in 1580 the Quarter-master for the State. He was an enthusiastic follower of the reformation and after the betrayal of Rennenberg, Governor of Groningen in 1580 - he no longer felt himself safe in the Ommeland and fled to Emden in Germany. His goods were then - like a traitor - put up for sale. In 1582 (and following years) he became deputy for Ommerland.

THE ARMS OF BOLHUIS

Rietstap described in his "Amoria General" the Arms of Bolhuis as follows:

Part:

Area 1 - gold has a half eagle in black full beaked and armed with jaws, side view moving, and surmounted by a star in silver;

Area 2 - of blue has a goose in silver, set on a terrase of chinese blue, beaked and armed with jaws, the head turned and holding a trefoil in its beak. Further he mentions also as a crest "a star", between a pair of wings.

An armorial motto in the Dutch language may also be included:

Variations:

1. On a field of gold protruding through the boarderline half a black eagle, with a red bill and talons, above his head a silver sixpointed star;

2. On a blue field a silver goose looking round, with red bill and feet, standing upon a grass ground, in his bill a three leafed clover. Crest: a sixpointed star between wings.

These arms are carried notably by various members of the family (van) Bolhuis; it appears on a number of seal impressions and gravestones, set in colour in one of the leaded glass windows in the court of St. Martins Church at Groningen.

On one occasion the arms are also to be found incorporating a fivepointed star,

in place of one with six points. In specific examples such variations showed that the person who so used the coat-of-arms was a free mason. In the case of the family van Bolhuis there were discovered no further indications of this. The significance of the various elements in these arms can be: The half-eagle, known as the so called Friesian Eagle shows that the family formed part of the faction of hereditary land-owners. This image is borrowed from the German State arms. Groningen and the rest of the Netherlands, were always a part of that Empire. Now only State Officials are allowed to bear the State Arms (or a part thereof). For all that many of the Groningen and Friesland proprietors also bore it. Not that they were State Officials, but that they held their lands in freehold, and thus, just like the German Kaiser, they were authorised to appoint magistrates and other functionaries. They held their lands not in lien (feodium) but in absolute ownership (alodium), like the Kaiser they were no feudal lords, but proprietors. A feudal lord in Friesland and Groningen strictly speaking, had no standing, he was an hereditary land-lord, a peasantry that held the land, were held in turn by a land-lord, and this is how they considered the Kaiser.

The goose is a symbol of watchfulness and sacrifice borrowed from the story of the geese on the Capitol (hill) at Rome, which, when the Gauls had thought to profit from the sleep of the watchmen to overthrow the City, alarmed them all.

A cloverleaf pointed to the required land tenure that was necessary in order to belong to the hereditary class. A proprietor must be in full possession of 30 grass-lands. A cloverleaf then often signified grassland, and an acorn woodlands. We must be very careful with these armorial interpretations, since it is quite possible that the Bolhuis family had taken over the arms of the Tammen family, who bore the very same arms, only the star is not of silver, but, heraldically more correct, red.

Sicco Tammen and Baeuwe of Zeerlijp were the grandparents of Abel Eppens of (strictly tho - meaning of) Equart (A-IV-1-a), which could explain how the family of Bolhuis took on this coat of arms. The family Eenkema later also carried these arms. In which colors it is not known, they are depicted on some of the family gravestones. Neither is it known whether this family is related to the Tammens or (van) Bolhuis. Just like Sicco Tammen they lived in Zeerlijp.

(B-VI-3-a)

References: G.F.E. Gonggrijp - Friesche Eigenerfdenwapen, the arms of the Fiesian Hereditary Landowners in connection with their rightful and un-fiefed possessions - Naarden 1943.

FOURTH GENERATION A-IV-1-a

IV-1. Children of Eppo Abels (III-1-b):

a. Abel Eppens tho Equart, born in Bolhuis, plm 29-3-1534, died, 1590, Marr. At Enselens 10-5-1562 Frouwke Louwens, born Enselens plm 1540, died 1626, daughter of Louve Havickes and Etgijn Waalcko's Elama (V-1), In his Chronicle Abel Eppens wrote: page 172:

"...so at such restless times of my God and Creator (I) came into the world in the year 1534 about Easter, and was born in Equart..." page 173:

"...until I anno 1562 on the 10 May stepped into the path of marriage, my father's heart was set to Enselense, the housing being in anno 1564 improved. With "My father's heart", was Abel Eppens to have got his eye on the farmhouse of his Father-in-Law, such that he increasingly described Etgijn Elema as "our mother", Louve Havickes was living in Enselens. In a letter taken up in the Chronicles of John Rengers van ten Post (part II page 370) of Doede van Amsweer, one gets the impression that Abel Eppens was still alive. In the summer of 1590 van Amsweer wrote a letter to Hilbrandt Bauckens, in which he was concerned over the repair of the East-Dyke, Abel Eppens had to him "for his last wish thereof this maintenance most earnestly pleaded". From these two letters we are led to believe that Abel Eppens in the summer, or in any event after April 1590 had deceased. (B.W. Steenbeck - Doede van Amsweer, Wageningen 1966)

On 7-11-1626 the vicar Gruys, living on the Fromaborg, forbade the widow of Popke Abels, one of the sons of Abel Eppens, to bury the body of Frouke Abels in the church. This could be the widow of Abel Eppens, but it is equally possible that it could be a daughter, of one of his daughters, ie: unsolved, the name not being known... (See the following page for more on this subject) See for the family of Frouke Louwens: F.R. Elema - Family book Elema, Harderwijk undated (1966).

Louwe Havickes was a son of Havick Louwens and Teteke, living in Enselens in 1506 (Archive Cloister at Apel, register 134) according to information in Groningen 1966:93.

Abel Eppens was for his times a very well travelled and learned man. The introduction to his Chronicle he describes himself and his life's course as follows: "an erudite rustic, a literate "Householder" or propertied farmer who has become known, through the developments of his times and his environment of open mindedness and faith. After the death of his father, his guardians Popko Sickens and Ballo Froma intervned with his upbringing and so he was brought to Farmsum, where he sojourned for two years. His Grandfather Sicco Tammens was on the opinion that the grandson was more suited for school than "for commerce' however Abel Epens himself testified that he currently had acquired a dislike of school "of my former Master"s severity". He was sent in 1547 for

further development to Groningen and there he was invested into the care of the organist of the Aker, the oldest school belonging to the Rector of "our beloved Lady Church of Antwerp". Some time later he went to the School of St. Martins at that time greatly renowned for her famous rector Gegnerus Praedinius. At the completion of his studies in 1555 Abel Eppens visited the High School at Leuven. Abel Eppens' impressions of Leuven made a very strong and great influence on his way of thinking; after years, whenever he thought of the Leuvenese theologian he suffered a fire of fury and wrath.

From Leuven he went to Cologne where he must have found himself in 1557. After that he took himself off to Wittenberg where he joined in the audiences of Philip Melancthon, the learned friend of Martin Luther. Of his stay in foreign parts, Abel Eppens has recorded comparatively little. Following the burial of Melancthon he undertook the return journey in May of 1560 to the Fatherland.

In 1569 one finds him competing in Wirdu, and in 1580 as a quarter-master on the side of the States. Abel Eppens, the convinced adherent of the reformation, had in 1568 left the country, not like so many of his countrymen due to the approach of the Duke of Alba (of Spain) but perhaps because he himself had given as little as possible of his blood. But in 1580, after the defection of Rennenberg, it was different. Abel Eppens no longer felt safe in the Ommelands, and took his way to Emden, followed later by his wife and children and mother-in-law. Leading up to what followed was that a colleague of the Viceroy Rennenberg, named Cornelius Kammpis, was taken prisoner with his wife and conducted to Winsu. (Chronicle page 293, 294).

In order to make reprisals a number of Ommeland leaders were picked up and removed from the view of their women and children. This became lot of Anna Allerssma, an unmarried aunt of Frouke Louwens and sister-in-law of Etgijn Elema, who was locked up in the castle of Middelstum for five weeks with her son and daughter. Frouke Louwens herself escaped. In the Chronicle it says "Anna was able to get to the hamlet of Loppersum and my housekeeper was also visiting Equert with the children which nevertheless through God's gracious help and support have been preserved and protected, that they mightest not fall into the hands of the above mentioned. And now full fourteen days long has she sought since she left her house and home and came to me at Emden, thus is the 2 May passed.

Thus also is our Mother Etgijn Ellema being sought at Enselense, and then also taken in" How long Abel Eppens had lived in Emden is not known. In 1580 he had planned to remove himself to Weener. In the year 1582 and the nexthe appears repeatedly in the archive materials as a deputy for the Ommelanders, (he was such in 1580 when he was elevated to the college of deputies) taking refuge in East Friesland.

So, among others he, is company with John Rengers of The Post, Mello Broersema, Em Tammen and Renko Elema, issued a declaration on the 8-8

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- 1582 that they had taken into their custody the State Seal of Ommeland and would Safeguard it. Also his signature was set under approval of the Ommelander accounts for the year. In 1580 "tho Embden in our banishment" Abel Eppens had himself explained in detail that which he published in the title of his Chronicle. But he did not let it go at that. His first section gave the reasons for the Nederlands wars of his times and consted mostly of a number of divered pieces over the separation of City from State before 1580. The first section of the old Friesian history just as Abel Eppens said himself, is not that. This section of the Chronicle has been lost and that possibly very well by Abel Eppens himself, exchanged for the aforementioned pieces.

The main subject remained the struggle between the Spanish King and the inhabitants of East Friesland, Abel Eppens place of exile. He had faithfully put together his Chronicle on his own without "fowl or feathers". Abel Eppens made the impression in his works of being a calm, trustworthy man. Naturally, he could never have been called strictly objective.

Also Abel Eppens was a child of his times and stood under the restless influence of education, environment, evolution, standards of living, mental faculties, and a host of other circumstances. Moreover he lived in a period of sharp oppositions to each quest, or worthwhile struggle. What is more it should be noted that he was so resolute in his communications and judgement. Very seldom was he vehement. If one looked for an ill disposed Ommelander in the old City of Groningen, such as formed fierce aversion to the Romish church or such as an envious Ommelander young hereditary landowner. One sought it, no more.

Abel Eppens was above all else a patriot. In 1586 he went off to Reide "in order once again to see or set foot on the Fatherland."

Party rancour, religious zeal or jealousy had, not too badly infatuated Abel Eppens, had not tempted him himself to write in spite, mockery or bigotry.

He had put together his book "for himself". And also his descendants had considered this work to be just that. That Rengers knew of it may be deduced. But not one of the Groningener or Ommelander history-writers of the 17th or 18th centruy were ever to report on the manuscript.

Only Doede of Amsweer, the learned theologian and contemporary of Abel

Eppens, being out of the same Ommeland descendance, just like Abel Eppens took refuge in Emden in 1580 and with him became very friendly, (only he..) had known the Chronicle.

We find on the protective leaves and on the title cover of the manuscript the signatures of two eighteenth century persons, namely of Doctor Theodor Adriani (1713 - 1798), secretary-of-State for the City and Province, and of Dr. Hemmo Arnold Werumeus, an Advocat of Groningen and member of the municipal jurors of that place from the 2nd half of that century. Had they been the owners of the manuscript? Not impossible!

A relationship with Adriani we have not been able to find. This together with the separate position of his signature, on one of the back covers and on a different sort of paper than the manuscript does imply that he was not one of the owners of the book.