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The Van Nierop & Van Dam Dynasty of Mathematical Practitioners

HUIB ZUIDERVAART

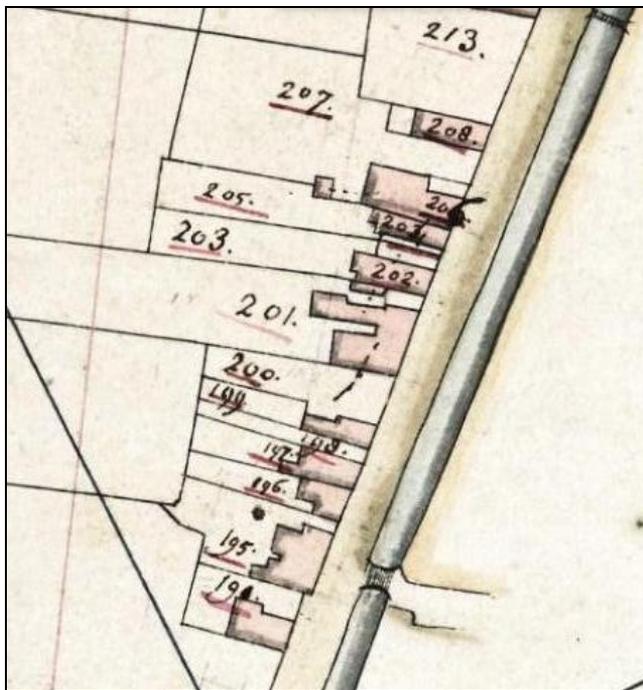
Dirck Rembrantsz van Nierop had several pupils who later worked as mathematical practitioners themselves, one of them being his sister's son Pieter Cornelisz Oomes (who later on would call himself Pieter Rembrantsz van Nierop) and another one his nephew-by-mariage Albert Jansz (who later on would call himself Albert Jansz van Dam). They were not the only family members who were inspired by Dirck Rembrantsz's work. Looking more closely into the Van Nierop genealogy, a much larger family network of mathematical practitioners is revealed. The business of making mathematical calculations for several Almanachs, which was started by Dirck Rembrantsz in the early 1650's, was maintained within the family until the beginning of the nineteenth century.¹

This genealogy serves two purposes: (1) to represent the family connections which have build the Van Nierop – Van Dam Dynasty of mathematical practitioners; and (2) to reveal Dirck Rembrantsz closest family ties. In his last will of 1678 Dirck Rembrantsz legated his mathematical instruments, books and papers (*evidently also his correspondence*) to his nephew Pieter Rembrantsz van Nierop. But the rest of his assets was destined to 'alle sijn naeste Bloedt-vrienden', or to all his next of kin. In this genealogy all persons, who inherited something from Dirck Rembrantsz have received a double underlining.

In constructing this list, we received indispensable assistance of Mrs. Annet Klomp-Keuken from Heerhugowaard. We owe her and her husband much

¹ See: Van Eeghen, 'Ambachten en beroepen voor almanakjes en kinderprenten van de erven stichter 1769-1800' (1982); idem, 'De Stichter's Enkhuizer Almanak en Amsterdam' (1983); and Smit, 'Dirck en Pieter Rembrantsz van Nierop. Hun relatie met de populaire almanakproductie van de 17e en 18e eeuw' (2001).

gratitude for sharing the information they both have collected about the Van Nierop family in the archives of Niedorp, in the regional archive in Alkmaar.²



Fragment of the first 'kadaster' map of the 'Hoogsijde' of Nieuwe Niedorp (1811).

Nr. 200 is the –then empty – yard, where the cobbler Rembrant Dircksz and his sons DIRCK REMBRANTSZ and Jacob Rembrantsz once lived. The remains of the family house on that site were demolished around 1800. In c. 1675 DIRCK REMBRANTSZ moved (temporarily?) to Nr. 206, the house of the farmer Cornelis Gerritsz Rijper.

*Nr. 201 was a bakery for almost two and a half centuries.
Nr. 199 was a path; Nr. 196 was the 'rechthuis' [courthouse]
(enlarged at some time with Nr. 197),
Nr. 195 was a large 'herberg' [inn]*

² See also Keuken & Klomp-Keuken, 'Terug naar het Rembrantsz huis. Een stuk bewoningsgeschiedenis' (1999); *idem*, 'Verbeteringen en aanvullingen' (2002), 20-21.

First generation

I. REMBRANT DIRCKSZ (died Nieuwe Niedorp, before 1637)

Mentioned as 'schoenmaecker' [*cobbler*] at Nieuwe Niedorp in the 'schepenrol' of 1606. He lived at the 'Hoogsijdt' [*high side*], in a house with an orchard, which he had purchased in 1599. In the years 1602-1610 he litigated with his neighbour – a backer – about the right of way from his yard to the street. This lingering conflict was settled only after Rembrant's death, when in 1637 his son Dirck Rembrantsz signed a notary deed with his two neighbours, the backers Jan Goosens Backer and Claes Willems Backer. Unfortunately, two years later the neighbouring bakery was the source of a fire, which destroyed both houses. After the fire the family house was rebuilt at the same spot. This place (Dutch 'Kadaster' section number B 200) remained within the family until 1698.

According to the tax register ('verpondingskohier') of 1622, Rembrant Dircks' family contained nine persons at that time. In 1631 the value of his property was estimated on 2.000 guilders.

Rembrant Dircksz was married in Nieuwe Niedorp on 8 March 1598 to AERIANE PIETERS. In 1648, the value of her property (being the widow of Rembrant Dircksz) was estimated at 1.000 guilders. She died in (or shortly before) 1655. (Regional Archive Alkmaar, RA Niedorp, inv. nr. 5696, fol. 213 & nr. 5697, fol. 196v-198).

children:

1. **DIRCK REMBRANTSZ**, follows II-1
2. Pieter Rembrantsz follows II-2
3. Weijntje/Wentgen Rembrants
married on 29 of 30 december 1631 to
Gerrit Cornelis, 'jonggezel' from Schoorl
4. Anna Rembrantsz follows II-3
5. Jacob Rembrantsz follows II-4
6. Cornelis Rembrantsz, moved to Enkhuizen follows II-5
7. Jan Rembrantsz, moved to to Enkhuizen follows II-6

Second generation

II-1. DIRCK REMBRANTSZ VAN NIEROP

(Nieuwe Niedorp, 1610 – Nieuwe Niedorp, 4 November 1682)



Not married; shoe maker and mathematical practitioner. Started the calculation of astronomical and tide tables for Almanachs in 1654.

Dirck lived together with his brother Jacob in the house of their parents at the 'Hoogsijde' in Nieuwe Niedorp. Probably this was also the shoemaker's workshop. In 1665, in the 'quohier van 't Haartstedegetl', the house is mentioned as having two chimneys and one stove. The brothers also farmed four cows. Dirck also owned some sowing land. In 1674 the value of Dirck's property was estimated on 1.500 guilders. In 1675 he moved (temporarily?) to the house of the farmer Cornelis Gerritsz Rijper, who had a wife and two children. That year, in the tax register of the 'familiegetl', is mentioned: 'Dirck Rembrantsz, een schoenmaker; 1 persoon woont bij den onderstaende; is een schoenmaker ende estronomist'. [*Dirck Rembrantsz, a shoe maker; 1 person lives with the person mentioned below [= C.G. Rijper]; he is a shoe maker and astronomer*].

In 1644, 1672 and 1674 Dirck Rembrantsz acted a few times as a notary witness for friends and neighbours, the last two years together with his nephew Pieter Cornelis Omes (III-1).³

³ Not. Archive Niedorp, inv. nr. 3887: 27 September & 12 October 1644 (for the benefit of Maria & Suzanna de la Plane); inv. nr. 3900: 22 Jan. 1672 (for the benefit of Jacob Willems & Griet Jacobs) & 18 April 1674 (for the benefit of Jacob Sijmons).

II-2. PIETER REMBRANTSZ (died before 1655)

Married at Nieuwe Niedorp on 23 april 1628 with TRIJNTJE EVERSDR, 'jonge dogter' of Schoorl.

children:

1. Neel Pieters follows III-2
2. Geert Pieters,
married to Jan Gerritsz van Alcmaer
3. Rembrant Pieters [mentioned 1655]

II-3. ANNA REMBRANTS

Silk trader (1648). She lived in 1680 at the 'Laechsijdt' at Nieuwe Niedorp.

Married on 15 december 1635 with CORNELIS PIETERS OOM(E)S (d. before 1648), son of Pieter Cornelis Oom[e]s.⁴ She remarried on 29 november 1648 as a widow with PIETER SIJVERTS, 'bleker' from Hensbroek.⁵

children:

1. Rembrant Cornelisz [Ooms], 'Innosente Broeder' [*innocent brother*]
2. Pieter Cornelisz [Oom(e)s] Rembrantsz follows III-1

child from second marriage:

3. Trijntje Pieters [Rembrants]

⁴ Not. Archive Niedorp, inv. nr. 3893: 23 Aug. 1653: last will of Pieter Cornelis Oom[e]s.

⁵ Not. Archive Niedorp, inv. nr. 3892: 24 November 1648: prenuptial agreement

II-4. JACOB REMBRANTSZ (d. before 1678)

Married 8 oktober 1656 to TRIJN HEIJNDRIX.

children:

1. Aeriane Jacob Rembrants (died 1697), married to Cornelis Jansz Langeboer, 'raad en vroedschap' of Nieuwe Niedorp.⁶ She lived in 1687 with her mother (the widow of Jacob Rembrantsz), in the old family house at the 'Hooghsijdt'. This house was sold in 1698.
2. Maertijen Jacobs Rembrants, married to Cornelis Jansz Bond from Barsingerhorn.

II-5. CORNELIS REMBRANTSZ (d. before 1655)

Moved to Hoorn. Married to AEFGEN PIETERS

children:

1. Rembrant Cornelis, shoe maker in Hoorn⁷
2. Wentje Cornelis, married to Willem Pieters
3. Grietje Cornelis, married to Cornelis Gerbrantsz
4. Lijsebeth Cornelis,⁸ married to IJsack Lammertz Backer

II-6. JAN REMBRANTSZ (d. before 1687)

Lived (1655) in Enkhuizen. Married there (?) to PIETERGEN HEIJNDRIXDR

children:

1. Aefje Jans, married to Jan Jansz Duyn
2. Trijntje Jans, married to Jacob Abrahamsz

⁶ On 12 May 1719 a certain Johannes Langeboer from Oude Niedorp was admitted as a surveyor by the States of Holland and West-Friesland. He could be a son (or grandson) of Cornelis Jansz Langeboer and Aeriane Jacob Rembrants. However, archival proof is wanting.

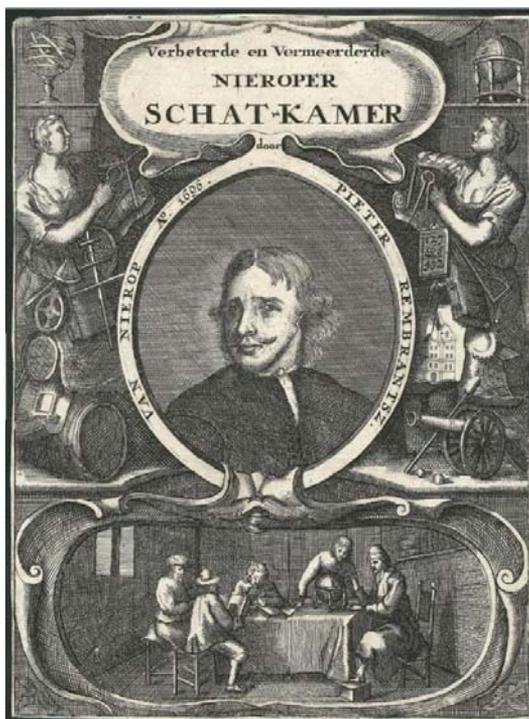
⁷ On 16 December 1662 Rembrant Cornelis, 'schoenmaker', became a member of the Waterland Mennonite Community in Hoorn. He died on 16 Febr. 1695.

⁸ Not. Arch. Nw. Niedorp, inv. nr. 3899: On 6 January 1685 Lijsebeth Cornelis 'bejaarde dochter' at Nieuwe Niedorp made her last will, in the presence of her nephew Pieter [Cornelis] Rembrants (III-1)

Third generation

III-1. PIETER [CORNELIS] REMBRANTSZ [OOMS] VAN NIEROP

(Nieuwe Niedorp, c. 1640 - Nieuwe Niedorp, Fall of 1708)



Surveyor (admission, 30 July 1668) and mathematical practitioner. Not married. Pupil and main heir of Dirck Rembrantsz van Nierop. He lived in Nieuwe Nierop, at the 'Lage zijde' [*the 'low side' of the canal*], diagonally across the house of his uncle (Dutch kadaster number D 347). Together with his uncle Dirck, he acted as a notary witness in 1672 and 1674. After the death of his uncle, in 1682, Pieter continued the work of Dirck Rembrantz. He edited – and enlarged – several of his uncle's publications and continued the calculation of astronomical tables for almanachs. In September 1693, when he temporarily lived in Hoorn, he received a patent for these calculations and for several 'Van Nierop' books (see A-5), which patent was renewed in August 1708.

III-2. NEEL PIETERS [REMBRANTSZ] (died before 1683)

married in Niedorp (town hall) on 5 April 1671 to

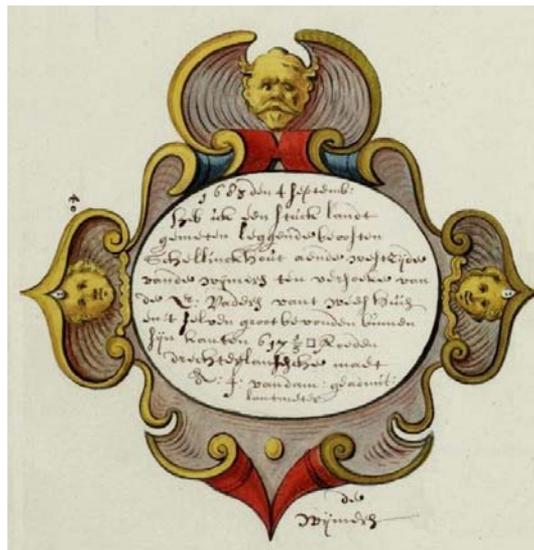
ALBERT JANSZ [VAN DAM] (Niedorp c. 1650 - Hoorn, 1715)

Pupil of Dirck Rembrantsz van Nierop. Surveyor (admission, 28 December 1680), mathematical practioner and 'kostschoolhouder' at the Nieuwsteeg in Hoorn.

After becoming a widower, Albert Jansz van Dam remarried in January 1683 in Hoorn to SIJTJE DIRCKS from Medemblik. After becoming a widower again, he remarried again in October 1686 with TEETJE CLAES from Hoorn.

children from the first marriage:

1. JAN ALBERTSZ (* c. 1672) follows IV
2. Antje (died Hoorn, July 1741)
3. Ariaentje



*Cartouche on a map made by Albert Jansz van Dam
(Kaartboek der landen van het Burger Weeshuis at Hoorn, 1683)*

Fourth generation

IV. JAN ALBERTSZ VAN DAM (c. 1672 – Hoorn, 7 February 1746).



Surveyor (admission 27 September 1695); mathematical practitioner, orphan master, and successor of his father as ‘kostschoolhouder’ in the Nieuwsteeg in Hoorn. Member of the Waterland Mennonite community at Hoorn in April 1694. Served in this community as ‘vermaner’ from 1715 until 1746.⁹ Examiner of the navigating officers of the Dutch East India Company, chamber Hoorn, from at least 1730 until 1746. In 1697 and 1717 he taught mathematics to the Russian Czar Peter the Great. After the death of his uncle Pieter Rembrantz van Nierop in 1708, he (and his two sisters) inherited Pieter’s estate. In April 1709 they sold Pieter Rembrantz’s former house in Nieuwe Niedorp for 297 guilders.¹⁰ Jan Albertsz also continued Pieter’s work on the calculation of almanachs. In May 1709 he took over his uncle’s recently renewed patent for the exclusive printing of these calculations and most of the earlier Van Nierop publications. He renewed this patent in October 1724 and again in March 1743. Jan Albertsz also edited Dirck Rembrantsz’ *Nieuw Nieroper graad-boek, inhoudende de tafelen van de zons declinatie* (Amsterdam 1715).¹¹

⁹ Cf. *Lyk-dicht, ter nagedachtenisse van ... Jan Albertsz: van Dam, oudste leeraar der Waterlandse Doopsgezinde Gemeente te Hoorn; overleden den 7. February 1746* (Hoorn: Cornelis Kloek, 1746).

¹⁰ Regional Archive Alkmaar, RA Niedorp, inv. nr. 5703, fol. 228 (10 April 1709).

¹¹ In the introduction of a manual for sea pilots (*De Nieuwe Hoornse Schatkamer*), Jan Albertsz van Dam honoured Dirk Rembrantsz van Nierop in a poem: ‘aanhoor het onderwijs, van ’t zaad uyt Rembrants Stam | Wiens groot geslagt zig spreyd van Nierop to van Dam’ [‘listen to the instruction, from the offspring of Rembrant’s clan | Of whom a great family is expanded from Nierop to van Dam’].

Jan Albertsz van Dam married in Hoorn at 30 June 1696 to ANTJE JANS [SMAK] (d. 1745) from the 'Oude Noord' in Hoorn.

child: 1. DIRK JANSZ

follows V

Fifth generation

V. DIRK JANSZ VAN DAM (Hoorn, 1705 – Hoorn, 19 September 1780)

Mathematical practitioner; In 1747 he was appointed successor of his late father Jan Albertsz van Dam as examiner of the navigating officers of the Dutch East India Company, chamber Hoorn. He filled this post until his death in 1780. After 1747 he also continued his father's work for the calculation of almanachs. In 1743 Dirk's father had requested that – because of his old age – the renewal of the patent for the exclusive printing of these calculations would also be valid for his heirs. As this request had been granted by the States of Holland, this patent with a validity of 15 years guaranteed the continuity of the family business. In April 1756 Dirck Jansz van Dam renewed this patent, which again would be valid for him and his heirs. He died suddenly in September 1780, shortly before the renewal of the patent, which a month later was continued by his son Meyndert.

Remarkably, several almanach publishers kept Dirk's name on their title page: the last was printed in the year 1800. Perhaps in that period his name was used as an *alias* by some other heirs. (Meyndert Dirks had at least one sister – 'Teetje Dirks' – and one brother – 'Jan Dirks'). Because of this long time span of half a century, a total of some three hundred different almanachs were issued in Dirk's name.

Dirck Jansz van Dam was married on 29 November 1733 to LIJSBET JANSZ BIERENBROODSPOT (1696-1781), widow of Johannes Termaet.

child: 1. MEYNDERT

follows VI



Mockery on the 'astronomist' Dirk Jansz van Dam (1705-1780), published in 1770 by Hendrick Numan in the *Zinspeelingen op allerlei Wetenschappen, Konsten en Ambachten* (Amsterdam 1770).
Regretably the story behind this satire is unknown.

Sixth generation

VI. MEYNDERT VAN DAM (Hoorn, 1730 – Hoorn, c. 1812)

Mathematical practitioner; In 1781 he was appointed successor of his late father Dirck Jans van Dam as examiner of the navigating officers of the Dutch East India Company (VOC), chamber Hoorn. He filled this post until the dissolution of the VOC in 1795. From 1781 until 1802 he also continued his father's work for the calculation of almanachs. In October 1780 he renewed his late father's patent for the exclusive printing of these calculations for him and his future heirs, for the standard period of 15 years. However, Meyndert would be the last Van Dam in this profession. The old Dutch Republic was dissolved in 1795, and with it the system of protection of printed works by a patent was also abolished. For exactly a century the system of patents had secured the family's position as the main supplier of mathematical tables for almanachs. Van Eeghen, for instance, mentions that even in 1792 three illegal competitors were imposed to pay a fine of 9.000 guilders.¹²

The last almanach with Meyndert van Dam's name on the title page was published in 1802 (for the year 1803). Over the years Meyndert van Dam issued more than 230 different almanachs. It can be estimated that since Dirck Rembrantsz started his work on Almanach's in the middle of the seventeenth century, the Van Nierop-Van Dam dynasty produced mathematical tables for more than a thousand different Almanachs.

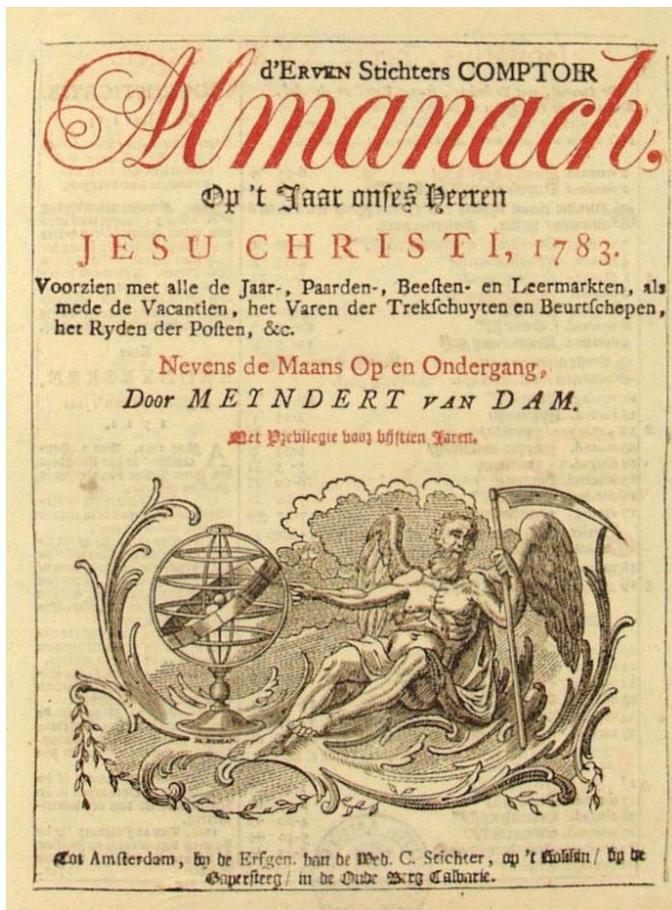
In 1801 Meyndert van Dam was commissioned to dismantle the former tax office of 'ontvanger-generaal van het Noorderkwartier' in Hoorn.¹³ In 1803 his former Almanachs were printed with the designation 'calculated by some some lovers of mathematics' [*beminnaren der wiskundige weetenschappen*]. In 1804 Meyndert was replaced as the main calculator for almanach tables by the Rotterdam mathematician and 'kostschoolhouder' Jacob de Gelder (1765 – 1848).¹⁴

¹² Van Eeghen, 'De Stichter's Enkhuizer Almanak' (n. 1) 49.

¹³ National Archive The Hague, Archive 'Financie van Holland, inv, nr. 929.

¹⁴ In 1815 Jacob de Gelder was appointed Professor in mathematics at the Military Academy in Delft, which position he changed in 1819 for a similar chair at Leiden University.

Meyndert van Dam was married in Hoorn on 19 November 1780 to AAGJE RIJPER from Purmerend. No children of this couple are known.



Stichters Comptoir Almanach for 1783, with astronomical and other tables calculated by Meyndert van Dam (1783)