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## The 'cello' in the Low Countries : the instrument and its practical use in the 17th and 18th centuries

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# Introduction

Since long I have been interested in history and art in general, and in Dutch history and Dutch visual arts specifically. As a child I devoured the historical books written by Thea Beckman, and as a teenager, when visiting old castles and churches, I would spend my holiday pocket money on guidebooks, to be able to read more about a site on my return home. I remember travelling from the village where I lived in 'het Hoge Noorden' to the Randstad - Amsterdam, The Hague, Utrecht - to visit special exhibitions. The love of my parents for Dutch antique tiles was transferred to me during our holiday visits to the Nederlands Tegelmuseum in Otterlo.

Later, during my professional training in modern and baroque cello this interest in Dutch history also resulted in a special interest in Dutch cello music. In addition to all the other music I played, I thus performed cello compositions by Léon Orthel (1905-1985), Jacob Klein (1688-1748) and Alexis Magito (1711-1773)<sup>2</sup>. Since my graduation I have compiled and performed, together with my chamber music ensembles, several concert programmes with Dutch music, mostly from the Baroque but also some compositions by the contemporary composers Daan Manneke (1939) and Willem Wander van Nieuwerk (1955).

I am not the only cellist interested in the Dutch musical heritage. In 2007 the Stichting Cellosonate Nederland was established by Dutch cellist Doris Hochscheid and pianist Frans van Ruth ([www.cellosonate.nl](http://www.cellosonate.nl)). The following is stated on their website: "The chief objective of this foundation is to promote the popularity of Dutch music for cello and piano with a particular emphasis on the Dutch cello sonata."<sup>3</sup> The website contains a catalogue of music for cello and piano from ca. 1830 to the present day, composed by Dutch composers (living in Holland or abroad) and by foreign composers living in Holland.

Since I am not only a modern cellist but above all a baroque cellist, I am specifically interested in the period before 1830. One then wonders if Klein and Magito were the only 18<sup>th</sup>-century Dutch composers who composed solo music for cello.

To get a first idea, I have made a list of all modern editions of Dutch 18<sup>th</sup>-century cello sonatas which I was able to find. The full list is reproduced in Appendix 1. What is immediately noticeable is that until the 1950s only music by Willem de Fesch (1687-1761) and Pieter Hellendaal (1721-1799) was published, and mostly only one or two sonatas at a time. From the 1950s onwards music by other composers was gradually published as well, starting with Jacob Klein in 1954. Alexis Magito's sonatas were first published in the 1980s.

The early 20<sup>th</sup>-century publications show highly edited scores (Figure 2),<sup>4</sup> whereas the more recent editions (Figure 3) are more faithful to the original (Figure 1).

<sup>2</sup> Even though Magito's name sounds Italian, he will appear to be Dutch, see Section 4.2.6.

<sup>3</sup> Last accessed: 2017, December 8.

<sup>4</sup> The problem with these highly edited scores is that one does not know what markings (a.o. slurs, dynamics, articulation) are original and what markings have been added by the editor. These edited scores, however, give a representation of a time picture, which in a way is also interesting, but for the purpose of this dissertation the original scores have been preferred.



Figure 1 Willem de Fesch: beginning of Sonata XI opus 4, published by De Fesch himself (1725).

**SONATE**  
von  
**Wilhelm De Fesch.**  
(Circa 1695 - 1758)

Bearbeitung von Alfred Moffat.

**Preludio.**  
**Largo.**

Violoncell.

Piano.

Figure 2 Willem de Fesch: beginning of Sonata in F major, edited by Alfred Moffat (1905). Note the added and deleted slurs, added dynamics, change of octave in the bass and added trills. Also the original scoring for 2 cellos has been changed to cello and piano.



Figure 3 Willem de Fesch: beginning of Sonata 5 (=11) opus 4, Donemus edition (1995).

As Appendix 1 shows, since 1905 many editions of Dutch baroque cello music have been published in Holland and abroad. But are those composers mentioned in this Appendix the only Dutch composers who composed solo music for cello? Or did more solo music see the light of day, but has this music since been forgotten or lost? And what was the situation in the 17<sup>th</sup> century? Did the cello play an active musical role then as well, as the 17<sup>th</sup>-century tile on the cover of this dissertation suggests? This tile raises more questions, mainly about the playing technique. All these and more questions come together in my research question:

***What was the name, the appearance, the development and the playing technique of the cello in the Low Countries between 1600 and 1800 and what music was composed for it?***

To get an answer to this comprehensive question I have first checked what modern (19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>-century) sources could tell me. On the following pages it will be proven that this is very little. The sources will be treated in chronological order, starting in 1866. I have listed all the publications that I could retrieve during the research process.

## Research in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries

**1866** A Dutch composer who is mentioned in many books is Willem de Fesch. In the second edition of his *Biographie universelle des musiciens* (1866) early music concert entrepreneur François-Joseph Fétis states that: "At the same time he [De Fesch] was a distinguished organist, a skilled cellist, and a composer of merit; [...]"<sup>5</sup> It does not become clear upon what Fétis bases the idea that De Fesch was a cellist. One could wonder if he has based it on the entry in Walther's *Musicalisches Lexicon*, where it is said that De Fesch, at that time, is a cellist and an organist in Antwerp.<sup>6</sup> I have only seen proof of De Fesch being a violinist and a concertmaster on several occasions.<sup>7</sup>

The only works for cello Fétis lists are the cello sonatas opus 8, whereas he lists many of the De Fesch sonatas for one or two violins.

**1875** As far as De Fesch' compositions are concerned, Belgian collectionneur Edmond van der Straeten, although writing extensively about De Fesch in his *La musique aux Pays-Bas*, only mentions the Canzonette and besides this he shows De Fesch' portrait. No mention whatsoever of any of his instrumental compositions.<sup>8</sup>

**1889** The first 'modern' book specifically written about the history of the cello was published in 1889, written by German musicologist Wilhelm von Wasielewski. He gives an extensive history of the viol and states that by the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the palmy days of the viol are over.

<sup>5</sup> Fétis (1866), p. 224. Original: "Il [de Fesch] était à la fois organiste distingué, habile violoncelliste et compositeur de mérite; [...]"

<sup>6</sup> Walther (1732), p. 243: "Fesch [Guilielmo de] ein Violoncellist..."

<sup>7</sup> Oxford Music online, last accessed: 2018, February 15.

<sup>8</sup> Van der Straeten (1875), pp. 1-15.

By that time the cello had taken over more and more and people requested compositions for this instrument.<sup>9</sup>

According to Von Wasielewski the rise of the cello in Belgium and Holland started around the same time as in France<sup>10</sup> but the rise was slower. From the 18<sup>th</sup> century he only mentions four cellists/composers, of whom Willem de Fesch composed the six sonatas opus 8.<sup>11</sup>

**1905** In his book *Il violoncello* the cellist and pedagogue Luigi Forino does not speak very highly of the Dutch cello school and of Willem de Fesch's compositions:

"*The Dutch* - in the 18<sup>th</sup> century the cello school was insignificant in Holland [...]. Willem de Fesch, born in the Netherlands at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, was a good cellist and organist. In 1757 he was in London. He composed 6 solos for the violoncello of minor importance."<sup>12</sup>

I assume that the solos Forino writes about are the sonatas opus 8, since the content of his text resembles the texts of Fétis and Von Wasielewski and both authors only mention these sonatas. As will become clear in this Introduction, the opus 8 sonatas are the sonatas mentioned most often in studies on the cello and the Dutch musical history.

On the cover of Forino's 1905 edition a cello is depicted. The second edition has a different cover: a group of three musicians playing two bass instruments and one treble, an image after Jost Amman (1568). It is most probable that the publisher liked the Amman image better and therefore changed it or that he simply wanted to change the appearance of the second edition. The instruments on the second edition, however, are clearly not cellos, whereas the instrument on the first edition is.

**1911** In Bruno Weigl's *Handbuch der Violoncell-Literatur* the following is written about the De Fesch's sonata in F major [= opus 4, no. 11] in the Moffat edition of 1905:

"Four charming little movements which are very pleasant to play and to listen to and let the wish arise to get to know more of De Fesch (born end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, died around 1760) in reprint. Highly recommended."<sup>13</sup>

Weigl's recommendation of the F major sonata is in contrast to Forino's comment that the solos are of minor importance.

**1914** The extensive *History of the violoncello, the viol de gamba [...]*, written by the German cellist Edmund van der Straeten, contains two chapters dealing with music from the Low Countries. Chapter VI, a chapter of under two pages, deals with the viola da gamba in the Netherlands (an instrument this dissertation does not deal with primarily), and the somewhat larger chapter XXVIII deals with the violoncello [and cellists] in Belgium from the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century up to 1900. The only cello music, composed before 1800, mentioned in this last chapter is Willem de Fesch's "Six Solos for Violoncello Op. 8". According to Van der Straeten De Fesch was not only a violinist but also a cellist and his cello sonatas (among other music) are "most delightful".<sup>14</sup> Van der Straeten and Weigl either agreed on this or simply copied from each other.

**1920** The only Dutch cello music Max Merseburger lists in *Das Violoncello und seine Literatur* is a modern edition of two sonatas by Willem de Fesch: "Fesch, W. de, Sonatas. D minor and F major

<sup>9</sup> Von Wasielewski (1889), pp. 36, 39.

<sup>10</sup> Von Wasielewski states that in the Paris Opera the cello was 'imported' as late as 1727 by the cellist Batistin, but that in Dresden already at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century two French cellists (Jean Baptiste José du Houbondel and Juan Brach de Tillon) were playing in the Court orchestra.

<sup>11</sup> Von Wasielewski (1889), pp. 192-193.

<sup>12</sup> Forino (1905), pp. 416-417. Original: "*Gli Olandesi* - la scuola del violoncello che nel 18 secolo non aveva fatto parlare di sé in Olanda [...]. Guglielmo DE FESCH, nato in Olanda verso la fine del XVII secolo, fu buon violoncellista ed organista: nel 1757 era a Londra: compose sei *solì* per violoncello di non grande importanza."

<sup>13</sup> Weigl (1911), p. 24. Original: "Vier reizende Sätzchen, die sich sehr angenehm spielen und anhören und den Wunsch rege werden lassen, mehr von De Fesch (geb. Ende des 17. Jahrh., gest. gegen 1760) im Neudrucke kennen zu lernen. - Sehr empfehlenswert."

<sup>14</sup> Van der Straeten (1914), pp. 94-95, 540.

(A. Moffat) each 2,50."<sup>15</sup> The F major sonata must be the same one Weigl listed in 1911. Even though I have not been able to check it, I am pretty sure that the d minor sonata stems from opus 8. It seems that this sonata is the only other sonata edited by Moffat. De Fesch apparently loved the key of d minor: the sonatas opus 1, no. 2, opus 4 no. 10 and opus 13, no. 4 were also composed in this key.

**1943** The only Dutch book on cello history, *De Violoncel*, is written by the cellist, gamba player and cello pedagogue Willem A. Mirandolle. One can expect that a Dutch author will pay full attention to the musical heritage from his/her country. Nothing is less true. The only 18<sup>th</sup>-century cellist Mirandolle mentions is Willem de Fesch. According to him De Fesch was born in Amsterdam and worked, as a cellist and organist, in Antwerp around 1725.<sup>16</sup> As already mentioned when discussing Fétis (1866), it is not clear upon what the idea of De Fesch being a cellist is based. Mirandolle states the same, but has most probably simply copied Fétis. Mirandolle's statement that De Fesch was born in Amsterdam is not true, de Fesch was born in Alkmaar, and only in later life he lived in Amsterdam for several years.

Whereas Van der Straeten's *History* treats both the cello and the viol, Mirandolle's book, according to the title page, only treats the cello. This is, however, not the case. A few chapters deal with the viol, and Mirandolle even states that music by J. M. Breval [Jean-Baptiste Bréval] and G. Cervetto [Giacobbe Basevi Cervetto] is originally meant for viol but nowadays is mainly played on cello.<sup>17</sup> As far as I could establish<sup>18</sup> Bréval and Cervetto were cellists and did not compose for the viol at all. Therefore Mirandolle's statement seems not to be true.

Mirandolle's book also contains a chapter on violin makers. He mentions, among others, Peter Borbon from Belgium and Cornelis Kleynman, Hendrick Jacobs, Pieter Rombouts and Johannes Cuypers from the Netherlands.<sup>19</sup>

**1948** Oddly enough in his second book *De Grondslagen van het Muziekonderwijs in het bijzonder voor de Violoncellist* Mirandolle does not mention the De Fesch' sonatas in his list of music he advises for cellists of different levels. The Dutch music he mentions is a concert by Fiocco for stage 4 (I suspect this is Paul Bazelaire's transcription (1934)<sup>20</sup> of Joseph Hector Fiocco's *Pièces de clavecin* opus 1) and for stage 5 four sonatas by Pieter Hellendaal (Presumably the Röntgen edition. See Appendix 1).<sup>21</sup>

**1949** The first biography of Willem de Fesch was written by the musicologist Frans van den Bremt in 1949. He discusses the cello sonatas extensively, and he makes a distinction between the duets for two cellos and the sonatas for cello and bc. About the duets Van den Bremt states the following, which is along the same lines as Henk O'Douwes will state in 1959:

"In the development of the cello literature, these works as well have an importance not to be underestimated."<sup>22</sup>

**1959** Up to this point almost all authors only write about De Fesch. In the preface to his edition of Hellendaal's concerti grossi the Dutch music author and expert on the work of J. S. Bach Hans Brandts Buys is very praising about Hellendaal's sonatas. He writes: "His sonatas with their great virtuosity and strong melodic expression are among the best of the century".<sup>23</sup>

**1959** The only magazine article on Dutch 18<sup>th</sup>-century cello composers I have been able to find was published in the Dutch music magazine *Mens en melodie* (1946-2012) in 1959. In this article Henk O'Douwes comments on De Fesch' cello compositions. He writes:

"The opus VIII [sonatas] are to be considered as the first highlight of his [De Fesch'] creative work. It contains both violin and cello sonatas. On the basis of this opus

<sup>15</sup> Merseburger (1920), p. 160. Original: "Fesch, W. de, Sonate. D-moll u. F-dur (A. Moffat) je 2,50."

<sup>16</sup> Mirandolle (1943), pp. 121-122.

<sup>17</sup> Mirandolle (1943), p. 74.

<sup>18</sup> Oxford Music Online, last accessed: 2017, December 13 & Lambooi & Feves (2007), pp. 91-93, 111-112.

<sup>19</sup> Mirandolle (1943), pp. 52-54.

<sup>20</sup> This concerto, in Bazelaire's transcription, is still sold today by Schott music: SF 7942.

<sup>21</sup> Mirandolle (1948), pp. 171-172.

<sup>22</sup> Van den Bremt (1949), p. 124. Original: "In de ontwikkeling van de celloliteratuur hebben ook deze werken een niet te onderschatten belang."

<sup>23</sup> Brandts Buys (1959), p. V.

number the ranking of De Fesch among the best of the smaller masters of his time is perfectly legitimate."<sup>24</sup>

As stated by many 'modern' authors De Fesch was a cellist. I have not found any proof for this, except Walther's statement (see above). In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, however, it was very common that musicians played more than one instrument. Since De Fesch has composed so many sonatas for the cello, it is plausible that he was able to play this instrument as well. O'Douwes comments on this as follows:

"Although in the lexicons De Fesch is mentioned as a violinist and composer (only Walther refers to him as a cellist), his excellent insight into the possibilities of the instrument gives ground to the suspicion that he himself must have played the cello, possibly as a second instrument."<sup>25</sup>

Many authors quoted in this Introduction mention sonatas composed by De Fesch. They do not agree on how many sonatas were published or simply do not mention all opus numbers. O'Douwes mentions sonatas opus 4, 8 and 13.

**1963** The Dutch journalist and amateur cellist C. C. van Rossem has written an entertaining and amusing book, *het onbespeelbare instrument*, about his struggles playing the cello. He refers to the list of cello music in one of Mirandolle's books (1948), but also invites the reader to choose his/her own music. Van Rossem writes:

"Especially in the field of early music the offer is amazingly versatile, and due to the fact that the average technical level of cello playing in the time of Vivaldi, Marcello, Veracini, Ariosti, Loeillet, Corelli, Valentini, Sammartini, Tessarini, Gaillard, Breval and so many others, was relatively low, their works are generally playable [for amateurs]."<sup>26</sup>

Curiously enough De Fesch' cello sonatas seem for him the only ones composed for the instrument in the Netherlands! The technique required in the De Fesch sonatas is comparable to the technique asked for in Vivaldi's and Marcello's sonatas, therefore that cannot be the reason not to mention them.

**1975** American cellist and musicologist Elisabeth Cowling mentions several pieces of mostly Italian music from the music library of Schönborn Castle, Wiesentheid, Germany. She makes special mention of sonatas by Jacob Klein, who, according to Cowling, is German:

"In addition there is a published opus from that library, an interesting work by the German [sic] Jacob Klein Le Jeune, *VI Sonates à une Basse de Violon & Basse Continue*, Op. 1, Bk. III (Nos. 13-18[]), which are in scordatura, with the cello tuned: Daeb and *VI Duetti a due Violoncelli*, Op. 2 (only the sixth duet is in scordatura): CGdg."<sup>27</sup>

<sup>24</sup> O'Douwes (1959), p. 40. Original: "Als het eerste hoogtepunt in zijn scheppend werk is zijn opus VIII te beschouwen, waarin zowel viool- als cellosonates voorkomen, en op grond van welk opus de rangschikking van De Fesch onder de beste der kleinere meesters uit zijn tijd volkomen gewettigd is."

<sup>25</sup> O'Douwes (1959), p. 42. Original: "Hoewel De Fesch in de lexicons genoemd wordt als violist en componist (alleen Walther noemt hem cellist) geeft zijn uitstekend inzicht in de mogelijkheden van het instrument grond aan het vermoeden dat hijzelf de violoncel goed moet hebben bespeeld, mogelijk als tweede instrument."

<sup>26</sup> Van Rossem (1963), p. 109. Original: "Vooral op het gebied van oude sonates is het aanbod verbluffend veelzijdig en dank zij het feit, dat het gemiddelde technische peil van het cello-spel in de tijd van Vivaldi, Marcello, Veracini, Ariosti, Loeillet, Corelli, Valentini, Sammartini, Tessarini, Gaillard, Breval en nog zo veel anderen, betrekkelijk laag lag, zijn hun werken over het algemeen goed speelbaar."

<sup>27</sup> Cowling (1975), p. 84. In the original the tunings are given on staves and not with letters as I have done here.



A few pages on she writes:

"The publication of cello sonatas during the baroque period by composers other than Italian was sparse. [...] One Dutchman, Willem de Fesch (1687-1761) published several sets: 6 Sonatas in a collection of 12 Sonatas, the other 6 being for violin; Sonatas for two violoncellos (Op. 1 & 2); Sonatas for violoncello (op. 4, 8 & 13)."<sup>28</sup>

From this quote one could deduce that de Fesch composed 5 or even 6 opus numbers for cello. I think this is not the case, as is shown in Appendix 1.

**1982/1992** Whereas other 'modern' authors have mentioned Willem de Fesch and his opus 8 cello sonatas, American cellist and music historian Nona Pyron only mentions trios/quartets by the Flemish composer Willem Gommaar Kennis (1717-1789).<sup>29</sup>

She also mentions several names used for the cello or bass violin in the north of Europe (Bass Geige, Basse de Violon & Bass Violin), but she does not give a Dutch name.<sup>30</sup> Did the Dutch not have their own word for this instrument and did they, for instance, use the French or the Italian word?

The American musicologist Stephen Bonta has shown that in Italy as early as the 1560s and 1570s instrument makers were making instruments similar to the cello. The name violoncello, however, was not used till a century later. Bonta mentions the following names for different sizes of cello: a cello of a large size: violone (da braccio/basso), viola (da braccio) & basso di viola; a cello of a smaller size: bassetto (di viola), violetta & many variations of violoncello; for a cello of an undetermined size: basso (viola) da braccio, viola da braccio, violone piccolo & vivola da braccio.<sup>31</sup> If the Italian word(s) was/were indeed used in the Netherlands, Bonta's research offers many different names. Did these names mean the same here as in Italy? And were they also used in 17<sup>th</sup>-century Dutch ensemble music?

**1983** Several reference books are illustrated with Dutch images, as is the cover of Lev Ginsburg's *History of the violoncello*. The cover shows two paintings of cellos: a detail of Matthias Grünewald's *Isenheimer Altar* (ca. 1512-1516)<sup>32</sup> and Jan Steen's *Interior with a company playing music* (1666): a German and a Dutch painting dating respectively from the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>33</sup> This is clearly a mistake, because cellist and musicologist Ginsburg starts his *History* in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

**1983** Musicologist Leendert Haasnoot wrote the first biography of Pieter Hellendaal, upon which he graduated at Amsterdam University in 1983. A tiny part of his dissertation is about the cello sonatas opus 5.

Haasnoot writes:

"On the other hand, Hellendaal shows that he is well acquainted with the possibilities of a specific application for the cello. This is shown for example in the use of the thumb as a playing finger, and in the passages that require a high position and in which furthermore the use of the fourth finger is essential."<sup>34</sup>

As mentioned before, it is suggested by several authors that De Fesch (also) played the cello. This could be a reason that his compositions are so well written for the instrument. Could this have been the case with Hellendaal as well? Haasnoot does not mention such a fact. He, however,

<sup>28</sup> Cowling (1975), p. 93.

<sup>29</sup> Pyron (1992), p. 246.

<sup>30</sup> Pyron (1992), p. 221.

<sup>31</sup> Bonta (1977), pp. 64-65 & Bonta (1978), pp. 5-7.

<sup>32</sup> One may question whether this instrument is a cello or in fact a viol. Ginsburg, however, wants one to believe that it is a cello.

<sup>33</sup> Ginsburg (1983), cover images.

<sup>34</sup> Haasnoot (1983), p. 89. Original: "Daar staat tegenover, dat Hellendaal blijkt geeft goed op de hoogte te zijn met de mogelijkheden van een specifieke applicatuur voor de violoncello. Men ziet dat bijvoorbeeld aan het gebruik van de duim als speelvinger, en aan de passages die een hoge positie vereisen en waarin bovendien het gebruik van de vierde vinger noodzakelijk is."

mentions a certain Pasqualino (Pasqualino de Marzis? (??-1766)), a cellist Hellendaal worked with in his London time.<sup>35</sup> Possibly Pasqualino tested Hellendaal's cello sonatas? Haasnoot is quite positive about the cello sonatas:

"Finally, it should be noted that, despite the virtuoso idiom that characterizes many single sonata movements, there is, more than in Hellendaal's violin sonatas, a certain equilibrium: the melodic lines are tangled to a much lesser degree in virtuosic "delights". This undoubtedly contributes in a positive way to the artistic content of these sonatas."<sup>36</sup>

**1984** In *Cello Story* in the chapter *The Performers* the Ukrainian cellist and musicologist Dimitry Markevitch mentions several cellists from the baroque period, including Francesco Alborea, Martin Berteau and the Duport brothers, but no Dutch cellists nor any Dutch composers. He, however, mentions the Belgian school, but this started only in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>37</sup>

**1987** Jacob Klein is called the "first real cello virtuoso outside Italy" by Dutch violinist and music historian Willem Noske. According to Noske, Klein's sonatas opus 1 are the first cello compositions outside Italy. Another interesting fact is that these sonatas were written down in scordatura.

Noske is also very positive about Klein's opus 2. He states that apart from two canons (Gabrielli & Fiorè) for two cellos, this must be the first collection of pieces for 2 cellos. He adds:

"It is almost certain that Klein's cello compositions have been a source of inspiration for his fellow townsman Willem de Fesch."<sup>38</sup>

As Noske does not give a publication date for Klein's music, the question remains whether Klein was an inspiration for De Fesch, or that it was the other way round.

**1988** As Fétis, Von Wasielewski, Forino, Van der Straeten (1914) and Mirandolle (1943) did, also British music writer Margaret Campbell states that De Fesch was a cellist. She writes the following in her book *The great cellists*:

"Although the cello was introduced into Belgium and Holland at about the same time as in France [first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century], it made considerably less progress. William de Fesch, born in the Netherlands at the end of the seventeenth century, is the first cellist of any importance. [...] His writings include six suites for violoncello, Op. 8 [...]."<sup>39</sup>

It seems likely that all these authors copied from each other.

**1990/1998** In cellist and musicologist Julie Anne Sadie's *Companion to Baroque Music* it has been said that several foreign musicians stayed in Holland long(er)-term. It is continued: "On the other hand, some Dutch musicians, such as the composers Willem de Fesch and Pieter Hellendaal, spent most of their careers abroad."<sup>40</sup> And in the short biography of the violinist De Fesch it is said that: "His string chamber music is familiar to amateur musicians, [...]."<sup>41</sup> I suspect Sadie refers to his cello and violin sonatas. The biography section in this book does not contain biographies of any other Dutch composers of cello music.

**1993** In the biography of Unico van Wassenauer musicologist Rudolf Rasch mentions a 'certain' Alexis Magito living in The Hague but being of Italian descent. This Magito was a cellist and he

<sup>35</sup> Haasnoot (1983), p. 10.

<sup>36</sup> Haasnoot (1983), p. 91. Original: "Ten slotte zij nog opgemerkt dat, ondanks het virtuoze idioom waardoor menig afzonderlijk sonatedeel wordt gekenmerkt, er meer dan in Hellendaals vioolsonates sprake is van een zeker evenwicht: de melodische lijnen raken in veel mindere mate verstrikt in virtuoze "hoogstandjes". Dit draagt ongetwijfeld in positieve zin bij aan het artistieke gehalte van deze sonates."

<sup>37</sup> Markevitch (1984), pp. 54-60.

<sup>38</sup> Noske (1987), p. 82. Original: "Het is vrijwel zeker, dat Klein's cello composities een bron van inspiratie zijn geweest voor zijn stadsgenoot Willem de Fesch."

<sup>39</sup> Campbell (1988), p. 78.

<sup>40</sup> Dunning (1990), pp. 317-318.

<sup>41</sup> Sadie (1990), p. 319.

composed six cello sonatas which were published in Cambridge.<sup>42</sup> If indeed from Italian descent, was he born in Holland or did he move here later in life?

**1996** Also cellist and musicologist Winfried Pape and cellist Wolfgang Boettcher only mention Willem de Fesch. His sonatas, they write, were part of Simrock's *Meister-Schule* (published between 1904-1913) and Schott's *Cello-Bibliothek* (published from 1894), edited by people including Alfred Moffat (see Appendix 1).<sup>43</sup> Pape and Boettcher make a special note of the repertoire for two cellos, and in that sense they refer to De Fesch again.<sup>44</sup>

**1997** The Dutch *Honderd Componistenboek*<sup>45</sup> contains biographies of one hundred prominent Dutch composers from 1600 up to the present. Willem de Fesch and Pieter Hellendaal are among 28 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>-century composers<sup>46</sup> who have their place in this publication. De Fesch and Hellendaal are the only ones who, according to the lists of compositions, have composed sonatas for cello.

Dutch harpsichordist and musicologist Pieter Dirksen writes the following about De Fesch and the cello:

"Both the second half of op. 4 and op. 8a consist of 6 sonatas for the original combination of 2 cellos. Later also two collections of 6 sonatas each for cello and continuo were published (op. 8b and 13). This shows that De Fesch must be counted among the most important composers of cello music of his time."<sup>47</sup>

Dirksen is mistaken here. Opus 8a is meant for violin, whereas opus 8b is for cello. In the list of compositions, however, it is written correctly. He completely misses out on opus 1.

Rasch, who is also responsible for the only complete modern edition of Hellendaal's cello sonatas (see Appendix 1), has written the chapter on Hellendaal. He states:

"The cello sonatas breathe the same cantabile and at the same time virtuosic atmosphere as the violin sonatas. From the eight sonatas the second four make a considerably greater appeal to the technical skills of the soloist than the first four. Even though the cello sonatas are of a later date than most of the violin sonatas, the structure is dominated by the pattern of the now very old-fashioned 'sonata da chiesa'."<sup>48</sup>

**1998** In *One Hundred Years of Violoncello* American cellist Valerie Walden mentions many violoncellists and several schools of performance (Italy, France, Great Britain, Austria, Germany and Eastern Europe), but (cellists from) the Low Countries are not among them.<sup>49</sup>

The Oxford Music Online article about the 18<sup>th</sup>-century use, performers and repertory of the cello lists a number of countries as well: Italy, Austria and Germany, Britain and lastly France. The Low Countries are not part of this list either.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Rasch (1993), pp. 17-18.

<sup>43</sup> Pape & Boettcher (1996), p. 168.

<sup>44</sup> Pape & Boettcher (1996), p. 171.

<sup>45</sup> Hiu & Van de Klis (ed., 1997).

<sup>46</sup> The other 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>-century composers in this book are: Henrico Albicastro, Benedictus à Sancto Josepho, Quirinus van Blankenburg, Elias Brunnenmüller, Pieter Bustijn, Jacob van Eyck, Hendrik Focking, Christiaan Ernst Graaf, Carel Hacquart, Gerhardus Havingha, Constantijn Huygens, Servaas de Konink, Pietro Locatelli, Sybrandus & Jacobus & Anthoni & Sybrandus jr. van Noordt, Cornelis Thymanszoon Padbrué, David Petersen, Christian Friedrich Ruppe, Johan Schenck, Cornelis Schuyt, Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck, Nicolaes Vallet, Jan Baptist Verrijt & Unico Wilhelm van Wassenauer.

<sup>47</sup> Dirksen (1997), pp. 129-130. Original: "Zowel de tweede helft van op. 4 als op. 8a bestaat uit zes sonates voor de originele combinatie van twee celli. Later verschenen er ook nog twee collecties met ieder zes sonates voor cello en continuo (op. 8b en 13). Daarmee moet De Fesch tot de belangrijkste componisten van cellomuziek van zijn tijd gerekend worden."

<sup>48</sup> Rasch (1997), p. 153. Original: "De cellosonates op. 5 ademen dezelfde cantabele en tegelijk virtuoze sfeer als de vioolsonates. Van de acht sonates doet het tweede viertal een beduidend groter beroep op de technische vaardigheid van de solist dan het eerste viertal. Hoewel de cellosonates van later datum zijn dan het merendeel van de vioolsonates, overheerst wat de opbouw betreft het schema van de inmiddels toch wel zeer ouderwetse 'sonata da chiesa'."

<sup>49</sup> Walden (1998), pp. 6-48.

**1999** In the *Cambridge Companion to the Cello* in a chapter on German composers violinist and musicologist Robin Stowell lists Jacob Klein as such (as did Cowling):

"Significant German composers of continuo sonatas were less numerous but include Jacob Klein *le jeune's* *Sonates à une Basse de Violon e & Basse Continue* Op. 1 (c. 1720), of which Nos. 13-18 (Bk. 3) require the scordatura tuning D-A-e-b, [...]"<sup>51</sup>

And in the chapter on 'other countries' Stowell writes:

"The publication of cello sonatas in other countries before c. 1750 was minimal, with no significant representations from British composers. One notable exception is the Dutchman, Willem de Fesch, whose early sonatas show allegiance to their seventeenth and early eighteenth-century roots as well as certain virtuosic aspects (e.g. twelve Sonate Op. 4, Amsterdam, 1725), but whose later style involves the simpler, more expressive idiom of the Italian *galant* (e.g. six sonatas each of Op. 8b (London, 1736) and Op. 13 (London, c. 1750))."<sup>52</sup>

Stowell mentions both the opus 8b and opus 13 sonatas, as well as 12 sonatas opus 4. The way he writes it, seems to insinuate that all opus 4 sonatas are meant for cello, which they are not. Furthermore, Stowell does not mention the opus 1 sonatas.

**2000** On his website<sup>53</sup> Dutch baroque cellist Frank Wakelkamp states that Jacob Klein was born in Amsterdam, where he lived all his life. This is in contrast to what Cowling and Stowell stated. According to Wakelkamp Klein composed four collections of music for cello.

**2001** The Dutch composers De Fesch and Hellendaal are mentioned in an article about musical immigrants as Dutch composers who moved abroad.<sup>54</sup>

**2005** Musicologist Robert Tusler, in his biography *Willem de Fesch*, mentions all four opus numbers of cello sonatas, and even the French reprints which were published under different opus numbers.<sup>55</sup>

Of the opus 1 sonatas the original print has been lost up to now. The French reprint is meant for 2 violoncellos, 2 bassoons or 2 gambas, but also a figured bass is added. Tusler comments:

"As solo sonatas with harpsichord accompaniment, as clearly stated in Opus VIII B (1738), they are also delightful."<sup>56</sup>

And about the opus 8 sonatas Tusler comments the following:

"Again, De Fesch has created a splendid collection worthy of the professional and the educated amateur."<sup>57</sup>

As Weigl and Van der Straeten before, Tusler is very praising about the cello sonatas.

**2007** Cellists Henk Lambooi and Michael Feves list in *a Cellist's Companion* cello sonatas by Willem de Fesch (opus 1, 4, 8 & 13), Pieter Hellendaal (opus 5), Jacob Klein (opus 1, 2 & 4), Alexis Magito (opus 1) and lost sonatas by Jacob Nozeman (opus 5) and Unico van Wassenaer.<sup>58</sup> They, as many others, state that De Fesch worked as a cellist in Amsterdam, Antwerp and London.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Last accessed: 2017, November 20.

<sup>51</sup> Stowell (1999), p. 119.

<sup>52</sup> Stowell (1999), pp. 119-120.

<sup>53</sup> [www.frankwakelkamp.com](http://www.frankwakelkamp.com) Last accessed: 2017, April 17.

<sup>54</sup> Weytjens (2001), p. 332.

<sup>55</sup> Tusler (2005), pp. 33-36, 233-234.

<sup>56</sup> Tusler (2005), p. 34.

<sup>57</sup> Tusler (2005), p. 141.

<sup>58</sup> Lambooi & Feves (2007), pp. 140-141, 251, 295-296, 354, 407 & 590.

<sup>59</sup> Lambooi & Feves (2007), p. 140.

Even though I have been able to draw from quite a reasonable amount of reference books, it is astonishing how little useful information about the cello in the Netherlands they contain. Mainly information is included about the cello in France and Italy, and to a lesser extent in other European countries. If authors did pay attention to the Netherlands at all, they mostly limited themselves to mentioning the composer and cellist [sic] Willem de Fesch and some of his compositions and to a much lesser extent Pieter Hellendaal.<sup>60</sup> A few authors also mentioned, in descending order, Jacob Klein, Alexis Magito and Willem Gommaar Kennis. What kind of music these last composers produced has not become very clear.

Apart from the motives mentioned in the beginning of this Introduction, the small amount of useful written information about the cello in the Netherlands has formed a huge incentive for me to perform the current research and to expand the research into the world of images, instruments and relevant compositions as well as applying it in my daily performance practice.

## Connection between image and text

As stated at the beginning of this Introduction, I am also very interested in Dutch visual arts, especially from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Over the years I have been to many exhibitions and museums in Holland and abroad. A problem one encounters at exhibitions and also in books and catalogues, is the misnomer of the cello. I give three examples of different kinds of misnomer.

I clearly remember my visit to the Vermeer exhibition in The Hague in the spring of 1996. We had to be in the queue for a long time before being able to enter the exhibition. While waiting we were offered the exhibition booklet to kill time and to prepare for what was coming. According to the booklet one of the paintings would show a cello. When we finally went in, that was the first painting I went to see. I was utterly dissatisfied: the cello was not a cello but it was a viol.

Another example of mixing up names is the following: on the website of the Rijksburo voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie (hereafter: RKD) Jan van Bijlert's painting *A young man with a beret and a feather tuning a viola da gamba*<sup>61</sup> is catalogued (see Figure 4).



Figure 4 NN: Jan van Bijlert: *Young man playing a cello*.

<sup>60</sup> An exception to this are the biographies of De Fesch (Brems (1949) and Tusler (2005)) and Hellendaal (Haasnoot (1983)).

<sup>61</sup> Bold: ET.

According to the website the old name was *A young man with a beret and a feather playing a cello*.<sup>62</sup> At some point this has been changed and the following comment was added:

"It is unclear what the young man is doing with the instrument: is he tuning it or is he playing a pizzicato (he is not using the bow) [sic<sup>63</sup>]. And is he fingering the notes or did Jan van Bijlert not know how a string instrument was played or plucked? What we can be sure about is, that it is not a (violon)cello but a viola da gamba,<sup>64</sup> the 16-18<sup>th</sup> century ancestor of the cello."<sup>65</sup>

I wonder what was the reason behind this name change.<sup>66</sup> The instrument in this painting is very clearly a cello given the shape of the body and the scroll and the number of strings. Probably the names have been assigned by art historians and not by those specialised in musical instruments? It might also be that the publisher is responsible for the obvious mistakes.

A third example of a misnomer comes from the reference books quoted above. I wonder who is responsible for choosing the illustrations in these books and especially who is responsible for the captions. In Mirandolle's 1948 book, a book specifically meant for cellists, several images of (true) viols are reproduced. And opposite p. 153 in this book a painting of Gabriel Metsu (*Woman at Her Toilette*)<sup>67</sup> is reproduced, very clearly showing a cello. The caption states: "viol in front on the right side."<sup>68</sup>

These examples show that one always has to be on one's guard and to be a critical reader and observer. But another question which arises is whether the difference between a cello and a viol is always clear. For those not knowing much about musical instruments, this can be confusing (although the examples above were all very clearly cellos).

## Da braccio versus da gamba

In the preceeding Section I have given a few examples of the problems which occur when naming instruments, even though for a trained eye the instruments mentioned were not very difficult to distinguish. On examining more images it sometimes becomes clear that what at first glance seems to be a cello might not be a cello or not even a viol, what makes it hard to give the right name to an instrument or distinguish between the 'da braccio' and 'da gamba' families. Albeit as early as 1543 Silvestro Ganassi made the distinction between 'da braccio' (instruments of the violin family) and 'da gamba' (instruments of the viol family),<sup>69</sup> in images this distinction is not as black and white as one would think. One can find many instruments of a mixed shape. Two examples of mixed shapes are shown below.

<sup>62</sup> Bold: ET.

<sup>63</sup> In terms of the hand position of the right hand, the cellist seems to be playing pizzicato. The left hand, however, is clearly tuning the d string. The right hand does not touch this string, but the bow seems to touch the a or d string. It therefore seems most plausible that the cellist is in fact bowing, but with the bow at a very awkward angle.

<sup>64</sup> Underscore: ET.

<sup>65</sup> Last accessed: 2017, December 10.

<sup>66</sup> On the RKD website there are two references: Huys Janssen, P. (1998). *Jan van Bijlert, 1597/98-1671: catalogue raisonné*, p. 138 & the journal of the Israel Museum, Jerusalem. Huys Janssen and the website of the Israel Museum both state: "(young) man playing a cello". This painting is therefore listed as such in my research corpus (see Part 3).

<sup>67</sup> This painting is part of my research corpus, see Part 2 & 3.

<sup>68</sup> Mirandolle (1948), opposite p. 153. Original: "gambe rechts vooraan." Ton Koopman observed the same with the name of keyboard instruments. Before the reorganisation of the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam harpsichord became spinet or piano in translations.

<sup>69</sup> Pape & Boettcher (1996), p. 16.



Figure 5 ZN: Ambrosius Francken: *Triumph of the Christ child* (1605-1610). Sloping shoulders.



Figure 6 ZN: J.J. Horemans II: *A musical company in an interior*. Sound holes in C-shape.

These two images offer a dilemma and also a challenge to those who want to compartmentalize. I have kept this in mind when studying images and I have tried to do this as little as possible. My dissertation, however, deals with the cello in the first place. I have therefore first looked for images of 'real' cellos, but I did not exclude the images of mixed shape instruments. Only images of real viols have not been used.

In the title of my dissertation I have written the word 'cello' between quotation marks. This was done on purpose. Since the dissertation deals with a period of more than two centuries, during which the name, the use and the instrument itself have changed a great deal, it would not be correct to use the same name for the whole period. A good description would be: *8' bass instrument of the violin family*. This description, however, would be very awkward to use at all times. I will therefore use the word 'cello' when speaking in general terms. When discussing the 17<sup>th</sup>-century larger instrument I will use 'bass violin'. For the 18<sup>th</sup>-century smaller instrument I will use 'cello'.

## Observations from the performer's practice

When examining 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>-century images of cellists it stands out that many of these cellists used to play in a (completely) different manner than cellists do nowadays and also in some ways than I, as a baroque cellist, do. Of course there is the obvious difference between how the modern and baroque cello are held: on an endpin or between the legs, which is also discussed in many reference books (not reproduced here). But there is much more to it. Even if one looks superficially one can notice immediately that the bow is very often held underhand (for an example see Figure 7) instead of overhand (see the case-study on bowing in Section 2.2.7).





Figure 7 NN: Jan Steen: *A peasant marriage* (1672).

Nowadays, holding the bow underhand is very unusual for both modern and baroque cellists, even so unusual that Rasch states that, in case of a 17<sup>th</sup>-century Dutch painting where only the scroll (a scroll one would at first sight associate with the cello) and the right hand (playing underhand) of the player are to be seen, most probably the instrument is a viol. He writes:

"Two women, one plays the harpsichord, the other most probably plays the viol, because she holds the bow underhand."<sup>70</sup>

In modern reference books the information about this way of holding the bow while playing cello is very scarce. I will quote all the descriptions I could find. In William Pleeth's book *Cello* Pyron states the following:

"Because many gambists who changed to the cello found the reasons for changing their bow grip not compelling enough to alter a lifelong habit, one sees with increasing frequency at this time [i.e.: beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century] depictions of cellists playing with the palm-up bow-hand position (the palm-down position had been traditional with all violinists from the very start). It was not until cellists from Italy had fully infiltrated the music-making in Northern Europe that there was a return to some degree to uniformity in the bow-holding position."<sup>71</sup>

In the quote above, the word "return" is interesting. Does this word mean that before gambists changed to the cello and played with underhand grip, (real) cellists were used to play with overhand grip? And was this done everywhere in Northern Europe, including the Low Countries?

<sup>70</sup> Rasch (2014), p. 38. Original: "Twee vrouwen, één speelt klavecimbel, de ander speelt waarschijnlijk gamba, omdat ze de strijdstok onderhands vasthoudt." Rasch writes about: Gerard ter Borch II: *Two women playing music in an interior*, KWN 70273. This painting is part of my research corpus.

<sup>71</sup> Pyron (1992), p. 236.



Walden's following remark points in the same direction:

"The underhand bow grip was historically used by gambists and was adopted by numerous early violoncellists, many of whom played both instruments."<sup>72</sup>

Does the word "adopted" mean that when gambists changed to the cello (without changing their underhand grip), cellists liked the underhand grip better and changed their way of bowing? I wonder if this is shown in 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup>-century images.

Australian cellist and musicologist Mark Mervyn Smith has done extensive research on the way the bow was held in 17<sup>th</sup>-century Europe.<sup>73</sup> He has shown that many cellists in fact did play with underhand grip. Was this often done in the Low Countries as well? A quick browse on the RKD website does indeed offer many cellists playing with underhand grip, but more research about the situation in the Low Countries should be done.<sup>74</sup>

The bow grip is one of the striking features when examining 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>-century paintings. There are, however, many more differences between modern and baroque, for instance the size of the cello (see Figure 8) and the number of strings.



Figure 8 ZN: David Teniers I: *Landscape with the flight into Egypt* (detail). A very large cello.

The examples above show that questions arise when examining the pictorial evidence. Most of the quoted reference books, however, do not answer these questions. They show that hardly anything is written about the history and appearance of the cello in the Netherlands, and in the best case something is written along the lines in summary: "the cello did not really exist in Holland before the 19<sup>th</sup> century". It is therefore the more striking that many of the reference books have been illustrated with pictorial material produced in 17<sup>th</sup>-century Holland.<sup>75</sup> One can

<sup>72</sup> Walden (1999), p. 79.

<sup>73</sup> Smith (1995).

<sup>74</sup> Last accessed: 2017, August 6.

<sup>75</sup> **Van der Straeten** (1914): Ferdinand Bol: p. 660. **Mirandolle** (1943): Cornelis Koning & Anonymous: opposite p. 36; Jan & Caspar Luyken: opposite p. 37; Gerard ter Borch II: opposite p. 45. **Mirandolle** (1948): Gabriel Metsu: frontispiece; Cornelis Bogerts: opposite p. 49; Gabriel Metsu: opposite p. 153. **Ginsburg** (1983): Jan Steen: back cover. **Markevitch** (1984): Pieter Claesz. & Leonart Bramer: p. 17; the Flemish [sic] artist Dirck Hals: p. 20; Pieter de Hooch: p. 71. **Campbell** (1988): Jan Miense Molenaer: between pp. 128 & 129. **Pyron** (1992): Pieter Codde: p. 211; Jan Miense Molenaer: p. 219; Adriaen van de Venne & David Teniers II: p. 226; Adriaen van Ostade: p. 230. **Pape & Boettcher** (1996): Dirck Hals: p. 23; Gabriel Metsu: p. 83; Simon de Passe: p. 98; Anonymous: p. 120. Dirck Hals, David Teniers II, Pieter de Hooch, Anthonie Palamedesz., Jan Miense Molenaer & Flemish tapestry: between pp. 144 & 145.

wonder why this is so. Many 17<sup>th</sup>-century Dutch paintings seem very realistic. Could that be the reason?

In Smith's thesis on the iconography of the cello in Europe 250 images of cellos have been reproduced. Most images in the first part (1535-1724) are produced in the Low Countries, whereas the second part (1725-1800) contains mostly images from countries in Europe outside the Low Countries.<sup>76</sup> The fact that in Holland in the 17<sup>th</sup> century so very many supposedly realistic images of cellos were produced could well be the reason that publishers/authors nowadays choose Dutch 17<sup>th</sup>-century material to illustrate books.

It has to be taken into account that pictorial material used in this dissertation is not as realistic as a photograph. The question, however, whether the images are realistic to a certain extent or not is very important for the outcome of my research. I will therefore discuss this question on the basis of quotes from several authoritative art historians in Sub-chapter 2.1.

## The Low Countries

Until now I have been using a mix of the words: Dutch, the Netherlands, the Low Countries, Belgium and Holland, but in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries this area was in fact called the Low Countries ('Lage Landen'). In this time the Low Countries consisted of two parts: the protestant Noordelijke Nederlanden<sup>77</sup> (hereafter NN) and the catholic Zuidelijke Nederlanden<sup>78</sup> (hereafter ZN).



**Figure 9 The Low Countries in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. A map made by Joan Blaeu in 1665. In contrast to what we are used to nowadays, the map has been turned 90°, and so the north is on the right hand side.**

A map of the Low Countries is reproduced in Figure 9. This map was made by Joan Blaeu in 1665, as part of his *Atlas Maior*. The following characterization of the Low Countries is written by Blaeu:

<sup>76</sup> Smith (1983).

<sup>77</sup> The northern part of the Low Countries.

<sup>78</sup> The southern part of the Low Countries.

"The Low Countries are called by their non-Walloon inhabitants Nederlandt or Neerlandt because they are so low. [...]"

The Low Countries are bordered to the north by the Ocean (North Sea), to the west by Picardy and the North Sea again, beyond which they have England as a neighbor, a matter of a few hours away; to the south Lorraine, Champagne and Picardy; and to the west [sic: should be east] Westphalia and East Friesland.

They are commonly divided into seventeen provinces, of which Brabant, Limburg, Luxembourg and Gelderland are duchies; Flanders, Hainault, Artois, Namur, Holland, Zeeland and Zutphen are counties; Western Friesland, Mechelen, Utrecht, Overijssel and Groningen are domains, while the seventeenth province is formed by the marquisate of the Holy Roman Empire. They are further divided into two States, one subordinate to the King of Spain [<sup>79</sup>] and other to the United Provinces [<sup>80</sup>]. The Low Countries comprises more than two hundred walled cities, at least one hundred and fifty places enjoying the status of city and many more than six thousand villages, some of which have, however, been ruined during the long wars."<sup>81</sup>

## Research question and content of the chapters

I have posed my main research question already in this introduction, followed by investigating what research had been done by others. The question still stands:

***What was the name, the appearance, the development and the playing technique of the cello in the Low Countries between 1600 and 1800 and what music was composed for it?***

This main question has been divided into four sub-questions, each of which represents a chapter of this dissertation:

1. What information can be found about the cello and cello playing in Dutch written sources dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries?
2. What information can be found about the cello and cello playing in Dutch pictorial sources, and does this information match the technique from cello methods of the time?
3. What can surviving Dutch instruments tell us about the cello and cello playing?
4. What music did Dutch composers compose for (small) ensemble with cello (obligato) and for cello solo and what are the technical characteristics of this music?

<sup>79</sup> The State subordinate to the King of Spain (ZN) consisted of several sovereignties of the 'Habsburgse Nederlanden', the principality Luik and several smaller territories.

<sup>80</sup> The United Provinces (NN) consisted of Gelderland, Friesland, Groningen, Overijssel, Utrecht, Holland and Zeeland.

<sup>81</sup> Blaeu (1665) & Van der Krogt (2006), p. 143. The English text is a translation from French taken from the original French edition, published in 1664. The text in the French edition was greatly expanded in relation to versions in other languages. Information from an email from Assistant Professor Peter van der Krogt, dated 2017, August 15.

The original text reads: "Le Pays-Bas, nommé par ses habitants, non Wallons, Nederlandt, et Neerlandt, parce que son assiette est basse [...]."

Ce pays a pour ses limites du nord la mer Océane, de l'ouest la Picardie, et la même mer, au-delà de laquelle il a l'Angleterre pour voisine, où l'on peut se rendre en peu d'heures; du sud la Lorraine, la Champagne, et la Picardie; et de l'est la Westphalie et la Frise orientale.

Il est divisé communément en dix-sept provinces, dont celles de Brabant, Limburg, Luxembourg, et Gueldre sont duchés, celles de Flandre, Hainaut, Artois, Namur, Hollande, Zélande, et Zutphen, comtés; celles de Frise occidentale, Malines, Utrecht, Over-Yssel, et Gromingue [sic], seigneuries, et le marquisat du Saint-Empire fait la dix-septième. Ces pays sont encore divisés en deux Etats, dont l'un obéit au roi d'Espagne, et l'autre aux Etats-Unis. Il y a dans tous ces pays plus de deux cents villes ceintes de murailles, bien cent cinquante places, qui ont privilège de ville, et beaucoup plus de six mille villages, dont toutefois quelques-uns ont été ruinés pendant la longueur des guerres." Blaeu & Van der Krogt, p. 105.

**Chapter 1** will display the names for the cello found in 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>-century written sources. It will also contain all the other information about the cello and cello playing found in these sources, for example how many strings the instrument should have and how these strings should be tuned. I have collected many different kinds of written sources, ranging from treatises to ordinary dictionaries and from solicitors deeds to captions for images. The results will show that these written sources differ greatly in accuracy and extensiveness. It will therefore be difficult to draw fixed conclusions, they will remain relative, but I have collected as many written sources as possible to present the best picture.

In sub-question 1 I have mentioned Dutch written sources. In this case "Dutch" is used in the broadest sense of the word: (art) dictionaries in which one of the two languages is Dutch or Flemish and also foreign treatises which have been translated into Dutch.

**Chapter 2** is built on a research corpus of over 850 images, dating from as early as around 1560 up to 1800. I have collected these many images of cellos and cellists playing the instrument to be able to draw the best conclusions. I will exhibit many different aspects of cello playing and of the cello, as seen in images. The art-objects containing these images are varied and include: paintings, drawings, engravings, tiles, glass, tapestries, ceramics and silver.

In several modern books on the cello Dutch paintings have been reproduced to illustrate a general story about the cello in Europe. A profound research on (images of) the cello in the Low Countries, however, has never been performed.

My supervisor Ton Koopman has called to my attention a very special collection of French drawings, made by Pierre Paul Prud'hon.<sup>82</sup> These drawings illustrate very well many, if not all, aspects of cello technique in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Since such an extensive and complete collection of images, as far as I know, does not exist anywhere else in Europe, let alone in the Low Countries, I will use them in this dissertation to compare Prud'hon's pictured cello technique with the technique found in Dutch visual arts.

For **Chapter 3** I have measured many Dutch cellos in the musical instrument museums in The Hague and Brussels. I have also received measurements from private parties. I will compare these measurements with one another and also the real instruments with the images discussed in Chapter 2. Moreover I will give a short historical overview of the violin making trade in the Low Countries.

**Chapter 4** is divided into two Sub chapters: music from the 17<sup>th</sup> century and music from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The Sub chapter about 17<sup>th</sup>-century music only contains ensemble music. I will discuss 11 collections, ranging from trio sonatas to motets. There is no doubt more ensemble music in which the cello plays a role, but the chosen pieces are a good representation of 17<sup>th</sup>-century ensemble music.

In the Sub chapter about 18<sup>th</sup>-century music I will discuss all Dutch cello sonatas found.

A few sentences in Rasch' & Vlaardingerbroek's book about Unico van Wassenaeer put me on to the composer Alexis Magito. My former baroque cello teacher Jaap ter Linden happened to have a copy of his music: 6 cello sonatas. Magito's music stuck into my mind and I discovered that hardly anything was known about him. Therefore I will devote an extensive case study to him and his music.

At the beginning of this Introduction I mentioned the Dutch concert programmes I compiled for my chamber music ensembles. For the 17<sup>th</sup>-century pieces in these programmes I was able, as a cellist, to see if it would be technically possible to play them. However, I was never sure if the cello was an accepted instrument for the bass line in the Low Countries at that time. To know more about this, I would need the answers to, for example, question 1 (see above).

On the other hand, to be able to fully answer the other three questions, the expertise of a cellist is absolutely needed. Most early sources are written in Dutch (sometimes in French). Since Dutch is my native language, it is easy for me to read all the sources. The combination of cellist, researcher and Dutchwoman put me in the best position to perform this research.

In the Conclusion I will comment on the findings from my specific position as a cellist-researcher.

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<sup>82</sup> Many thanks to Cécile Tainturier, assistant curator at Fondation Custodia, Paris, for showing me these drawings in November 2007. The photos I made during that visit, are reproduced in Section 2.2.11.

This dissertation has been based on music historical research and on research in and through the musical practice of me as an experienced cellist; research on the different shapes, names and the use of the cello in the Low Countries in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, with the aim of getting a better understanding of the possibilities of the cello and of the tradition of music practice by cellists during that time.

It is my hope that this study will contribute to increasing the knowledge of the Dutch cello in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, and that cellists, other musicians and aficionados will even more appreciate this part of the musical heritage of the Low Countries.