

Has there been a Flemish influence on early games in Scotland?

Robin Bargmann

The origins of golf and curling are two of the most hotly debated issues in the history of Scottish sport. This paper will review the evidence for a Flemish influence on the development of these two games. Regarding golf – or colf as the early version of the game was called – the establishment of the game in Fife and Lanarkshire in the medieval period, coinciding with the migration of Flemish craftsmen to Eastern Scotland, provides compelling circumstantial evidence for a Flemish influence. There is similar evidence pointing to a possible Flemish origin for the game of curling. The paper also touches on the origins of tennis especially in the light of the fact that the court at Falkland Palace is the oldest surviving tennis court in the world. The game was originally known as caets spel in the Low Countries and caichpulle in Scotland (etymologically connected to caets spel).

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HAS THERE BEEN A FLEMISH INFLUENCE ON EARLY GAMES IN SCOTLAND?

Robin K. Bargmann

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Before answering whether there has been a Flemish influence on the development of early games in Scotland the question has to be put in a broader historical context.

What influences determined the Scottish identity and formed Scotland into a single nation? What do we mean with the terminology of Flemish or Flanders?

For the purpose of this chapter the extinct royal games of pall mall and caitchpule in Scotland are reviewed, as well as two recognised ancient Scottish games, curling and golf now played worldwide. In the context of this article the definition of Flanders and the Flemish will be expanded to mean the Low Countries and people therefrom.

The largest and most influential nation of the southern Low Countries in medieval time was without a doubt the state of Flanders and the Count of Flanders. The count as overlord was considered the most powerful Western European ruler of in the High Medieval Period following the break-up of the Carolingian Empire and Frisian realm (Frisia Magna)¹. Frisia was signified by its most important trading emporium Dorestad located on the fork of the Rhine and included in the network of main Northern and Western European trade routes in the Early Middle Ages.

In the history of the Low Countries, the Burgundian Netherlands consisted of roughly seventeen fiefs (provinces) ruled by Valois-Burgundian overlords and their Habsburg heirs in the period from 1384. The area comprised large parts of present-day Belgium and the Netherlands, as well as Luxembourg and regional parts of northern France. After the fall of Antwerp in 1585 and the preceding declaration of independence in 1581 of the rebellious provinces the power shifted considerably to the northern Low Countries with the states of Holland (Amsterdam) and Zeeland (Middelburg) as the combined epicentre of the newly formed Republic of United Provinces and replacing Flanders as the most powerful state of the Low Countries.

Through the centuries (1100-1600) the Low Countries as a whole have had considerable cultural and political interrelations with Britain, the Republic especially with Scotland, fed by intensive commercial merchant trade and financial interests.

Early inhabitants of northern Britannia were Keltic tribes of Picti and Scoti. In Northern and Western Europe nations had not yet formed and the region was populated by the many different Keltic tribes interconnected by tribal confederacies and through a common language and culture. These confederacies developed into a series of petty kingdoms, mainly following the collapse of the Roman Empire. The first kingdom of Alba (later to be named Scotland) was formed under Constantin II during the 10th century. After the top down Normanisation of England by William the Conqueror and his Angevin and Plantagenet heirs, Scotland experienced its 'Davidian Revolution' and the kingdom of

¹ In the Germanic pre-Migration Period (i.e., before c. 300 AD) the Frisii and the related Chauci, Saxons, and Angles inhabited the Continental European coast from the Zuyder Zee to south Jutland. During the Migration Period "new" Frisians (descended from merging of Angles, Saxons, Jutes and Frisii) resettled in the north and the west of the Low Countries.

Scotland was formed into a modern Normanised feudal monarchy by King David I during the 12th century. This period was known for the formation of burghs in the Lowlands areas of Scotland.

The first mention of the Western European region of the Low Countries as a confined territory was by Julius Caesar in his book *De Bello Gallico*, written during his campaign to conquer Gallia on route to invading and colonising Britannia from around 50 B.C. In this book he identifies northern Gaul, roughly north of the river Seine and west of the river Rhine, as the Terra Belgica². The word *belgus* (adj.) is a Roman given name in Latin, comparable to *barbarus* for the Germanii, and meaning ‘an angry fearsome person not to trifle with’. Caesar qualifies the Belgae as *fortissimi*, and similar to the belligerent Germanii people. However, Caesar did manage to subjugate the Belgae and use the conquered territory as a stepping stone for his campaign to eventually colonise Britannia. It is not unlikely that the Roman army employed several ‘Belgae’ tribesmen for its military campaign and that scores of these mercenaries may have settled in Britannia as part of an occupying and governing body and assimilating into a new Romano-British population.

Notwithstanding an occasional invasion, the Romans stayed decidedly away from the Picti and Scoti of the northern territories known as Caledonia, and had built the Hadrian and later the Antonine walls in defence of warmongering and plundering infiltrators from the north. There is very little cause to believe that there was any significant influence of the Belgae on the Scottish Gaelic culture in the north at this time. Romans themselves have been part of the culture of North-Western Europe for centuries and the Roman language Latin has remained indefinitely part of Romano-European civilisation.

Later in time the Romans would refer to the northern part of Belgica as Germania Inferior and to the Batavi people living in that region. This is considered to be the earliest reference to the Low Countries as a separate region or people with a shared Germanic language and culture. Old Dutch as a language (or Old Low Franconian) was spoken as a dialect in the Low Countries during the Early Middle Ages, from around the 5th to the 12th century and with influences of the “new” Frisian language expanded to the territories of Flanders and present day northern France.

The collapse of the Roman British rule towards the end of the 4th century left a large vacuum, that was quickly filled by continuous Germanic invasions into Britannia with Romano-Britons being pushed to the western edges of Britain and escaping across sea to Hibernia (Ireland), Armorica (Brittany) and Gallaecia (Galicia) after numerous Frisian Anglo-Saxon incursions during a period of widespread migrations within Europe. Encouraged by the expansion of the Frankish Kingdom from the south the Frisian and Anglo-Saxon invasion of and settlement in the British Isles during the 6th to 8th centuries decisively changed the culture and language in Britain and from this Anglo-Frisian culture the new Old English civilisation was formed. The North Sea Channel no longer separated Britain from Continental Europe but rather formed a connecting factor going forward. In southern and eastern parts of Scotland Old English, a language very similar to and phonologically resembling to Old Frisian, had become the standard language.

Old Dutch in turn evolved into Middle Dutch around the 12th century. Old Dutch was spoken by the populace that occupied what is now southern Low Countries (or Netherlands), northern Belgium, part of northern France, and parts of the Lower Rhine and Westphalia regions of Germany. The language of the Flemish was therefore Middle Dutch. The inhabitants of northern Dutch provinces,

² Vide Julius Caesar – *Comentarii de Bello Gallico* (58–49 BC); translation by H.J. Edwards in the Loeb Classical Library edition.

including Groningen, Friesland and the coast of North Holland, spoke Old Frisian mutating to Middle Dutch.

A following important event, the Conquest of England by William Duke of Normandy, would dramatically change the Anglo-Saxon world in England³, and later in Scotland too, into a modern Normanised culture and government with Franco-Norman (French) and Latin as prevailing languages replacing Old English in official documents. Regionally Flemish (Middle Dutch) was also introduced. Following the death of the Anglo-Saxon King Edward the Confessor the crown of England was claimed by William. Following his victory at the Battle of Hastings in 1066 he was crowned as King William I in London and the bloody campaign to conquer and Normanise England started. Ultimately the new Anglo-Norman culture would assimilate with the Old English civilisation.

Writers as Geoffrey of Monmouth importantly integrated Norman culture into a new Anglo-Norman civilisation through his widely acclaimed Latin chronicle *Historia regum Britanniae* (The History of the Kings of Britain)⁴. Based on this work Robert Wace wrote his *Roman de Brut* in Norman-French language. Geoffrey de Monmouth is possibly a descendant of Norman-Flemish parents having migrated to Wales. In his work *Historia* Monmouth integrated his earliest writings of the *Prophetiae Merlini* (Prophecies of Merlin) and reshaped the myths of the legendary Merlin and Arthur into Anglo-Norman culture. In this manner Monmouth was mainly responsible for establishing the Arthurian canon in literature and creating the legend of King Arthur. This was followed by another hexameter poem *Vita Merlini* (Life of Merlin) tying the story of Merlin into the life of the legendary Arthur. The later incarnations of the Arthurian legend were greatly influenced by *Merlin* by the French-Norman poet Robert de Boron, who included elements of The Holy Grail in the unfinished work *Percival* by Chrétien de Troye. The book of *Merlin* was also translated into Middle Dutch in the 13th century by the Flemish writer Jacob van Maerlant as *Merlijns boeck* catering for the Dutch speaking Flemish contingent of Normanised Britain and the Low Countries populace. Through their work these writers greatly contributed to the integration and acceptance of Norman culture in the traditional Anglo-Saxon society and added to the chivalric romance in Anglo-Norman literature.

William of Normandy was married to Matilda of Flanders, daughter of the powerful Count Baldwin of Flanders, who at the time was also Regent King of France. This way William ensured the support for his campaign by an important Flemish ally, although Flanders would always maintain a certain neutral position in view of its broad range of parallel political interests. His most important ally was Count Eustace of Boulogne acting as his military commander of a total force of only 8.000 men during the invasion and thereafter. Scores of Flemish noblemen and knights joined the campaign of William and Eustace to Normanise England and from the Domesday Book (1086) it can be determined that large portions of land confiscated from Anglo-Saxon lords were granted to Flemish Normans in return for their valuable services, albeit under feudal tenure of King William who thus maintained de facto control of England⁵.

³ Vide Eljas Oksanen – Flanders and the Anglo-Norman World 1066-1216 (Cambridge University Press, 2012).

⁴ Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain*. Edited and translated by Michael Faletra (2008); John J. Parry and Robert Caldwell, "Geoffrey of Monmouth" in *Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages* (Clarendon Press: Oxford University. 1959).

⁵ Johan Verberckmoes, *Flemish Tenants-in-Chief in Domesday England*. In: Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire. Tome 66 fasc. 4, 1988. Histoire - Geschiedenis. pp. 725-756; Luran Toorians, *Flemish Settlements in Twelfth-Century Scotland*. In: Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire. Tome 74 fasc. 3-4, 1996. Histoire medievale, moderne et contemporaine- Middeleeuwse, moderne en hedendaagse geschiedenis. pp. 659-693.

William died in 1087 and following a short lived reign by his son William Rufus he was succeeded by his younger son Henry I as King of England. He forged dynastical ties with Scotland through his marriage with Matilda of Scotland (christened Edith). She was the daughter of Malcom III of Scotland and Saint Margaret of Scotland, also known as Margaret of Wessex, and was an English princess of the House of Wessex representing the important royal bloodline. Matilda's brother David I would become King of Scotland (1124-1153). As an exile David had spent a number of years in England and became a dependent at the court of his brother-in-law King Henry I. There he was influenced by the Norman and Anglo-French culture of the court. As king he started the relatively peaceful top-down process of the Normanisation of the Scottish government, and the introduction of feudalism through immigrant Anglo-French and Flemish knights. This is known as the "Davidian Revolution", referring to the many changes during his reign as king by way of Normanising government, introducing feudalism, mainly through Norman and Flemish immigration, and the founding of burgh towns and monasteries.

David would witness the son of his niece Empress Matilde (Henry I's daughter) to be crowned as King Henry II of England following a harrowing civil war and become the most powerful English Angevin monarch of the realm. The period that followed produced the closest co-operation between the dynasties of England, Scotland and Flanders, mostly at the expense of France, being the common rival of Angevin and Flemish interests. This rivalry was supported by a formal Anglo-Flemish treaty and payment of substantial money fiefs as reward for military services by the Flemish. Henry II asserted his acquisitive powers and extended his influence over Scotland that would last through the long reign of David's grandson King William the Lion (1165-1214). William was actually not known as "The Lion" during his own lifetime but the name was later attached to him because of his flag or standard, representing a red lion rampant with a forked tail on a yellow background, that went on to become the Royal standard of Scotland⁶. William was known to be the "Lion of Justice". Under the Treaty of Falaise William had accepted Henry as his feudal superior swearing fealty to him, and the church of Scotland too was subjected to that of England. Henry arranged the marriage of William to Ermengarde de Beaumont. She was of direct Anglo-Norman descent from King William I and was accompanied by not few relatives in her retinue.

During this period Anglo-Flemish and Scoto-Flemish dynastic interrelationships intensified. In Scotland settlements and feudalization were extended, new burghs founded, and trade grew aided by a needed clarification of criminal law and widened responsibilities of justices and sheriffs. Especially the new burghs changed the long-term economic and ethnic contours of Scotland through new inhabitants with a different culture and language, pushing the traditional Gaelic culture further back and introducing the new Scottish Lowlands culture. Lallans⁷ became the new Scots language with substantial influence from the southern Low Countries region with Flanders as its main representative⁸. Lallans is derived from the Flemish (Dutch) word *laaglanden* meaning: lowlands (or

⁶ Coincidentally the Royal standard of Scotland is identical to the standard of the Count of Holland at the time, possibly due to family ties. In 1292 the powerful Count of Holland Floris V even claimed the throne of Scotland in the Great Cause, (his great-grandmother Ada being the sister of King William I of Scotland) but he did not receive the expected support from Edward II, King of England.

⁷ Lallans is the original Scots as spoken in southern and eastern Scotland referred to as the Lowlands of Scotland and dates back to the period of migration of peoples from the Low Countries between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries. It is an assimilation of the locally spoken English language and Flemish (Dutch) spoken by the immigrating people from mainly the southern Low Countries.

⁸ Lallans as language is referred to by Robert Burns in his epistle to William Simsonand:
"They took nae pains their speech to balance or rules to gie;

low countries) and *laaglands* meaning: from the lowlands (or from the low countries). In Flemish (Dutch) language the Low Countries is *de Lage Landen* or *de Nederlanden*. Compare *Niederlant* as opposed to *Oberlant*, and *Lowlands* as opposed to *Highlands*, referring to cultural difference rather than geographical description. *Lallans* is nowadays mostly referred to as Old Scottish by linguists and is mostly forgotten as a language denomination⁹.

The Normanisation of Scotland and ensuing Davidian Revolution, was, within a wider European context based on old Carolingian institutions, a major turning point in the history of Scotland and would forever change the face of Scots culture and civilisation, especially in Lowlands country, and created a strong and truly centralized royal government. Many of the present day noble families of Scotland find their roots in the great Norman families, especially from the southern Low Countries (Flanders, Artesia, Picardie), with its ecclesiastical structure and chivalric culture. Flemish noblemen were accompanied by a large retinue of relatives and friends and with the establishment of burghs – a Flemish (Dutch) word for a fortified town – many merchants and artisans settled in their new Scottish home and thus created a new Scottish breed of burgesses.

An example of the many newly created lordships was the name *Freskin*. King William granted lands in Moray to his son, which were already held by *Freskin* at the time of King David. *Freskin* is a Flemish name but also relates to the Frisian roots thereof and he probably belonged to a large group of Flemish settlers from the Low Countries in Scotland acquiring land from the king and bringing the territory more under royal control from their castle strongholds¹⁰.

In essence the newly established burghs became the new towns of Scotland and many of these – it is estimated about fifteen – were founded during the reign of David I. Burghs were kept in royal demesne and ensured an excise on transactions and customs due to the king. Episcopal organisation and parochial system in Scotland were also monopolised by the king to enhance his control over society. The Church in Scotland was rapidly brought into the Norman feudal system and had advanced as far north as St Andrews. The Norman class of Scoto-Flemish barons and knights became Scotland's new aristocracy and formed the nucleus of the landed gentry. Their estates being an important source of income became heritable property. Among later representatives of the landed gentry were well known Norman names as *William le Valeys* (William Wallace) and *Robert de Brus* (Robert Bruce).

Scottish exports were mostly unprocessed raw materials. In support of the hugely important cloth-making industry in especially Flanders – Bruges and Gent – the rearing of sheep and export of large quantities of wool would become the backbone of the medieval economy in Scotland (and England for that matter). The wool trade was the 'jewel of the realm'. To protect the vast economic value of wool exports to Flanders large staples were established in Bruges by Scottish merchants¹¹.

But spak their thoughts in plain, braid lallans like you or me."

⁹ J.F. Bense, *Dictionary of the Low-Dutch Element in the English Vocabulary* (Oxford, 1926-38); David Murison, *The Dutch element in the vocabulary of Scots*, in A.J. Aitken et al. (eds), *Edinburgh Studies in English and Scots* (London, 1971), p. 159-176; Henry Hexham, *A Copious English and Netherduytch Dictionarie* (1648); Reinier Salverda, *Taal & cultuur - Engels is Nederlands, Ons Erfdeel*. Jaargang 46.

¹⁰ Ritchie, *Normans*, p. 233.

¹¹ The staple was later moved by James IV to Veere, near Middelburg in Zeeland. Dynastic ties were close after Mary Stuart of Scotland, daughter of King James I, had married the powerful governor Wolfert van Borselen, Lord of Veere and Stadtholder of Holland, Friesland and Zeeland, and serving as Admiral of the fleet. Vide J. Davidson and A. Gray, *The Scottish Staple at Veere* (London, 1909).

The growth of towns in Scotland, as in Europe, was largely responsible for the medieval economic upturn and formed a new class of wealthy merchants and citizens. It is in this period of post-Normanisation of Scotland that large numbers of Flemish (as part of the Norman immigrants) settled in the south-eastern and eastern regions of Scotland and substantially influenced the local language and culture¹². The period of the late middle ages was a period of consolidation of merchant trade with the Low Countries (Flanders) from the burghs of Scotland with a constant flow of migrating Flemings settling in these growing Scottish towns as merchants and artisans. This migratory process was stimulated by an unsurpassed population growth in Flanders and other southern Low Countries states in combination with periodical flooding disasters and the spread of epidemic diseases.

Another important event substantially influenced the relations between the Low Countries and Scotland in the 16th and 17th centuries. Over time the seventeen provinces that formed the Low Countries or the Burgundian Netherlands had become part of the realm of the Habsburg overlords. Charles V, known as the Holy Roman Emperor and whose domains were to be described as "the empire on which the sun never sets", had forged the Netherlands into one combined and centrally ruled political domain governed from his seat in Brussels (Brabant). Following his abdication he was succeeded by his son Philip II, who also inherited the Kingdom of Spain from his father. The towns of the southern Netherlands, especially in Flanders and Brabant, joined by Holland, Zeeland and Friesland revolted against the Habsburg centralistic rule and the imposed taxations, which policy was strongly supported by the Catholic Church and its inquisition system working against heretics and other offenders of canon law, and started a war of independence – known as the Eighty Year's War – which lasted from 1568 to 1648, in which year the Republic of the United Provinces of the Netherlands was formally recognised as an independent state in the Treaty of Munster¹³. This was also a victory for Protestantism, originally based on Luther's theses and now rapidly spreading in north-western Europe and resulting in the Reformation. However, for the new Republic this was only the beginning of a series of political and military conflicts with the English nation, after the shared Spanish enemy had been defeated, notwithstanding the close dynastic relations between the Scottish Stuart dynasty and the house of Orange.

Following the declaration of independence¹⁴ signed by the provinces of the Netherlands in 1581 all magistrates were freed from their oath of allegiance to Philip II, King of Spain, as Lord of the Netherlands. William I, Prince of Orange, was the leader of the revolt against the Habsburg rulers and appointed Stadtholder of the Netherlands after the Dutch Republic¹⁵ was formed by the States General (Parliament). William I was subsequently declared an outlaw by Philip II and murdered. He was succeeded as Stadtholder by his sons Maurice and thereafter by Frederick Hendrik, who finally brought the revolt to a successful end after eighty years of war and rebellion.

In 1585 the major town port Antwerp was recaptured by Philip II from the rebellious forces and was answered by an effective rigid blockade of the waterways by the north led by the provinces Holland and Zeeland. This in combination with the continuous crushing rule by the Habsburg overlords in the southern provinces was the reason for the country's elite to flee north. This exodus of the majority of its financial, intellectual, and cultural resources indirectly contributed to the later enormous success

¹² Vide R.L. Graeme Ritchie, *The Normans in Scotland* (Edinburgh University Publication, 1954).

¹³ Vide Jonathan I. Israel, *The Dutch Republic, its Rise, Greatness and Fall, 1477-1806*, (1995).

¹⁴ In Dutch *Plakkaat van Verlatinghe* or the Act of Abjuration.

¹⁵ The Republic of Venice may have served as 'best practice'. Vide also Plato's major work on political science titled *Politeia* and thus known in English as *The Republic*.

of the Dutch Republic and its 17th century Golden Age. Thus thousands of wealthy Flemings fled their towns in the south and resettled in the Dutch¹⁶ northern provinces, mainly Holland and Zeeland. Towns and large areas in the vacated of the Southern Habsburg Netherlands had eventually been lost to France, having formed a political alliance with the Dutch Republic against Spain for this territorial gain. It is said that the fall of Antwerp pushed the southern Netherlands back two hundred years into the middle ages in contrast to the huge growth in wealth in the north. Up to half of the original population of the southern provinces emigrated in waves to the north as well as to other protestant countries including England and Scotland shifting the economic and cultural centre of gravity to the Republic¹⁷.

The 17th century life in The Hague, the residence of the Orange Stadtholders of the Republic, was marked by a wide presence of Stuart royals¹⁸. It all started with the marriage of Elisabeth Stuart¹⁹, Princess of England and eldest daughter of King James VI/I of Scotland and England, to Frederick V, Elector Palatine and briefly King of Bohemia, in 1613. The marriage took place in London and was a grand occasion but had earlier been postponed due to the sad and untimely death of her brother Henry Frederick, the Prince of Wales. He apparently died of typhoid, it is said after drinking contaminated water to lessen his thirst after an exhausting game of tennis with a party of friends and relatives, who had joined together in London in preparation of the royal marriage. The royal company included Frederick Henry, Frederick V's uncle and future Stadtholder and half-brother of the ruling Stadtholder Maurice, Prince of Orange. Shortly before the marriage ceremony Frederick V was inducted into the Most Noble Order of the Garter by his father-law-law King James I/VI. This is considered the highest chivalric order of the realm and demonstrated the political importance of this dynastic royal marriage. On the way home to the Palatine Frederick and Elisabeth travelled to The Hague, residence of the house of Orange in the Republic, to visit Maurice, Prince of Orange before travelling on to Heidelberg in the Palatinate. Frederick's mother was the eldest daughter of William I, Prince of Orange, who is recognised as the founding father of the Netherlands. Frederick was crowned King of Bohemia following the Protestant rebellion triggering the Thirty Year War. However, he was defeated by Catholic opposition after only one year, also due to the lack of political support from his father-in-law James I/VI, who feared Habsburg opposition to his intervention and renewal of unwelcome hostilities with Spain. After his defeat in Bohemia Frederick and Elisabeth were forced to flee the Palatine lands too into exile. The royal couple was invited by Frederick's uncle Maurice, Prince of Orange, to stay at his residential court in The Hague.

The Stuart princess was now a queen in exile and often referred to as the Winter Queen due to her husband's short reign in Bohemia. Elisabeth arrived in The Hague in 1621 and would remain there for almost the rest of her life during which time she experienced the execution of her king brother in London, the exile of her family from Britain to the continent, and finally the restoration to the crown of her nephew as king in 1660. She died shortly thereafter in 1661 having returned to England. Elisabeth had a dominant character, quite like her grandmother Mary Queen of Scots, and she had great influence on expanding royal court life in The Hague. She arranged for the marriage of her maid

¹⁶ The word *Dutch*, both noun and adjective, became synonymous with denominations of the Northern Netherlands, whereas *Flemish* identified the southern Netherlands. The common language was Dutch.

¹⁷ Vide Gustaaf Asaert, 1585. *De val van Antwerpen en de uittocht van Vlamingen en Brabanders*, (2004).

¹⁸ Vide Pieter Geyl – *Orange and Stuart: 1641-1672*, Charles Scribner's Sons (New York, 1969).

¹⁹ Elizabeth was born at Falkland Palace, Fife, in Scotland in 1596. With the demise of the Stuart dynasty in 1714, her grandson succeeded to the British throne as George I of Great Britain.

of honour Amalia van Solms-Braunfels to Stadtholder Frederick Henry, Prince of Orange. Amalia together with Elisabeth became the prime movers and arrangers of several royal marriages, including that of Amalia and Frederick Henry's son William II to Mary, Princess Royal of England and Scotland, the daughter of King Charles I. Both women were described as intelligent, arrogant, ambitious and were very much alike. They were known for their courtly rivalry although Elisabeth had acted as tutor and served as Amalia's example to follow²⁰. In Stuart tradition Elisabeth showed especially great interest in various pastime games, such as pall mall and tennis, and is often depicted in popular winter landscape paintings as an onlooker of various joyous pastimes on ice, such as skating and the game of colf²¹, the favoured pastime of the new rich Dutch elite class. On the occasion of the wedding of Frederick Henry and Amalia she arranged for a *liber amicorum* to be made by the artist and painter Adrian van de Venne²², allegorically depicting various pastime games and scenes of day to day life in Holland. Elisabeth presented this album to Frederick Henry as the symbolic leader of the Dutch revolt and fighter for the Protestant cause. After the sudden death of their son William II in 1650 Amalia became the main guardian of her grandson William III, the only son of William II and Mary Stuart, Princess Royal, born just a few weeks after his father's untimely demise. Amalia kept this position as guardian until 1672, in which year William III was appointed Stadtholder of the Republic after a stadtholderless period of twenty two years following the death of his father. He was to be the saviour of the Republic as it was attacked simultaneously by the powerful English and French nations. The Dutch nation was, senseless, hopeless, and saviourless (*redeloos, radeloos, reddeloos*). However, he managed to prevail through great political skill and military acumen. Following the execution of his father-in-law King Charles I, William II, Prince of Orange and Stadtholder of the republic worked ambitiously for the restoration of his exiled brother-in-law Charles II to the throne of England. This effort would be continued in The Hague by his widowed sister Mary, Princess Royal, together with his aunt Elisabeth Stuart, the Winter Queen. Both regularly demonstrated their hospitality to both brothers Charles II and James II, notwithstanding the political entanglements the States General of the Republic and British Parliament lead by the republican ruler Oliver Cromwell. England and the Dutch Republic went to war at sea in – the First Anglo-Dutch War (1652-1654) – as a result of the introduction of the Navigation Act, that caused substantial damage to Dutch naval interests and merchant trading. It limited Dutch trade with any of the English colonies in America unless the shipping was done in "English bottoms". Traditionally the Dutch and British naval fleets had closely cooperated in successfully fighting off the Spanish Armada as their joint enemy. However, following the treaty of Munster formerly allied nations started rushing for empire and chasing rich former Portuguese and Spanish colonial possessions. The largest fleet of mercantile ships had been built by the Dutch gaining large influence over British trade by using a free trade system. This created competitive disparity on top of the Dutch benefitting from the internal division and turmoil of the English Civil War. However, overconfidence and arrogance caused deficiencies in the Dutch navy at a time when the Commonwealth navy constantly improved with the support of a stable financial basis. General Monck stated: "The Dutch have too much trade, and the English are resolved to take it from them", and war broke out. A useless conflict whereby two Protestant nations

²⁰ Nadine Akkerman – *Courtly Rivals in The Hague* (Van Spik/Rekafa Publishers bv, 2014).

²¹ E.g. Hendrick Avercamp – Winter landscape with skaters near the town of Kampen (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam).

²² Album by Adriaen van de Venne, in the British Museum (Registration number 1978.1624.42.1 to 102). Unfortunately the accompanying text, possibly by the famous writer Jacob Cats, is missing. Van de Venne often worked as illustrator of the works of Cats with proverbs and sayings.

were to exhaust themselves. However, The Hague had become a Royalist bulwark with Orangist support of the Stuart restoration. To no avail Cromwell had wished the Republic to join the Commonwealth as a member state and to crush the Royalist movement there. A peace treaty was signed on the condition, however, that William III of the House of Orange was secluded from becoming Stadtholder of the Republic.

The Restoration had finally succeeded in 1660 and this was officially celebrated in The Hague with an impressive banquet offered by the States General with both Charles II and his brother James II, Duke of York, in attendance and witnessed by Mary, Princess Royal, and her young son William III, Prince of Orange. Little did William know at the time that he would knock his future father-in-law James II off his royal throne as King of England and Scotland and together with his wife Mary II Stuart succeed him as joint King and Queen William and Mary. Before the royal company boarded ship and was waived off from Scheveningen Charles and James had been invited by the State of Holland and Amsterdam, the most powerful political tandem of the Republic for an official reception dinner. Here Charles was presented with a large number of important works of art, known as the "Dutch Gift", as a token of goodwill towards the Royal court and British nation. The Dutch East India Company gifted a yacht named the "Mary". It proved, however, to be of no avail as it eventually turned out. The commercial rivalry continued and subsequently caused the Second Dutch-Anglo War (1665-1667), ironically occurring after the restoration of Charles II to the throne of England with substantial Orangist support. The king naturally sought to remain on friendly terms with the Republic, that had supported him politically, militarily and financially with the house of Orange lending large sums of money to Charles I before during the English Civil War. Charles II had also been appointed guardian of the under-aged William III, Prince of Orange, after his sister Mary's death in 1661. Unfortunately Charles II was easily influenced by his warmongering brother James II to declare war at sea. Again control over the seas and trade routes was at stake but the Dutch were still able to continue their dominance of commercial world trade taking advantage of a nation having been economically damaged by the Great Fire of London and the Great Plague disasters. A second peace treaty was signed in which England was allowed to keep the captured New Netherlands and New Amsterdam in America (renamed New York after James II, Duke of York). But Britain and its monarch still felt humiliated and teamed up with France and Louis XIV to finally defeat the Dutch Republic in the Third Anglo-Dutch War (1672-1674). William III of Orange was now called upon to save the nation and was appointed Stadtholder. In the aftermath of war and ensuing peace Charles II arranged for Mary II, the daughter of his brother James II, to marry William III, Prince of Orange, in 1677. Unwittingly this action was eventually a step up to the Glorious Revolution in 1688, whereby King James II, who had succeeded his childless brother Charles II, was deposed as king by William and Mary due to his unwanted papal tendencies. William had crossed the Channel with a large invasion fleet and the Revolution blocked any further attempts by Britain to subdue the Dutch Republic by military force as in the previous three Anglo-Dutch Wars in the second half of the 17th century.

In the 16-17th century period a large number of Scots made their way to the northern Netherlands. Dynastic relation between the Stuart and Orange houses caused many Scots to settle in Holland. The Scottish Reformation forged the new national Kirk and especially during the reign of James VI bonded closely with the Dutch Protestants, theologically shaped by Calvin and inspired by Luther.

Domestically Erasmus of Rotterdam, the influential Dutch Renaissance humanist, social critic, teacher, and theologian was the most prominent factor of the Protestant Reformation. Scores of Scottish merchants settled in major trading centres in support of economically valuable exports of goods (e.g. wool), especially in Rotterdam, where a Scots Kirk was founded too. During the Eighty

Years' War several foreign regiments were hired to build up an army in order to sustain the Dutch war of independence. These included Scottish military who eventually formed the Scots Brigade²³. Known as the Scotch Dutch many amalgamated into the Dutch society. Following the strong political, commercial, military and cultural links with the Netherlands, serving as pivotal link between Scotland and the continental European intellectual culture, hundreds of Scottish students attended college at the University of Leiden²⁴, where they were educated in modern renaissance sciences, such as in law and medicine. Leiden was a highly regarded university in 17th century Europe with the presence of many pristine scholars.

The many Scots in the Republic during this period of the 16-18th centuries experienced Dutch/Flemish day to day life and shared in the local customs. At the same time the Republic continued its commercial trading activities with the Scottish burghs.

Curling

The game of curling or the curling bonspiel is considered a traditional Scottish game and certainly the game as it today played worldwide has its origins in Scotland²⁵. However, whether there has been an influence from the Low Countries on the early development of the game of curling itself has been the subject of lengthy discussions by historians. A possible influence has only been hinted at and mostly denied by Scottish historians not recognising the Lallans element in Old Scottish history. In the words curling and bonspiel there may be sufficient etymologic proof that there definitely is a Flemish connection. Traditionally the game of curling itself was referred to as a bonspiel played outdoors on ice. Today curling is mostly an indoor game and the word bonspiel is almost obsolete.

English dictionaries state that the game of curling is played with stones on ice (1610s) and that a description of a similar game is attested from Flanders (c. 1600). The word *curl* as a verb is derived from the metathesis of *crulle* (c. 1300), from Old English or Middle Dutch *krul*. In present day Dutch language *krullen* means to curl (v.), i.e. to cause an object to make a curling movement or motion. The word *bonspiel* (n.) consists of two elements, the word *spiel* and the prefix *bon*. The word *spiel* as a noun is related to Old English or Middle Dutch *spilian* (v.) meaning to play, and *spil* or *spel* (n.) meaning a game. Curling historians in Scotland have discussed the origins of the word or prefix *bon* in combination with *bonspiel* in length but without satisfactory result. However, it is not a speculative suggestion at all that *bon* is related to Old English or Middle Dutch *bolle* (n.) meaning a round (wooden) object. Compare to present day English *bowl* (n.) and Dutch *bol* (n.), used in games. In Germanic language the letter *n* is added at the end of a word to create verbs and plurals. Therefore to play with a *bol* is *bollen* and the plural of *bol* is also *bollen*. In Dutch dialects the middle letters may dissolve in the pronunciation. Therefore *bollen* becomes *bol'n* or *bo'n*. The traditional Scottish curling word *bonspiel* is therefore possibly related to the Dutch *bollen spel* and *curling bonspiel* to *krul bollen spel*. Interestingly, today het krulbol spel is still played in the Netherlands and Belgium (area of Zeeuws-Vlaanderen) and is considered an old Flemish folk game, even protected by UNESCO as part of the national cultural heritage²⁶.

²³ *The Papers illustrating the History of the Scots Brigade in the Netherlands* and *The Journal of Thomas Cunningham of Campvere*, published by the Scottish History Society, 1899-1901, 1927.

²⁴ Leiden University is the oldest university in the Netherlands and was founded in 1575 by William, Prince of Orange, leader of the Dutch Revolt in the Eighty Years' War as a reward for the heroic resistance of the citizens of Leiden against the siege of the city.

²⁵ Vide John Kerr, *History of Curling* (1890, Edinburgh); David B. Smith, *Curling: an illustrated history* (1981, Edinburgh)

²⁶ Bert van Gelder, *Een geschiedenis van het krulbollen*, deel 1,2 & 3 (2011/2012)

Other than the linguistic evidence there is more proof that the game of curling has been influenced by Flemish (Dutch) elements. In the medieval era in the Low Countries various ball games were played with wooden objects according to various archaeological finds. Like most ballgames and stick- and ballgames having been played since the middle ages the exact origins of the games is lost in the mist of time due to the lack of exact documentary evidence. Early evidence is usually found in edicts banning certain games being played in the streets inside the town walls. Or in iconographic images painted in religious books of hours. Early games are also described in allegoric poems. In 16-17th century art of the Low Countries there are multiple paintings and drawings with illustrations of the *bolspel*, whereby wooden bowls are rolled on land towards a stake as target. David Teniers specialized in village scenes with peasants playing pastime games as throwing a bowl towards a stake or skittles. These wooden bowls were not completely round but had flattened sides. As one side was more rounded than the other this caused the disc to make a curving or curling movement towards the stake. Hence the word or expression of *krul bollen*, i.e. to make the bowl curl. In an archaeological cesspit in Middelburg, Zeeland, an almost perfect set of six wooden (elm) *bollen* were found, which can be dated to c.1400²⁷. Note that square holes have been made on the flat side of the *bol* and it is a not too speculative suggestion that this is where a stickhandle was inserted. These holes are now inserted with dice cubes giving each of the *bollen* an identification number. Peasant games were usually played as a pastime outdoors on land during summertime. Games were mostly played by children²⁸, as their parent labourers were busy making a living, or the elderly. However, during winter outdoor economic life usually came to a standstill with land and waterways becoming frozen. Many games played on land were taken to the ice and adapted for the wintery circumstances. Winters in Northern Europe during the Middle Ages were particularly cold and peaking during the so called Little Ice Age²⁹. In this manner the *bolspel*, and similarly the game of colf, was taken to the ice and played as a winter pastime. The wooden *bol* was laid on its flat side and a wooden stickhandle attached to aid the throwing over ice. Of particular interest is amongst others a painting by Pieter Brueghel The Older, *Hunters in the snow* (1565) clearly depicting this *bol* game being played on ice. A much clearer evidence is provided by a remarkable engraving by Robert de Baudous (after a drawing by Cornelis Claesz. van Wieringen), *Winter* (1591-1618), part of a series of four gravures depicting seasonal life on the water³⁰. Here we can clearly see a group of men playing a game very similar to the curling *bonspiel* as it is played in Scotland. It is assumed that here a flat-sided wooden *bol* and wooden stickhandle are used. The players are using a number of bowl discs (*bollen*) and also the *besom* (*bezem* in Dutch) is used as an implement to clean the *bol* and remove snow from the marked rink. Although somewhat rigidly drawn these illustrated *bollen* very much resemble the *bollen* of the archaeological find in Middleburg.

The word curling itself in Scotland only appears in writing in early 17th century. Before reference was made to stones. The game was played whenever there was ice in winter on frozen lochs and rivers. Even ponds or rinks were artificially made in towns for the *bonspiel* when all work stopped. The history of the game in Scotland has been extensively described by Rev. John Kerr and his monumental work *History of Curling* published in 1890 and is today still considered the standard history of the roaring game of curling. David Smith as an authority of the game followed up on Kerr's

²⁷ Archeologic depot SCEZ

²⁸ Johanna W.P. Drost, *Het Nederlands kinderspel vóór de zeventiende eeuw*, proefschrift Rijksuniversiteit Leiden (1914).

²⁹ Vide Brian M.Fagan, *The Little Ice Age: How Climate Made History, 1300–1850* (2001)

³⁰ A.M. Meijerman, *Hollandse Winters* (Hilversum, 1967)

work with his book *Curling, an illustrated history* (1981), that also includes a reprint of Captain John Macnair's earlier rare book *Curling, Ye Glorious Pastime* (1882) based on *An Account of the Game of Curling*, by Rev. James Ramsay, a member of the Duddington Curling Society, Edinburgh (1811). In 1638 the poem *The Muses Threnodie* was published in Edinburgh by Henry Adamson as an in memoriam. In the possessions of the deceased are listed "His allay of bowles and curling stones", and his love for archery, golf and curling are described. From this it may be concluded that curling was a popular pastime in the early 17th century. In earlier documents the throwing of stones on ice is recorded but not the game of "curling" as such although it is probable that the same game is intended. However, these writings do not answer the question whether the game of curling was introduced to Scotland from the continent, in particular from Flanders, but only its earliest mention. One can state that at the time of Ramsay's writing the game of curling was only known to be played in Scotland and from here gradually exported to other countries, e.g. England and Canada. No similar game existed elsewhere although the terminology used in the game is all Dutch (or Germanic). We may be looking in the wrong direction. Ramsay may have been correct in stating that the game of curling was introduced into Scotland by the Flemings in the 15-16th century or even earlier. However, Kerr is probably also correct in stating that the Scots have been throwing stones on ice for ages long before the first Flemings set foot on the shores of Scotland but he is incorrect in concluding that the origins of the game of curling are to be left in the midst of a haze of antiquity. It must be noted, that during the period of 12-14th large scores of Flemings had settled in Scotland bringing with them their own culture and language and forging a new Lallans way of life in the Lowlands and burghs of Scotland. During the period of 16-17th century traffic between Scotland and the seceded Protestant Republic of the northern Netherlands provinces intensified. It is very likely that in the period before c.1500 the game of bollen was introduced to by Flemish immigrants to Scotland³¹. The game was played on land but the implements could also be used on ice. However, the native Scots had their own game on ice played with stones. These stones, also named kuting stones, before c.1500 were quite crude and did not have a particularly round form³². On the contrary. It is noteworthy that in the list of possessions of the deceased Master James Gall both [wooden] bowles and curling stones are both mentioned meaning that both forms existed simultaneously in Scotland. Taking a close look at the form of the wooden "Middelburg bollen" one can clearly detect the round disc form as an Edam cheese and that one side is more rounded than the other causing the *bol* to curve when rolled over the ground towards the target. Furthermore one flat side of the *bol* seems to be convex and the other concave, the latter facilitating the *bol* to smoothly slide over the ice if used on ice. Also note the square holes on the flat side of the *bol* facilitating the fitting of a wooden stickhandle.

It is therefore a reasonable to conclude that the *bollenspel* – played both on land and on ice – was introduced by immigrant Flemings prior to c.1500 and that this game was merged with the native game of throwing stones on ice after c.1500 to become the *bonspiel* we know today as integrated in Scottish culture. The crude stones became rounded to create a better and predictable bounce off other stones. The word *krul* was later added to *bollenspel* so as to differentiate from other similar

³¹ In his book David B. Smith (p. 7) refers to a comment made by B. Wander of the Nederlands Openlucht Museum in Arnhem that the engraving by Van Wieringen indeed shows a variant of a game *krulbolspel* and that the Flemish people may played their favourite game on ice. He concludes that there may have been some association between *krulbol* and curling but that the matter of origin and eventual adoption of curling is still obscure.

³² Compare the "Sterling Stones" in Kerr, *History of Curling*.

games played with the *bol*, such as pin bowles (skittles). In the assimilation phase of the game in Scotland the word *krul* or *krullen* was converted to curling in the 16-17th century and added to *bonspiel*.

*Frae northern mountains cald with snaw,
Where whistling winds incessant blow,
In time now when the curling stane
Slides murmuring o'er the icy plain.*

Allan Ramsay (Scottish poet), *Epistle to Robert Yarde of Devonshire*.

Caitchpule or Tennis³³

The ball is linked to many popular pastimes of today of which the history goes back into ancient history. Homer can be accredited with one of the earliest mentions in literature of a handball game played by young maidens in his epic poem *Iliad*. In the north-western region of continental Europe the game may have started as a medieval chivalry tournament. *Caitchpule* (Scots) or *caets spel* in Flemish (Dutch)³⁴ is originally played as a handball game and is considered to be a forerunner of the modern game of tennis³⁵. In England the game was referred to as tennis³⁶ (or tinnis) but in Scotland the now extinct word *caitchpule* was used to denominate the game.

David Murison, the renowned editor of *The Scottish National Dictionary*, in his contribution *The Dutch Element in the Vocabulary of Scots* in the *Edinburgh Studies in English and Scots* (edited by A.J. Aitken e.a., London, 1971) stated in the chapter Games: 'A sure indication of the close and cordial relations existing between the Netherlands and Scotland appears in the various names for games which the Scots borrowed chiefly in the 15th century and in one instance at least appropriated for good.

Fifteenth century: cache, and later the combination *cachepell*, tennis, are Middle Flemish *caetse(-spel)*; *golf* (Middle Dutch *kolf*, a club, *kolven*, a game with clubs), despite the disbelief of some Scottish devotees, is too well illustrated in Flemish painting to be anything else than of Dutch origin, however it may have been developed or modified in its adopted country; *kylis*, ninepins (Middle Dutch *keghel*, *keyl*, a ninepin), the word still being used for a New Year-day game resembling skittles at Kirkcaldy; *speeler*, an acrobat (Middle Dutch *speler*, a player, actor, juggler), suggests that the common Scottish word *spiel*, to climb up a rope, wall, etc., is originally Dutch *spelen*, to play, perform tricks, applied specifically to gymnasts, trapeze artists and the like.

Sixteenth century: The word spiel also occurs in *bonspiel*, a match, contest, now specifically at curling, the first element being obscure³⁷; *dool*, a goal, may also possibly be from Dutch *doel*, a target, but phonological considerations point rather to Low German *dole*.'

³³ Robin K. Bargmann, *Serendipity of Early Golf*, Chapter 5 (2010)

³⁴ Compare *cachier* (Picardie)

³⁵ Cees de Bondt, *Heeft yemant lust met bal, of reket te spelen...? Tennis in Nederland tussen 1500 en 1899* (1993).

³⁶ The word tennis (in a 1400 document spelt as *tenetz*) is derived from the French imperative *tenir*. 'Tenez' was used as a warning required by the rules of medieval tennis before serving the ball. In the chapter *Ludus Pilae Palmariae* of the Latin-French schoolbook *Commentarius Puerorum* (1580) by Maturin Cordier the server calls: "Tenez, j'y mets" (Latin *ecco mitto*).

³⁷ In this article it is explained that *bon* is related to Dutch *bollen*.

The game of handball was called palm play by the French – *jeu de paume* (compare Latin *pila palmaria*) and was extremely popular being played by Burgundian nobility and commoners alike. In numerous wonderfully illustrated 14-15th century books of hours this game of hand tennis, or fives as it is referred to in Britain today³⁸, is often represented as a pastime activity. The origins of the early game of caitchpule, or Dutch *caets spel* or *teneys*, can be traced back to Renaissance Italy (mostly referred to as *giuoco della palla* or *pallacorda*), France and the Burgundian Netherlands. Many of today's expressions in tennis are derived from either French or Dutch language. An important number in medieval times was 60 used as a standard for measurement as it was easily devisable (by 2,3 and 5) and therefore used as a standard for time, distance, weight, etc. The four points needed to win a game of *caets* were denominated as 15, 30, 45 and 60³⁹, with two points difference being needed to win a game – *deux à jouer* or *duce*.

The game was originally an outdoor game played on the open field or in the streets. The clergy played the game in enclosed courtyards of the cloister or palace. A rooftop was used for the first serving of the ball. Traditionally the game was played between two opposing teams of three players. Courtplay was limited to single or double players and also a cord or net was introduced for the ball to be played over. Ball games, like *caets* and *colf*, became hugely popular games being played in the densely populated towns and streets and were regularly banned. The game of *caets* had become an essential part of everyday social life. It is extensively described in the script *Dat Caetspel Ghemoraliseert* by Jan van den Berghe (Brugge, 1431), although the book itself is intended as an allegoric form of literature and uses the game of *caets* to describe the prevailing juridical system as comparison⁴⁰. The game described by Van den Berghe was the original outdoors field handball game. Pieter van Afferden, senior master at the Great Latin School in Amsterdam, used day-to-day expressions of the games of *caets* and *colf* in his Latin exercise book *Tyrocinium linuae Latinae* of 1552. E.g. in chapter 23 of the *Tyrocinium* is stated under *de Pila palmaria*:
Pila palmaria / eenen caetsbal (a caitch or tennis ball).

Reticulum, instrumentum quo pila percutitur, factum ex fidibus crassiusculis / een raket (a racket).
Sphaeristerium / een caetsbaan (a caitchpule or tennis court).

Mittere pilam in tectum / den bal opt dak smijte (to hit the ball on the roof).

The racket is now introduced as a play instrument although the game here is still played outside. The *Tyrocinnium* underlines the importance of these two only mentioned games, *caets* and *colf* in the everyday life in the 16th century in the northern Low Countries.

Though essentially a continental European game in its origin tennis became domesticated at the royal courts in Scotland and England. The game had moved more and more to enclosed spaces surrounded by walls and at the same time rackets were introduced replacing the hand-ball glove to facilitate the faster return of the ball, which were also made larger, harder and heavier. These first short-handled rackets – *raket* in Dutch or *racchetta* in Italian – were made of bent ash-wood and stringed with roped sheep gut⁴¹. Racket tennis in Europe and Britain mostly replaced the handball game and was a game of aristocrats and royalty due to the exclusivity of available space and buildings. An enclosed tennis court required large dimensions and was usually attached to palace

³⁸ Vide Joseph Strutt, *The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England* (1801), Chapter III Games of the Ball.

³⁹ As an abbreviation the 5 in 45 was dropped to 40, and 60 is now replaced by 'game'.

⁴⁰ Vide the dissertation (Dutch Literature) by J.A. Roeter Frederikse, on the subject of *Dat Kaetspel Ghemoraliseert*, University of Utrecht, 1915).

⁴¹ In English this was called 'catgut', translated from Middle Dutch *caetsdarm*, gut used to string the *caets* racket.

buildings or otherwise special tennis houses were built, with or without roof. In Scotland the construction of an open caitchpule (or tennis court) at Falkland Palace began in 1539 and still stands today as the earliest court in Britain⁴². In its heyday the game in Scotland was not called tennis but rather caitche, a term originating from the Flemish (Dutch) word *caets*. Most of what is known about tennis in Scotland relates to the Stuart period although there is mention of reference (but no documentary evidence) to the game as early as during the reign of Alexander III in the 13th century, stating the game was a favourite game of kings and courtiers during his reign⁴³. Dynastic ties with the royal court in France are the main reason for the games popularity amongst Scottish nobility. During the Stuart period there is mention of caitche or tennis being played in Perth, Stirling, St Andrews and Edinburgh. In his personal diary the Scottish reformer James Melville, who attended St. Mary's College at St Andrews University, made the following reference to the game: "I learnit and usit sa mikle bathe of the hand and racket catche as might serve for moderate and halesome exercise of the body" in 1574. The games popular following is attested to as a metaphor by the poet William Dunbar:

*Sa many rakkētis, sa many ketch-pillaris,
Sic ballis, sic nakkētis, and sic tuttilvaris.*

Caitchepule (or tennis) had been played over a long period of time from the earliest mention (c.1400) in Gower's ballad to Henry IV:

*Of the tennis to winne or lese a chase
May no life wete or that the ball be ronne,*

and it remained a highly popular game at the royal courts of Scotland and England until the Civil War of the 17th century from which the game never fully recovered until the introduction of a new form of lawn tennis in 1874 by Major Winfield. The old game of tennis played inside walled courts has sporadically continued to this day and is known as 'real tennis'.

It is worth mentioning here that most balls used for caitchpule or tennis and golf were imported from the Low Countries, where the town of Goirle was known for its ball manufacturing capabilities. The import of balls had grown to such an extent that an injunction was made to stop the outflow of capital by James VI/I. This encouraged the manufacturing of golf balls locally in Scotland by immigrant families centred in Musselburgh. Well known golf ball makers in the 18th century were members of the Gourlay family. The family name Gourlay may have a connection to the town of Goirle; or alternatively to the Norman family des Gourelais migrating to Scotland during the reign of William the Lion⁴⁴. The earliest known balls are leather covered and stuffed with hair/wool and feathers or fibres of the flax plant. The modern day golf ball shifted away from the featherie first to the gutta percha (rubber) ball in c1850, and then to the industrial rubber-core ball in c1900.

The town plan of Edinburgh by James Gordon of 1647 shows the tennis court just outside the gates but inside the walls of the Holyrood House compound. Interestingly the map also shows an alley of trees, a possible indication that the game of pall mall was played here. Just outside the walls a square

⁴² Vide L. St John Butler and P.J. Wordie, *The Royal Game* (1989).

⁴³ Robert MacGregor, *Tennis in Britain* (1878) and *Pastimes and Players* (1881).

⁴⁴ Thomas Gray, *Scalachronica* (c.1357). After William's release from captivity in Falaise (Normandy) in 1175 several younger sons of well-disposed lords accompanied him to Scotland and were given lands of other men who were disaffected. Such were [the younger sons] "des Baillolys, de Brus, de Soulis, et de Mowbray, et les Synclers, les Hayes, les Giffardis, les Ramesayis et Laundels; les Bisseyis, les Berkleys, les Walenges, les Boysis, lez Montgommeries, lez Vauz, les Colewyles, les Frysers, les Grames, les Gourlays et plusours autres" (vide R.L. Graeme Ritchie, *The Normans in Scotland* note 4 page 377).

building construction is visible that may have been used as an artificial ice rink for skating and curling in winter.

The Royal Courts of Renaissance Italy⁴⁵ had earlier taken to the game of pallacorda (or tennis) and from there it spread to France, Netherlands, England and Scotland. The Italian writer Antonio Scaino published his *Trattato del giuoco della palla* in Venice in 1555, the first treatise on tennis, in which he mentions the forms of tennis then played. Of particular importance was Catherine de' Medici from Florence, who married Henri II King of France and was mother of three sons who became kings of France: Francis II, Charles IX and Henri III. Catherine was thrown into the political arena after her husband's untimely death at a jousting tournament and she acted as regent for her first two sons and advisor to her last surviving third son. During her reign as queen mother she bolstered royal prestige and cultural life in Europe and was renowned for her lavish court style and way of entertainment. Tennis (*pallacorda* or *jeu de paume*) and pall mall (*pallamaglia* or *jeu de mail*) were favoured games at the royal courts of Italy and through her influence became very fashionable at the royal courts over Europe and were played according to common standard rules set by the French court at the Louvre. In this manner the fashion of the royal games of tennis and pall mall was introduced at the Royal court of Scotland, although the earlier games of caitchpule as well as golf had already become rooted in Scottish society.

Mary Queen of Scots was to marry Francis II, dauphin and son of Henri II King of France and Catherine de' Medici, to become Queen consort of France. Mary Queen of Scots was the only surviving legitimate child of James V of Scotland and was only six days old when she became queen. Her mother Marie de Guise arranged for a dynastic marriage with the young Dauphin of France, who ascended to the throne as Francis II but died a year later. Mary had spent most of her childhood in France and was queen consort until Francis' untimely death. She returned to her home country Scotland, that had been ruled by regents in her absence since the death of her father James V, to reign as Mary Queen of Scots. She arrived in 1561 and was only 18 years of age. Her life and reign were unhappy, firstly marrying her cousin Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley, and after his murder remarrying James Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell. She was eventually forced to abdicate in favour of her one year old son James VI in 1567 and fled into exile in England seeking the protection of Queen Elisabeth, her first cousin. However, she would remain a threat to Protestant England as the Catholic movement in England considered her the legitimate sovereign and she was finally sentenced to death for treason and beheaded.

Golf (notes not yet completed)

Apparently Mary was a keen sportswoman having been raised and educated at the Royal court of France, where she had learnt to play the royal games of tennis and pall mall. Tennis (or caitchpule) was quite known in Scotland, but pall mall was not a popular game being confined to the royal courts in Scotland. The game is not very well documented in Scotland as it is in England. But we do know that Mary was accused of playing at "pall mall and golf" at her Seaton Palace refuge outside Edinburgh just a day after her murdered husband's funeral. Contrary to modern day Scottish legend it is, however, not very likely that Mary actually played golf at all but rather that golf is mentioned in this instance as being a game resembling the more unfamiliar game of pall mall. There is no other mention known that Mary was indeed known to be regularly playing at golf. The royal games of

⁴⁵ Vide Cees de Bondt, *Royal Tennis in Renaissance Italy* (2006).

tennis and pall mall could be played within the safe confinement of the palace walls as opposed to golf being played in the open field on links land.

The enthusiasm for 'gentlemanly' sports is also seen in a personal letter (as a Royal Gift), written by Mary's son James VI, who was also to become King James I of England, thus uniting both crowns of Scotland and England in 1603. He wrote his *Basilikon Doron*⁴⁶ (1599) in the form of a private letter as educational advice for his young son Henry Frederick, Prince of Wales: "But the exercises that I would have you to use (although but moderately, not making a craft of them) are running, leaping, wrestling, fencing, dancing, and playing at the caitch or tennise, archery, palle maille, and such like other faire and pleasant field games." Here James VI shows his delight in honourable games and their educational value⁴⁷. Unfortunately Henry Frederick did die of an illness after a match of tennis. His second son Charles I and grandsons Charles II and James II, and great grandson William III, Prince of Orange, were known to be enthusiast tennis players keeping up the Stuart tradition. William had the beautiful Hampton Court Palace tennis court, originally built for Henry VIII, reconstructed as it stands still today.

Although no direct evidence has been provided yet there is sufficient reason to believe that James also did play golf himself and that golf was played in his entourage by courtiers. His son Henry Frederick, Prince of Wales, has been described by a visiting French diplomat in London to be playing a game very much resembling pall mall. This was certainly golf and it is therefore remarkable that James does not mention golf as one of the healthy exercises to be undertaken by his young son and heir. At least not in the *Basilikon Doron* he republished in London after his arrival as king of England. Possibly he felt that introducing golf as a royal game in England would be too Scottish and possibly politically incorrect or not royal etiquette. However, with James' ascension to the throne in London he did move his royal court from Edinburgh to London and with it a large retinue of Scottish noblemen and gentleman merchants. In this manner the Scottish game of golf was introduced to England and instituted at Blackheath in London as the earliest form being played in a golfing society. London had become the centre of merchant trade strengthened by the arrival of James VI to the Royal court in London. The concentration of merchant trade in London, organised as The Company of Merchant Adventurers of London having links to the peculiarly successful staple-market economy of the Republic (Amsterdam Entrepôt – meaning the stockpiling and redistribution of high volume and low margin commodities through an exchange mechanism) and to the business conducted by the Dutch East India Company, caused many Dutch merchants to establish their business in London as well as in other surrounding trade centres including Scotland. During this Dutch Golden Age period the game of colf had become the favoured game of the new class of hugely wealthy merchant citizens played on ice during wintertime as illustrated in the scores of Dutch artists paintings. This way the Dutch game of colf and the Scottish game of golf touched one another in London⁴⁸ as it had in the burghs in Scotland before. In this manner golf in Scotland and colf in the Republic adapted to and adopted from one another. Both in the Republic and in Scotland, including the Scottish enclaves in London, the games of colf and golf had become the favoured game of a new class of wealthy citizens, gentlemen and burgesses.

⁴⁶ In Greek language this means 'royal gift'. It was privately printed in Edinburgh but publicly republished in London in 1603. Divided into three books the third describes proper behaviour in the daily lifestyle.

⁴⁷ The great Dutch scholar Desiderius Erasmus in his *Colloquia* of 1522 points out the importance of ball games (Pila) and a trained body for a healthy mind: 'Mens sana in corpore sano'; compare J. Huizinga, *Homo Ludens – A Study of the Play-element in Culture* (1938), late professor of History at the University of Leiden, regarding the cultural and social significance of play.

⁴⁸ Dutch Calvinists in Early Stuart London - The Dutch Church in Austin Friars 1603-1642 by Ole Peter Grell.

The origins of the game of golf in Scotland is probably the most debated subject of all golf historians. By whom and where golf was invented is actually an incorrect question as early games are not invented but rather evolve over time and are influenced by numerous cultural developments through the centuries. Moreover stick and ball games in medieval times were played in varying forms and were not governed by standard rules as we know in modern times today.

One must realise at the same time that unlike modern games or sports of today medieval games were highly informal and were not characterised by standardisation of rules and equality of competition. Today's competition leads to bureaucratisation and rationalisation of games and sports, the desire to quantify results and keep records thereof. In early games physical strength was a dominant and determining factor. Rules were informal and not standard.

Early inhabitants of Britain, Celts and Anglo-Saxons, undoubtedly had their own primitive stick and ball games as did the inhabitants of Flanders in the Low Countries region across the North Sea channel. Games usually consisted of two opposing teams of numerous players contesting the ball with play sticks. Sticks were commonly single pieces of carved wood and balls made of various materials, from wood to leather. Stick and ball games evolved into multiple formats, varying from teams of players contesting the ball to individual players hitting towards a target at shorter or longer distances. The first images of stick and ball games are illustrations in books of hours of the 14-15th centuries made in Flanders. There are clear images in books of hours showing a stick and ball game with more players contesting one single ball. Alternatively players are shooting a ball towards a certain target. War and civil turmoil were an unpleasant fact of life during the Middle Ages in Europe and games were considered peacetime exercise and simulations of warfare using physical and mental strength in order to improving technical skills.

Golf historians have commonly focussed on the comparisons and analogies between the game of golf in Scotland and the game of *colf* (also spelled as *kolf*) in the low Countries, especially during the 17th century in the Dutch Republic of the northern low Countries. The reason for this focus is the abundance of iconographic images representing the game of *colf* in popular landscape paintings and portraits by many well-known Dutch masters. The similarities between the two games in Scotland and the Dutch Republic are indeed quite striking. Moreover, in a number of documents written evidence is to be found that the two games are very much related leading historians to the erroneous conclusion that golf has its origins in Holland. A closer look, however, demonstrates that there is a distinct Scottish influence in the game being played by the Dutch in Holland. There is, however, no doubt that the words golf (or goff, gouwf, and other spellings) and colf (or kolf) are linguistically related, but we may have to search for other indications to demonstrate that there was an earlier Flemish connection underscoring the origins of golf in Scotland.

Let us first look at the game of *colf* played in the northern Low countries. We know that with the founding of the Dutch Republic and following the fall of the city of Antwerp in 1585 during the 100 Years War for independence against the Habsburg overlords, very large numbers of people from Flanders and Brabant fled the southern Netherlands and settled in the northern towns and cities. There is sufficient recognition today that the immigration of large numbers of Flemings in the Republic substantially accounted for the growth of wealth and the ultimate success of the Republic during the Golden Age. Almost half of the population left Flanders to settle in Holland and other provinces. This included the upper crust of Flemish society consisting of wealthy merchants and bankers, intellectuals and artists, seeking a better future based on political and religious freedom. This immigration of a huge populous of Flemings substantially influenced cultural development in the north. This included the many games played in the south, such as *caets*, *bollen* and *colf*, adding to the

popularity growth of these originally mainly peasant games. With the birth of a new class of wealthy citizens in the Republic the game of *colf* was elevated to become the signature game of the powerfully rich and symbol of economic prosperity and political successfulness of the Dutch. Two additional remarks need to be made with regard to the esoteric Dutch game of *colf* during this Golden Age period. The citizens of the Republic were very much absorbed by merchant trading, shipping and warfare. Basically there was no time for adult games to indulge in. However, the 17th century climate was marked by the so called Little Ice Age, with temperatures dropping to extreme low levels for abnormally long periods of time during winter. Waterways and canals were normally quite important for Dutch trading and transport business. These wintery conditions meant that economic life and even the continuous warfare came to an almost standstill and citizens alternatively took to the ice for their enjoyment and playful pastimes. Many games, that were normally played on dry land, were taken to the ice and adjusted for changed conditions. In this manner the game of *colf*, and other games as *bollen* for that matter, became a very popular winter pastime game played on the ice of frozen canals and rivers. At this time the game was played over long stretches of ice requiring a full swing of the club at the feathery ball towards a distant target. Posts in the ice tended by markers in support of the players served as target instead of holes in the ground on land. Oft pitching the ball into a derelict rowing boat stuck in the ice was a more challenging final stroke towards the pre-set set target. The outcome of the final shot determined the settlement of wagers, usually for very large amounts of money.

Further, the House of Orange played a significant role in the struggle for independence of the young Dutch Republic and de function of Stadtholder became a hereditary position of the Princes of Orange as commanders in chief of the military campaigns against the Habsburg oppressors. The House of Orange very much endorsed this new popular game of *colf* played by the Dutch regents, very often of wealthy Flemish decent, although the royals very much kept themselves to the exclusive games of *caets* (court tennis) and *malie* (pallmall) still reserved for the aristocratic class. The House of Orange is known to have maintained very close dynastic and political ties with the House of Stuart, especially after the ascension of James VI to the English throne. Three Royal Stuart princesses stayed with their household at the residential court of the Orange Stadtholders in The Hague, who at this time played decisive political roles in events of Anglo-Scottish history, especially the Restoration (1660) and the Glorious Revolution (1688) episodes. Ties between the Dutch and Scots could not have been closer, although relationships with English Parliament were not always pleasant to say the least with world dominance at sea being at stake. In the many winter landscape paintings with the popular game of *colf* being played on ice one can very often detect royal members of the Houses of Stuart and Orange watching the game as interested spectators symbolizing the close ties between the Scottish and the Dutch. Famous were the many portraits of young boys, 3-5 years old, painted with a *colf* club in their hands. These boys were the sons of wealthy merchants and regents showing off their opulence. The *colf* club was a metaphor and symbolised a proper education of the boy.

Traditionally the relationships between the Scottish and the Dutch had been influenced by centuries old commercial attaches between de Flemings and the Scots in the long period before the secession of the northern Dutch Republic from the remaining southern Habsburg Netherlands. It is said that after the secession Flanders was pushed back into the middle ages and never recovered from this split up.

In the northern Low Countries also scores of Scots had settled in the Republic, either attracted as students to the University of Leiden, the now famed bulwark of religious and intellectual freedom in Europe; or as mercenaries in support of the Dutch military warfare against the Habsburg armies; or

as merchants to protect the important Scottish staples of commodity goods stored in the Dutch warehouses, such as wool stored in Veere and Rotterdam, a continuation of the traditional Scottish merchant trade previously performed in Flanders, with Bruges, Gent and Antwerp playing significant roles.

There is an abundance of evidence of the Scottish influence on the game of *colf* in the northern Low Countries at this time, both in paintings and in literature. In this sense one could easily conclude that the development and popularisation of this Dutch game of *colf* benefitted from the traditional game of golf being played in Scotland at the same time and that there was a cross fertilisation between the two games.

Notwithstanding its popularity *colf* played on ice gradually declined and finally disappeared altogether in the early part of the 18th century. Reasons are the changing climate, the influence of the protestant church and the increasing effect of French fashion on day to day life. Instead the old game of *colf* gradually evolved into a newer and much shorter form played on land again, usually in an enclosed boarded area and adjacent to popular inns or other taverns to attract patrons. This new *kolf* game used elements and standards of other known local games and gradually developed into becoming the most popular game in the Netherlands in the 18-19th centuries together with another game called *kegelen* (skittles or ninepins). However, both games also went into gradual decline and are now almost derelict in the Netherlands.

We can therefore conclude that the Scottish game of golf largely influenced the game of *colf* in the northern Dutch Republic, where scores of Flemish had made their new home and raised the popularity of their game of *colf* to new unknown heights as the iconic game of the very well to do regents as well as of the everyday commoner. However, golf in Scotland may originally be of Flemish decent introduced during the Lallands period following the Davidian Revolution and Normanisation of Scotland with many Flemish immigrants crossing the North Sea to Scotland and settling in the newly established burghs in support of the important merchant trade with the southern Low Countries and Flanders as its epicentre. In that sense the game may have come full circle.

Going back to the early history of golf in Scotland we have detected a new breed of citizens of Flemish descent. These Flemish settlers helped established the new burghs and helped forge a new Lallans language and culture, the Old Scots language of Lowland Scotland. With this new culture many games were introduced from the Low Countries (Flanders) to Scotland, such as *colf*, *caets* and *bollen*. These dominant Flemish games assimilated with local Celtic and Anglo-Saxon games and customs to form the games we know today in Scotland. Lallans (or Old Scots language) through the centuries gradually anglicised and now only survives as a series of dialects and in a modified literary form, also called braid Scots. It can be safely concluded that there is sufficient linguistic and phonological proof that the Scottish word golf derives from the Middle Dutch word *colf* used by Flemish immigrants at the time.

The early game of golf in Scotland was probably played in various forms. From illustrations in early books of hours made by Flemish masters in the 14th we can discern two basic forms of play of stick and ball games by the name of *colf*: one with two opposing teams with a number of players contesting a single ball (similar to today's shinty game in Scotland); and the other with two or more individual players playing their own ball towards a set target (similar to today's golf or croquet games).

The earliest image of a person playing golf in Britain is the so called 'Crécy man', who is clearly playing a *colf* type of game and is hitting the ball in mid-air. The player is pictured on a stained-glass window of Gloucester cathedral in southern England and was placed in the cathedral in the latter half

of the 14th century to commemorate the battle of Crécy in 1346 in Flanders during the Hundred Years War between England and France. Flanders was part of the domain of the French crown at the time before being passed to the dukes of Burgundy and later Habsburg. The image clearly reflects the popularity of the game of *colf* as it was played at that time in the southern Low Countries. Why the game is depicted in a cathedral in England has never been explained satisfactorily. However, it is very likely the game was played in England as it was in Scotland as a result of the multitude of Flemings having immigrated and resettled in countries of the British isles during the Normanisation period. Another interesting illustration from about this same period is the illustration in the Flemish book of hours by Simon Bening with three *colf* players each playing their wooden balls on land towards a hole in the ground. The fourth man is probably the person acting as neutral arbiter and pointing at the inn where the waiting innkeeper stands in the doorway waiting to serve beer after the game when the wagers are settled. Arbiters were customary and necessary because of the heavy gambling and betting habits of the players.

Comparable is another illustration of *colf* players in a similar book of hours, depicting a player in full swing and another attempting to stroke his ball into a hole. In the background the contours of the town of Antwerp are visible. The game is played on land and contradicts the assumption by few Scottish golf historians that the game was a short distance game played on ice towards a post as target. Clearly the early game of *colf* was originally played on land and not on ice as later became customary. It is also clearly a long game requiring a full swing at the ball. And finally the ball is played into a hole as target. The game of *colf* was originally played with a wooden ball, that was succeeded by the leather ball stuffed with hair, that made a cross-over from the game of *caets*, known as *caitchpule* in Scotland. It is most probable that this cross-over was realised in Scotland where golf had become increasingly popular whereas in the Low Countries *caets* was still a dominant game. Yearly large numbers of balls were exported from the Low Countries to Scotland, originally for *caitchpule* but also for golf.

The earliest written record of golf played in Scotland is the Act of Parliament of 1457 banning playing the game of golf in Edinburgh and other cities in Scotland. One should realise that in the fifteenth century Scotland, great turmoil plagued the country, with quarrelling between Scottish nobility and hostile invasions by the English. The Stuart King James I of Scotland was the first king who established a 'firm and sure peace' quelling internal divisions and repelling invaders by forming a strong and united army. Military training was essential, with archery practice made compulsory for men, starting at a young age. The first written evidence appears in a reference to the game of golf. The evidence shows that golf met with the disapproval of the civic establishment and military authorities. This earliest known written reference to golf in Scotland decreed that: 338. Item 'ye fut bawe and ye golf be utterly cryt done and not usyt' and instead archery was to be practiced. Archery practice in the kirkyard was compulsory, with each man required to shoot at least six shots towards set targets (butts). Defaulters paid a penalty of two pennies, spent on drinks for those who had obeyed to the rules of practising archery.

There are no records explaining how the Scots actually played the game of golf at this particular time or what type of ball was used. The fact of the same sentence line addressing both football and golf could lead to the conclusion that golf here is more like the shinty game, a team game of numerous players contesting the ball, as is still played today in Scotland. In those days Scots apparently played golf and football in the streets and courtyards of the Scottish towns and cities and most probably caused peril to people and their goods. The main reason, however, for banning football and golf does seem to be merely a need to have men practice archery in case of war. Both games were considered

to be not only 'unprofitable sports', but also caused havoc in the town streets. Earlier decrees in both Scotland (1424) and England (1363) banned only playing the game of football from the streets and again stressed the importance of practicing archery. This could mean the game of golf had not yet gained the popularity height of football in the early part of the fifteenth century in Scotland.

One could also draw a comparison to the first edict found in the Low Countries. Issued in 1360 by the Magistrates of the City of Brussels in Flanders: Item 'wie met colven tsolt es om twintich schell oft op hare overste cleet'. Meaning that whoever plays ball (sollen is to play ball) with clubs (colf is a club) shall pay a fine of twenty shilling or have his coat confiscated. From this edict of Brussels we can also safely conclude that the games of *sollen met colven* (Dutch) and *souler à la crosse* (French) were identical games but denominated in different languages as also attested in literature in both languages. The common language in the Low Countries was Middle Dutch, although in the southern regions as Flanders, and in aristocratic circles French was also spoken. This Brussels edict is the first of countless decrees found in city archives banning the game of *colf* from the streets in towns of the Low Countries, mainly because of the damage caused to citizens and their property. Clearly, the game was a nuisance within the city walls. The game of *colf* had become too popular and therefore needed removing from the streets to designated grounds outside the city walls, where there was minimal chance of injuring people or damaging property. Here the game evolved more towards an individual longer distance target game like golf today. From documents we can conclude that many incidents had occurred, such as mud and dirt flying against buildings, people struck in their faces and bodies and legs hit by balls and clubs. Breaking window-panes and stained-glass church windows was a frequent encounter. Even outside the city walls, incidents still occurred of crops being damaged and cows scared away. In 1389 Albrecht Count of Holland, wished to show his gratitude to the citizens of Haarlem by granting the city a perpetual right to a specified area outside the city walls, called 'De Baen' (meaning 'the course' in Dutch) as a playground for games as *colf* and *caets*, as well as other popular pastimes such as archery. Interestingly De Baen stills stands today as a public playground, very comparable to Bruntsfield Links granted to the citizens of Edinburgh by King David I as a perpetual playground. Bruntsfield Links later in the 18th became the birthplace of organised golf in Scotland as we know it today with the formation of the first golfing societies in the mid-18th century.

In sixteenth century Scotland, historic developments made King James IV change his mind about the still popular game of golf. He concluded a 'treaty of perpetual peace' with Henry VII, King of England. This factor reduced the need for training archers. In addition, gunpowder's invention caused muskets and cannons to replace the bow and arrow as military weapons. Although the peace did not last the Scots could continue to play the game of golf without the threat of royal wrath. Evidence of this King's own passion for the game is given by a regular supply of 'clubbes and ballis' to his majesty and his court.

One could conclude that by this time in the late 15th century the game had evolved more to the more controlled game of striking the ball towards a distant target by individual players, requiring more skill than physical strength. This game would also have been played outside the burgh walls on the sandy coastal links land. Sir Robert Gordon wrote in 1630 about the links in Dornoch: "About this toun, along the sea road, ther are the fairest and lairgest links (or green feilds) of any pairt of Scotland, fit for archery, goffing, ryding and all other exercise; they do surpasse the fields of Montrose or St Andrews." The sandy soil and drier climate of Scotland's seaside east coast was well suited for the game of golf we know still today. The seaside grass was naturally short and made

access to the ball easier than in long wet inland grass. This natural habitat of the Scottish east coast gave an enormous boost to the development of the increasingly popular game of golf going forward. The popularity growth of golf in Scotland was stimulated by the cross-over the leather ball made from caitchpule, the Flemish handball game also played with rackets, to golf. The Scottish Stuarts proved to be commercially thinking royals when the outflow of 'silver and gold out his Hienes kingdom of Scotland for bying of golf ballis' from the Low Countries needed to be stemmed. King James VI granted a monopoly to the ballmaker James Melville. Any ball found without a Melville stamp the state would confiscate. On the other hand, Melville could not charge more than four shillings for a ball, still a hefty price for a ball in those days. Balls therefore did not come cheaply in those days and numerous documents found in archives on both sides of the North Sea in Scotland and the Low Countries, tell us the Scots imported large amounts of balls from the Low Countries, in particular from the town of Goirle in Brabant.

In the Low Countries, the filled leather ball used for *caets* had replaced the wooden ball used in the early game of *colf*. It is not clear when this change occurred but from iconographic images it is reasonable to conclude this may have happened in the 14th century at the time *colf* was banned from the town streets to safer compounds outside city walls. At this time *colf* evolved to the more popular long distance individual target game. There was a large number of ball makers in Goirle (locally called 'ballenfrutters'), primarily servicing of the popular handball game of *caets*, also played with rackets. A regular ball was a leather ball filled with wool or other animal hair. Even herbal flax was used to fill balls. To increase the compression of a ball, the leather was sewn wet inside out and the reversed leather cover then filled with hair boiled in water. After the leather ball was firmly stuffed and closed it would be left to dry. The leather shrank and the hair expanded at the same time creating a naturally high compression and increasing the bounce of the ball. Later hair was replaced by feathers to improve the bounce o the ball. No documents have been found as yet how the balls were actually made, probably because the craft of ballmaking was handed over from father to son and continually protected by an organised guild.

The process of ballmaking is wonderfully described in the Scottish heroi-comical poem *The Goff* by Thomas Matheson, first anonymously published in 1743 in Edinburgh. He describes how the ballmaker Bobson 'with matchless art shapes the firm hide, connecting every part and through the eyelet drives the downy tide, crowds urging crowds the forceful brogue impels the feather harden and the leather swells, he crams and sweats, yet crams and urges more till scarce the turgid globe contains its score.' This account clearly describes the difficulty and hard labour to manufacture a proper feathery ball. The cost was therefore proportionally high.

Balls used for the games of *colf* and golf both in the Low Countries and Scotland were hardened and made heavier using white-lead paint. This also made the balls impervious to water and substantially improved the durability. Clearly finding or recovering a white ball made life a lot easier and cheaper for the wayward hitter. Feathers had replaced hair as filling to create a ball called the feathery ball or *pennebal* in Dutch. This ball was lighter in weight and created more compression and a harder bounce because of a higher degree of expansion of the dried feathers inside the stuffed ball.

It is said that Queen Mary of Scots in customary Stuart tradition was a keen sportswoman. She had been raised and educated at the Royal court of France, where she had learnt to play the traditional royal games of tennis (*jeu de paume*) and pall mall (*jeu de mail*). Originally introduced as a Flemish handball game but also played with rackets, caitchpule (or tennis) was quite well known at the royal courts in Scotland. However, pall mall was less popular and confined to the walled compounds of the royal palaces in Scotland. The game is not very well documented in Scotland as it is in England. But

we do know that Mary was accused of playing at “pall mall and golf” at her Seaton Palace refuge outside Edinburgh just a day after her murdered husband’s funeral. Contrary to modern day Scottish legend, however, it is not very likely that Queen Mary actually played golf at all but rather that golf is mentioned in this instance as being a game resembling the more unfamiliar game of pall mall. There is no mention elsewhere that Mary was indeed known to be regularly playing at golf. The royal games of tennis and pall mall could be played within the safe confinement of the palace walls as opposed to golf being played in the open field on links land. A birds-eye view on the Gordon map of Holyrood House in Edinburgh clearly shows a tennis house where caitchpule was played, and also a tree lined alley is visible within the palace walls, very often a clear indication of a pall mall court or alley.

The enthusiasm for ‘gentlemanly’ sports is also visible in a personal letter, written by Mary’s son King James VI of Scotland, who was also to become King James I of England, thus uniting both crowns of Scotland and England in 1603. He wrote his *Basilikon Doron* (meaning a Royal Gift), privately printed in Edinburgh in 1599 but publicly republished in London in 1603 after his coronation as King of England. It is written in the form of a private letter as an educational advice for his young son Henry Frederick Stuart, Prince of Wales : “But the exercises that I would have you to use (although but moderately, not making a craft of them) are running, leaping, wrastling, fencing, dancing, and playing at the caitch or tennise, archery, palle maille, and such like other faire and pleasant field games.” Here James VI shows his delight in honourable games and their educational value. He followed the great Dutch scholar Desiderius Erasmus, who in his *Colloquia* of 1522 points out the importance of ball games and a trained body for a healthy mind: ‘Mens sana in corpore sano’.

Although no direct evidence has been provided yet there is sufficient reason to believe that James I also did play golf himself and that golf was played in his entourage by courtiers. He did purchase clubs and balls from his bowmaker, assumedly for his own personal use. His son Henry Frederick has been described by a visiting French diplomat in London to be playing a game very much resembling pall mall. This was certainly golf and it is therefore remarkable that James does not directly mention the royal and ancient Scottish game of golf as one of the healthy exercises to be undertaken by his young son and heir. At least not in the *Basilikon Doron* he republished in London after his arrival as King of England, although he does mention “other faire and pleasant field games” probably referring to the game of golf. Possibly he felt that introducing golf as a royal game in England would be too Scottish and possibly politically incorrect or not in line with etiquette at the Royal Court in London. Royalty at European courts and the Tudor court in England played the fashionable games of tennis and pall mall. Golf, although considered a royal and ancient game by the House of Stuart in Scotland, had not yet made it to royal status in England. With James’ ascension to the throne in London he had moved his court and entourage from Edinburgh to London and with it a large retinue of Scottish noblemen and gentleman merchants. In this manner the Scottish game of golf of Flemish descent was introduced to England and instituted at Blackheath in London as a royal pastime. The arrival of these Scots strengthened London’s position as the centre of merchant trade with its close links to the particularly successful staple-market economy of the Dutch Republic, aided by the traditionally strong commercial ties with the Royal Burghs in Scotland, originally established by Flemish immigrants, firstly with Flanders but later shifting northward to Holland where Flemings had made their new home. In this manner of regular contacts between the three nations the Scottish game of golf in Scotland and the Dutch game of *colf* in the Republic, both having strong Flemish roots, adapted to and adopted from one another. In Scotland, including the Scottish enclaves in England, golf had become the favoured game of a new class of wealthy citizens, gentlemen and burghesses. In

the Dutch Republic golf followed this example. Confusingly this has led to the belief by some historians that the game of colf in Holland was the origin of golf in Scotland, whereas the true origins of golf go back to the Normanisation period and Lallans culture introduced by Flemish settlers during the reign of David I and through that of William the Lion during the 12-14th centuries.

Notwithstanding the shift of the Scottish court to London in 1603, golf did very much remain a Scottish pastime, even in England. Much later in time did golf become very fashionable amongst the English elite during the Victorian age and the game's popularity exploded during the Industrial Age in the latter part of the 19th century after the feathery ball was replaced by the gutta percha rubber ball and thereafter the industrially manufactured rubber-core wound ball. Like many other British games golf was exported to the outskirts of the Empire and from there on conquered the world. Before that golf had barely survived the Jacobite uprising and related tribulations of 18th century Scotland, where golf was played inside a handful of golfing societies disguised behind the façade of secrecy of Freemasonry.

Looking back in history there is unfortunately very little evidence in Scotland relating to the game of golf in the form of equipment, such as clubs or balls, or even visual images, such as drawings or paintings, from earlier than the mid-17th century. The 'Stuart clubs', possibly having belonged to the executed Stuart King Charles I may be the oldest playing clubs known in Scotland, although definite proof still needs to be found. The only surviving written sources relate to the darker ages of golf in Scotland long before the formal establishment of the first golfing societies and are not clear as to how the game was played or with what material. The Burgess Golfing Society of Edinburgh was the first golfing society to be formed in 1735 at Bruntsfield Links, followed by the Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers at Leith Links in 1744, and most notably the Royal & Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews in 1754, today recognised as the home of modern day golf. Before the establishment of the first formal golfing societies in the 18th century, the game of golf was a popular informal pastime on the coastal links playgrounds outside the protective walls of the established Royal Burghs of Scotland.

The many similarities between *colf* and golf can be seen in a Latin school textbook written by Pieter van Afferden. The *Tyrocinium linguae Latinae* is a textbook with Latin exercises for pupils containing aspects of everyday life. In forty-seven chapters various subjects are explored in the Dutch language with the correct Latin translation. This exercise book was first published by Pieter van Afferden in Flanders in 1552 (Gent). It has roots in similar Flemish works that had been in use in previous decades. This work inspired others such as Hadrianus Junius for his *Nomenclature*, published in 1568, and later Scotland's David Wedderburn book *Vocabula*, first published in 1636. Four chapters of the *Tyrocinium* covered popular ball games in the Low Countries, including *Caetsen* and *Colven*. It proves that these games were part of the day-to-day life. In his *Nomenclatur*, a comprehensive Latin compendium, Junius too describes the game of *colf* with a definition of the ball, 'pila clavaria, que clava plumbata expellitur'. This work was translated in English in 1585 and gives the following definition: 'a ball stuf with hard haire or wooll, which they use to smite in play with cudgels leaded at the ends'. Van Afferden's *Tyrocinium* gives the Dutch-Latin translation of 25 terminologies, that include: hitting the ball with a *colf* club, hitting a good shot, losing the ball, finding the ball, missing the ball, hitting straight towards the hole, stroking the ball in the hole, playing before one's turn, good and bad manners, asking advice, playing false, unlucky shots, finishing the game. From this one can discern that the early game of *colf* played in the Low Countries of Flanders and Holland in the 15-16th centuries and before very much resembles the modern game of golf played in Scotland today and that the two games are very closely related.

Interestingly, the Dutch word used for a hole is *cuyt*. There is no evidence the Dutch word *put*, meaning pit, was ever used for the game of *colf*. Therefore, it is not related to the Scottish term putt used for stroking the ball to the hole. However, there may be an etymological connection with the word putt with the Lallans (Old-Scottish) word *butt* used for a target in archery. Archery and golf were closely related games in Scottish society and members of companies or societies of archers and golfers were much the same individuals. It is likely they used the same Lallans word *butt* for target although for different games. In golf this word evolved to today's word putt.

The main difference between *colf* played in the Low Countries and golf in Scotland was the number of clubs played with by an individual person. The Scottish game uses various clubs for different lies and distances, and as such the game is more sophisticated and complicated than the Low Countries game. The *colf* club was made of a single piece of sawn ashwood of which the head was covered by a sheet of lead, a *slof* or shoe. The *colf* player played a single club only for all shots, long and short. *Colf* players were accompanied by a single helper or *marqueur* who spotted where balls landed and held the post serving as the target. Often an arbiter would join a match, usually an indication of high wagers on the game. The Scottish club was a two piece jointed club of which the shaft was made of hazel and the club head of boxwood with a leaden filling in the back to add to the swing weight of the club. A player would have four wooden-headed clubs for various distances and lies. A player would also have an iron-headed club at his disposal to play from sandy or other difficult lies like ruts or ditches. Clubs were carried by a helper, named a caddie. From the description of the games both in the Low Countries and in Scotland one can justifiably conclude that *colf* and golf were very similar games played with identical balls with similar general rules. The main difference was the variance in the type and number of clubs the Scottish game allowed for, adding to the sophistication of the golf game in comparison to the game played in the Low Countries of Flanders and Holland. On the other hand the rule that only one club may be used increased the complexity and technique required for hitting the ball towards the target. It is noted that the game of *colf* was originally played on land but moved to the ice during the cold winter season. However, the character of the game did not change and the hole in the ground as target was replaced by posts or other challenging options.

It is very reasonable to conclude that the games of golf and *colf*, simultaneously played in the 16-17th centuries in both Scotland and mainly the northern Low Countries, were very similar and closely related, not only linguistically and phonologically but also in the manner of play, and that therefore the two games have a joint and shared ancestry. In view of the close ties between Scotland and the Republic it also reasonable to conclude that both games influenced one another. This is clearly visible in Dutch numerous paintings portraying Scottish players or players using Scottish jointed clubs. This is also clearly illustrated in the poem by Johannes Six van Chandelier 's *Amsterdammers Winter*, including a description of a *colf* player having the choice to either play his Dutch ash-wood club with a wrapped leaden shoe or a *Schotse kliek*, being a Scottish jointed wooden club with leaden filling in the back. In a number of Dutch master paintings of winter landscape scenes both the single piece Dutch ash-wood *colf* club and the traditional long-nosed Scottish jointed golf club are distinctly visible.

In view of the Flemish migration to Scotland from the southern Low Countries during the Normanisation period and the later migratory move of Flemings to the Dutch Republic the logical conclusion is that the shared ancestry of golf in Scotland and *colf* in Holland is the Flemish origin of both games.

De colver bindt syn ysspoor aan,

The colf player binds his spurs on,
Of heeft iet strams om op te staan,
Or has something stiff to stand on,
Want 't gladde glas, is 't onbesneeuwt,
For the slippery ice, if without snow,
Met effe soolen lacht en spreeuwt,
Laughs at and mocks smooth soles
En na het looten van paarty,
And after drawing sides,
Schrapstaande slaet syn esp, met bly
Standing firm, he drives his ash, with lead
Verswaart, of syne schotse klick,
Weighted, or his Scottish cleek,
Van palm, dry vingers breed, één dik,
Of boxwood, three fingers wide, one thick,
Met loot der in, den pennebal.
With lead inserted, the featherie ball.
Van 't drijfje onsichtbaar voor haar val,
From the tee unvisable before its fall,
Van ballemerkers opgemerkt,
By ballmarkers noticed,
Voorts colvende aan een paal geperkt,
Playing on towards a pole,
Of slaat om 't verdste, slach om slach,
Or driving the furthest, stroke for stroke,
Om witjes, of een vaan in 't lach,
For pennies, or beer in the inn,
Gekorven op een dunnen tak,
Counted on a tally-stick
Die ieder veur in 't wambuis stak,
That each in front of his coat puts
Mids wie syn kerfstok niet neemt waar,
For he who does not count correctly
Uitveegen zal voor allegaar.
Shall be wiped out by all.