

The Heritage of Richard Haka: Part I

Of English heritage, Richard Haka¹ was the most prominent woodwind instrument maker in Amsterdam in the last quarter of the seventeenth century. He was one of the first makers in Amsterdam to stamp his name on his instruments (see Figure 1), and was one of the first makers outside France to produce instruments in the new French Baroque style. We know that Haka ran a busy workshop in Amsterdam and that he trained various other makers, including his nephew Coenraad Rijkel (1664–1726), Abraham van Aardenberg (1672–1717) and Jan Steenberg (1676–1762). It is uncertain, however, where Haka himself learned the trade of instrument maker, although his father Thomas was a walking stick maker, and it is possible that Richard gained experience working with wood in his father's workshop. Given the occupation of his father, it is interesting that Richard Haka made walking stick flutes (see Figures 2 & 3). We know that his parents Thomas Hakay and Agnes Atkins² were married at St Martin-in-the-Fields in London on 24 June 1635, but no record of Richard's baptism has been identified.



Figure 1. Stamp of Haka on the alto shawm (Deutsche schalmei) in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. no. BK-2010-18.

This and all other photos by the author.



Figures 2 & 3. Walking stick recorder by Richard Haka. The labium is situated at the back of the instrument. Kunstmuseum (formerly Haags Gemeentemuseum), The Hague, inv. no. Ea 532-1933.

¹ For a full list of 40 extant instruments by Haka and Rijkel, see www.mcjbouterse.nl under 'Haka files'. There are also scans of the various archival documents referred to in this article.

² The family name is recorded variously as Hakay, Haca and Haka; Agnes Atkins is also recorded as Angenies Aecqui and Agnietje Thomas.

It is not known why or exactly when the Haka family emigrated to Amsterdam, although it may have been for either economic or religious reasons. The first concrete evidence for the family being in Amsterdam is the baptism of Catarina, daughter of Thomas and Agnes, on 4 August 1652. No record of burial for Thomas has been identified, although we know that he had died sometime prior to 25 September 1655, when Agnes, described as a widow, married Evert Leeck. That the family maintained links with London or lived within an English community in Amsterdam is documented by the fact that three of Thomas and Agnes' children married people of English heritage: Merce Tomas Haka married Thomas Rutlits from London in 1655; Maria Thomas married Hendrik Rijkel (Ruckoll) in 1664; and Catharina Haka married Samuel Lubeck of Norwich in 1675.

From a contract of marriage between Richard Haka and Margrietje (or Margareta) Bogaerts,³ dated 24 January 1676, we know that Richard was then 30 years old, suggesting a year of birth of c1646. The union resulted in at least eight children, although only four survived their father: Margareta (1681–1747), Angenietje or Agneta (1683–1719), Richard (1686–1709) and Jan (1688–1759). At the time of his marriage, it is possible that Richard had been active as an instrument maker for a number of years, since an advertisement in the *Amsterdamse Courant* in 1691 stated that he had started as a *meester van het maken van Fluyten, Houbois, Bassons en Velt-Schalmeyen* (master in making flutes [recorders], haubois, bassoons and field shawms) 30 years before.

It is difficult to determine the number of instruments produced in Haka's workshop, as the number of instruments which have survived or are listed in old inventories is not conclusive. However, there is some evidence that Haka produced instruments in large batches. An invoice from 1685 preserved in the Swedish military archive (*Krigsarkivet*) in Stockholm, for example, specifies 40 instruments: shawms, dulcians, oboes, a bassoon and recorders in sizes from discant to bass.⁴ The invoice is particularly interesting since it gives prices and short descriptions of the instruments. These were both made in the 'old style' such as dulcians (the only reference to them in connection with a

Dutch instrument maker) and shawms (*Deutsche schalmeien*) and in the new French Baroque style, such as a bassoon (which Haka calls *dulsian basson*), oboes (*haubois*) and recorders (*fleutte does* or *flûte douce*). The large complement of shawms (six large and 13 smaller ones) and dulcians suggests that they were intended for a sizeable ensemble, while the fewer double-reed instruments (one bassoon, one tenor oboe and four ordinary oboes) may have been intended for a smaller chamber ensemble. Together with reeds, staples, some music books and transport costs, the order amounted to 475 *guilders*.

The houses of Richard Haka

There is evidence that Richard Haka lived at various addresses in Amsterdam, and also bought several houses as investments. The following timeline gives the various details:

1676: At the time of his marriage, Haka lived on the Kalverstraat

1679: Coenraad Rijkel, Haka's nephew, becomes an apprentice for a period of seven years

1682: Haka buys a house on the Kalverstraat, perhaps the house that he had previously rented

1683: Haka moves his home and workshop to a house at the Spui

1688: Haka buys two houses on the Keizersgracht

1696: Coenraad Rijkel takes over the workshop on the Spui; Richard Haka moves to a nearby house on the Singel

1697: Haka buys a house on the Keizersgracht and moves to that address a few years later

28 December 1697: Coenraad Rijkel, living on the Spui, marries Anna Pasmoy. Since both his parents had died, Rijkel was assisted at the wedding by his uncle Richard Haka.

16 October 1698: a notice in the *Amsterdamse Courant* states that someone living at Haka's former address is claiming to be Richard Haka and uses his stamp, but that he is still alive and is living on the Singel. That the notice refers to Coenraad Rijkel is confirmed by a second advert in the *Amsterdamse Courant* a year later, in which Rijkel states that he will now use his own stamp on his instruments.

³ Her name also appears as Bogaars, Bogers and Boomgaard.

⁴ See Jan Bouterse, 'Communication', *Journal of the American Musical Instrument Society* 30 (2000), pp.243–50; and Jan Bouterse, *Dutch woodwind instruments and their makers, 1660–1760* (Utrecht, KVNMM, 2005).



Figure 4. 727 Keizersgracht (third house from the left) seen from the other side of the canal.

26 January 1700: a notice in the *Amsterdamse Courant* states that: Richard Haka, flute-maker, who lived on Spui near the Old Lutheran Church for 15 years, has moved and is now living on the Singel, between the Old Lutheran Church and the Appelmarkt, near Heysteeg. Here, he and his son (perhaps 14-year old Richard (ii) or 12-year old Jan) continue to do the same work as before.

Richard Haka appears to have only stayed a few months on the Singel, since the same year he moved to a newly built house on the Keizersgracht, now no.727 (see Figure 4). Whether he continued making instruments on the Singel remains uncertain, although he was now a wealthy man, and the owner of several properties in Amsterdam. He died in 1705, and was buried on 25 February that year in the Oude Kerk (see Figure 5). The precise location of his grave is uncertain, but we know that his wife Margrietje died in 1735 and was buried in grave no.203 on the north side of the nave (Figure 6). While grave nos.202 and 204 survive, there is now only an unmarked and unnumbered stone where no.203 may once have been (see Figure 7). Whether the flute maker Richard Haka might also have been buried there is unknown.

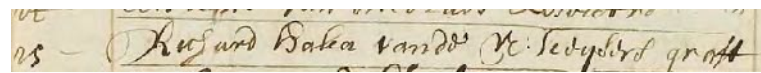


Figure 5. Burial record of Richard Haka, 25 February 1705. Stadsarchief Amsterdam archieff.amsterdam/indexen/persons, DTB-registers, archive reference: 5001/1048, folio 37.

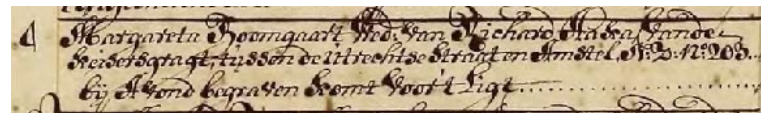


Figure 6. Burial record of Margareta Boomgaard, widow of Richard Haka, 4 June 1735. DTB-registers, archive reference: 5001/1049, folio 31.



Figure 7. Possible location (bottom left-hand corner of photo) of the Haka family grave in the Oude Kerk in Amsterdam.

Four years after the death of her father, Margareta married Antoni Oosterhuysen, and it is possible that the couple lived in the house on the Keizersgracht. Margareta remained childless and died in 1747. The last descendent of Richard Haka was his son Jan, and we do know that he lived there alone surrounded by a wealth of items that he and his relatives had collected over many years. His untimely death in May 1759 and the subsequent inventory of his possessions are dealt with in Part II.

Jan Bouterse

