

## A Royal 'Haagse klok' "Severyn Oosterwijck Haghe met privilege"

Reviewed by Keith Piggott

### NEW FINDS RECENTLY BROUGHT INTO 'OPEN RESEARCH'

Based on the author's paper 'FOR OPEN RESEARCH' at Teylers' Museum, 3rd December 2011,  
For the 'GOING DUTCH' symposium sponsored by the Museum van het Nederlandse Uurwerk

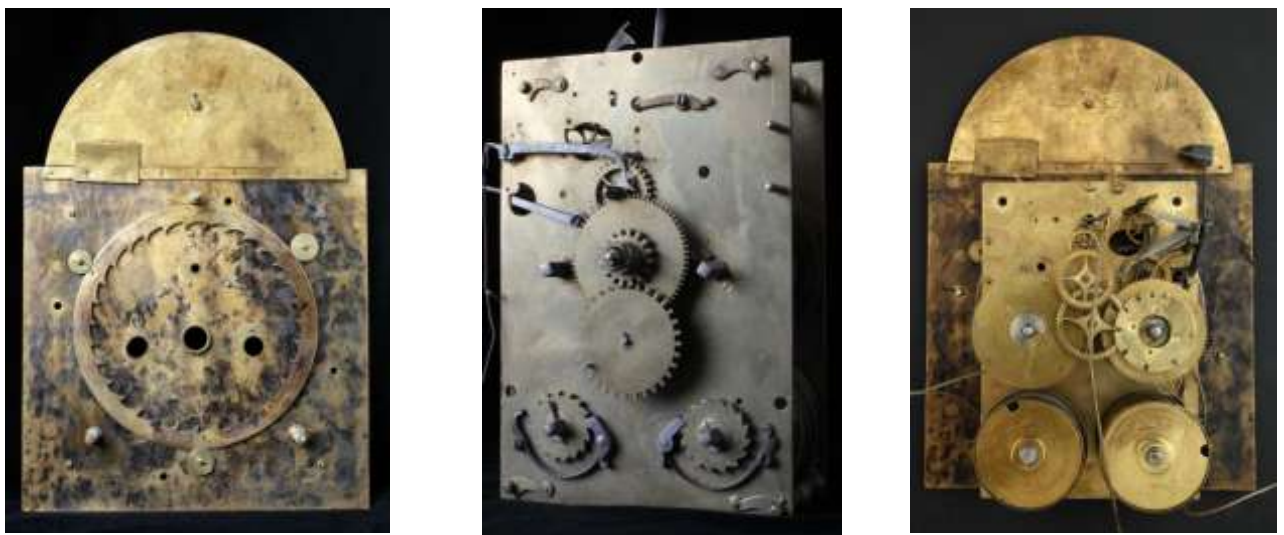
**AN HITHERTO UNKNOWN DUTCH WORKSHOP OF 'A-FROMANTEEL HAGE' - REVEALED IN A FUSEE MOVEMENT WITH STRIKE, SHOWING THE 'SECONDS' BY EARLY 'TIC-TAC' ESCAPEMENT, circa 1675/1680:** Images courtesy of the Museum of Arts & Craft, Zagreb, (all modified originations are by KP). I acknowledge Dr. Vesna Lovrić Plantić and Hans Kreft as co-authors of this report.

Gestations can be lengthy - I had assisted Hans Kreft in his 'Fromanteel Story', (*Tijdschrift*, 2005); in 2010 Dr. Vesna Plantić, Ph.D., curator of Zagreb's Museum of Arts & Craft, sought Hans' opinion on an English spring-clock, signed 'A-Fromanteel' with an obscured address. Hans passed it to me, as I had advised owners and him about an important *sleeper*; a large turn-table spring-clock by "[Johannes Ebsworth Londini Fecit](#)", now back in England with Gerald Marsh at Winchester, its pendulum re-converted, its case sympathetically restored; (see Hans Kreft, 'Een kijkje in de keuken. Zomaar een Engelse tafelklok?', *Tijdschrift*, 2010).

Dr Plantić 's images came in three separate tranches but for convenience I append all the Zagreb images here.



This review of the unique movement ignores the much later arch and 18th Century Austrian case. The arch bears an applied circular boss signed 'Albertus Fromanteel London', the reverse inscribed '1661'.



Zagreb Museum's '*A=Fromanteel*' movement, (having the address deliberately obliterated with floral-scrolls by a later engraver), would appear to be unrecorded in the English bibliography. That impression turned out to be an understatement. Nothing like it is recorded.

Obliterations may indicate stolen objects disguised; one important clock was stolen and has had its back-plate replaced, in vain attempt to change its identity.

Previously, I had deciphered total obliterations in an important London movement, I revealed as "*Matthew Crockford at y<sup>e</sup> Royal Exchange*", I applied the same digital editing techniques to Zagreb's "*A-Fromanteel*".



*'Matthew Crockford at ye Royal Exchange'*

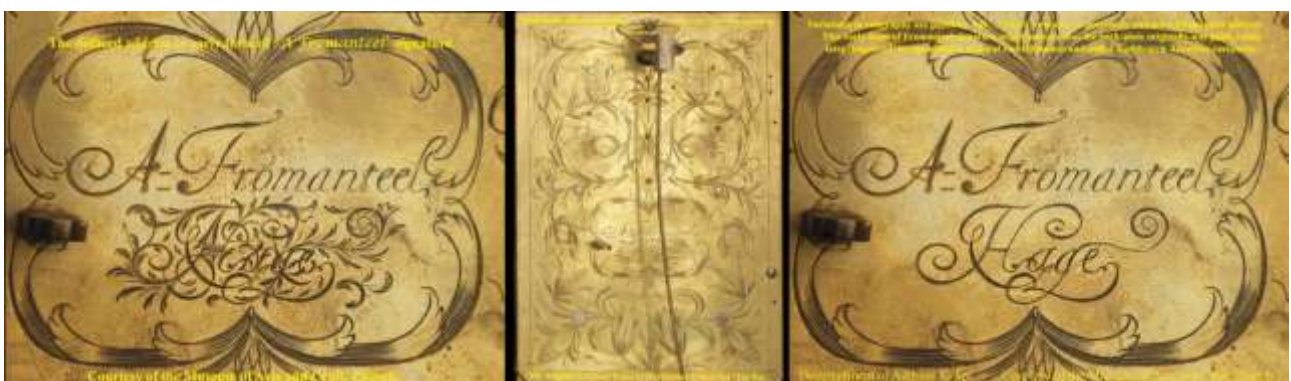


**A fine early London spring movement, c.1672, apparently anonymous.** This outstanding movement having many delightful features, including a superbly engraved floral back-plate and indiosyncratic set-up ratchets and clicks, marred by the later defaced Lambrequin. Carefully added flower-heads, nevertheless, left exposed engraved strokes of original Signature.



**(RH, Supplementary Views, p.2., Appendix Nine: Matthew Crockford deciphered).**

**Fromanteel's unknown address:** The task seemed simple, as the only recorded Fromanteel workshops are London, Newcastle, and Amsterdam. Yet I revealed an unknown Fromanteel address, '*Hage*' - used by Van Ceulen in skeletonised signatures, but normally Latinised, as '*Hagae*', or Dutch, '*Haghe*'.



**(RH, Supplementary Views, p.2., Appendix Nine,:**

**'A Fromanteel Hage', unknown)**

In the Fromanteel dynasty's long history, this Hague workshop is unrecorded, (*RH, Supplementary Views, Curiosa*). I reserve questions about the untypical 'floral' engraving, I suspect the back-plate originally was plain, having only the early form of signature, being later confined by a *Knibb-style* floral cartouche, finally, having the Hague address defaced by yet another engraver for an unknown (possibly nefarious) purpose.

Which '*A.Fromanteel*' had set up this unrecorded workshop in The Hague, between 1675-80, dates implied by Zagreb's movement? Not the '*Albertus Fromanteel London*' signed in later arch. Brian Loomes has traced the Fromanteel family travels; Ahasuerus I went to Holland in 1668-9; Abraham I joined his father in 1669; he went again in 1680 to set up business with John; was called back to London in September for his Freedom. Had Ahasuerus I with Abraham set up a short-lived workshop in The Hague, around the time of John Fromanteel's relocation with Ahasuerus II to Amsterdam, in 1681? Did Fromanteels' make a failed attempt to break into the Hague's important pendulum market, with a physical workshop, or merely '*badging*' this earlier 'stock-movement' with a Hague address? Perhaps the Fromanteels' did '*test*' that market, but met opposition from the local trade, just as Rotterdam's Simon Douw had found in 1658.

Zagreb's little Fromanteel movement is sole surviving evidence for that *unrecorded* failed marketing bid. Therefore it now assumes an even greater importance to antiquarian horology far above its former status. Other extraordinary and rare features raise that status considerably.

**Fromanteel's Dial:** A diminutive 220 mm. (8.6") latched dial, *exceptionally* shows Seconds', much like Tompion's earlier weight-timepiece, (see '*RH, Part II, The Seconds' Hiatus, p.29*'). This has typical Fromanteel chapter-ring, early cherub spandrels, bold Clement-Fromanteel hands, and decorative ringing, (distorted by winder, due to worn Fusee pivot, now '*bumped*'). Images reveal an unexpected group of four large filled holes down **III** side, purpose presently unknown. Each vertical edge has two small filled holes; for swivels that held the dial and its movement in its former *English* case, Knibb's spring-clocks also used a swivel fixing system. Seeing the importance of Zagreb's Fromanteel Seconds' movement, probably its case was important too, perhaps a large turn-table case in show-wood, circa 1675. Images of the front-plate show a 'tic-tac', [derived from Ahasuerus Fromanteel's earlier 'cross-beat', and 'pendulum-cross-beat']. Is Abraham's London movement in fact earlier than floral engraved back-plate and ringed dial-holes suggest?



Courtesy of the Museum of Arts and Craft, Zagreb

Dial of a rare fusee-clock showing the Seconds, by '*A=Fromanteel Hage*' a previously unknown Fromanteel address, (*AP*). The fine original hands are typical of the Fromanteel-Clement workshops. Distorted ring by wear at Fusee pivots- note '*bumped*' pivot. The movement has Fromanteel's original pivoted-pendulum to early '*Tic-Tac*' escapement with his knife-edge suspension and steel keeper, and having typical English Five-Wheel Trains on Fusees; circa 1680. (*RH, Part 2, "The Seconds' Hiatus?" p.29*).

(*RH, Supplementary Views, p.2., Appendix Nine, :*



Fromanteel's typical layout: Bugle-latches; reversed ratchets and clicks (corrected by direction of line); scroll-foot to brass click-springs and long-cock for '*Tic-Tac*' arbor; *Fesico* shaped bridge, integral steady-pins (2nd method); ID punches (*NL, 'tekawa'*): lifting-piece with Strike re-set pull; passing half-hour strike; steel posts and port for *B&SMP* (Shutter set on Dial collet); shaped ports; Seconds' direct off 4th Wheel in *Tic-Tac* train.

'*A Fromanteel Hage*', Seconds)

**Fromanteel's Front-Plate** (200mm x 140mm): typical Fromanteel layout and components;

- Bridge wrought in vesica-shape, integral steel steady-pins, their 2nd method, (Fromanteel's 1st method had fixed the steel steady-pins fast into the plate);
- Components have punched 'ID' marks, (*NL. 'tekens'*), like their earliest clocks;
- Early 'bugle' latches to only 4 pillars, (Fromanteels' normally use 5, 6, plus);
- Scroll-foot to the long brass Pivot-Cock, (for the 'tic-tac' escape-pallet arbor);
- Elegantly shaped steelwork to the Strike Lifting-piece, (almost a trademark);
- Reversed Ratchets and Clicks, as often seen in early London work (Crockford, Ebsworth); usually corrected by the gut-lines, so each fusee winds clockwise;
- Curiously shaped apertures for the strike-detents - typical thoughtful details;
- **III** side: 2 steel posts, and pivot hole, for Fromanteel's own '*Bolt and Shutter Maintaining Power*' (*B&SMP*). Nb. Dial-centre has a brass *grommet* for a rare dial-mounted pivoting Shutter, (c.f. *Cupid Fromanteel*, Bonham's July 2011).
- **IX** side: Strike Lifting-piece with a pull-chord, used for re-setting the hours by the 'count-wheel' controlled Strike. Note the *half-hour passing-strike* just below.

**Abraham Fromanteel's Fusee Trains; Rare 'Tic-Tac' Escapement, producing Seconds'.**

Images of the front-plate show an early '*tic-tac*', [derived from Ahasuerus Fromanteel's cross-beat, then his pendulum-cross-beat (1664)]. In all of Huygens' patent applications, all weight-clocks, and all intended for scientific purposes, his short-trains always support a Seconds' dial. Whereas, in early spring-clocks, intended for secular use, a Seconds' dial is rare, but made by Johan Philip Treffler of Augsburg and Florence (1657/8), two by William Knottesford of London (1670s), one Johannes van Ceulen, The Hague (1690), and Pierre van Stryp of Rome ('*tic-tac*' c.1700). Zagreb's "*A Fromanteel Hage*" movement adds to that tiny corpus.

(*RH, Part I, p.13 n.; Supplementary Views, Appendix 9; Curiosa; 'A Fromanteel Hage'; Tic-Tac; Seconds*).



(*RH, Supplementary Views, p.2., Appendix Nine, Fromanteel's Tic-Tac Train*)

The pallet-arbor has the Fromanteel refinement of 'knife-edge' rear-pivot, held by a steel 'keeper'.

Initial images from Zagreb gave the impression of a verge-escapement, having seconds directly on Contrate. However, that is not the case; confirmed by later image; as predicted by clockmaker-conservator Laurence Harvey. Images below show Fromanteel's 5-wheel train with original early 'tic-tac' escapement, (developed from Fromanteel's 'cross-beat' and 'pendulum cross-beat'), having direct Seconds' wheel on the fourth arbor.

**Fromanteel's Unique Seconds' Train on 'Tic-Tac':**

G1 Fusee 96, G2 Centre 8/60, G3 Inter 8/56, G4 Seconds 7/30, G5 'Tic-Tac' 6/14..  
 Beating 140 beats per minute, having a nominal pendulum of 18.25 cms. (7.18 inches).  
 (See *RH*, 'openresearch' matrix; Sheet One, Row 44\*). \* nb. present row may change.

**"A FROMANTEEL HAGE" ~ Original hand-cut wheels suggest an early date.**  
 DIAL 220mm x 218mm (later Arch digitally removed).  
 MOVEMENT PLATES 200mm x 140mm

swivel fixing  
 Hammer arbor is shown misaligned  
 S3 removed  
 swivel fixing to original case  
 ? functions unknown  
 Origination © kp  
 Courtesy of the Museum of Arts and Craft, Zagreb  
 lines correct ratchets for winding direction.

ZAGREB FROMANTEEL TIC-TAC — SECONDS "A=Fromanteel Hage" (probably Abraham I) c.1680					
Movement and wheel trains resemble Ahasuerus Fromanteel's circa 1670/75, but Back-plate engraving and Dial rings suggest the later date.					
TIC-TAC TRAIN (Nb. English wheels, 4-crossings)	Nr. Teeth	Pinion nr.	Beats per Minute	Turns per min	Turns per hour
5th. Wheel - Escape (Tic-Tac)	14	6	140	5	300
4th Wheel - Seconds (at Dialplate)	30	7	Pendulum cms	1	60
3rd. Wheel Intermediate	56	8	18.25 cms	0.125	7.5
2nd. Wheel Centre (Minutes)	60	8		0.016666667	1
1st. Fusee	96				

(*RH*, *Supplementary Views*, p.2., *Appendix Nine*, Fromanteel's Trains)

Laurence Harvey wondered why the 'tic-tac' escape wheel did not have an extra tooth for a shorter pendulum. [KP. It would need 4 extra teeth, to raise the bob above the lower edge of the back-plate - for bench running].

**Fromanteel's Fusee Trains:** (*RH*, *Supplementary Views, Curiosa*). Zagreb's Fromanteel Hague movement becomes of particular historical interest. Its possession of hand-cut wheel-trains with a radial escape-wheel and early "tic-tac" escapement, showing Seconds' on the dial, adds to its horological significance and historical import. These features, all suggest a date pre-1675. In 1672, Knibb used 'tic-tac' for James Gregory's *'Split-Seconds Timer'* at St.Andrew's University; Tompion was to use it later. However, the bold hands and ringed dial, also the floral back-plate, all post-date Knibb's clock, and so probably date this little movement to circa 1680. So far as I am aware, this particular construction is unique in the Fromanteels' *oeuvre*; only matched by Pierre van Strijp, Rome, c.1700, (cited in *RH*, *The Seconds' Hiatus*). Zagreb's Fromanteel breaks the mould, enlarging the known canon of this highly important English clock dynasty.

Abraham's movement clearly is not of Dutch extraction, nor even Dutch influenced. Its typical English fusee movement has the Ahasuerus Fromanteel pallet-arbor refinement of a 'knife-edge' pendulum suspension to the rear-pivot with a steel 'keeper' dove-tailed into the back-cock, a refinement absent in Hague clocks. The movement, apparently, might be earlier than its floral engraved back-plate and ringed dial-holes suggest, even perhaps before 1675? Seeing the new importance of Zagreb's Fromanteel movement, probably its English case (on evidence of Dial swivels) was important too, perhaps a large [turn-table case](#) in a fine show-wood or even conservative ebony for the Dutch market. But this *'apotheosis of English pendulum clocks'* seems not to have established an eager new clientele among the Hague's conservative and thrifty burghers.

These findings and originations went to Hans Kreft and to Dr Vesna Lovrić Plantić at Zagreb, who kindly consented to my publishing these findings and originations; which the museum will use in their publications. I also made a direct plea, "[Because of this unique Fromanteel movement's undoubted historical and technical importance, please display it without the later case or the added dial-arch \(falsely dated '1661'\). I realise my plea runs contrary to conservatorial views, but the arch and case are not culturally relevant, and are not \*bona-fide\* 'improvements', but in fact 'abuses'.](#)" I cited example of Florence's Museo Galileo's prominent display of *Treffler's* movement; hoping that Zagreb Museum of Arts & Craft accepts this antiquarian's genuine plea.

This *'Fromanteel Story'*, and *open research* it represents, is just beginning. As a long- standing Fromanteel enthusiast, I am well aware of the significance of this discovery; Ronald Lee and Peter Gwynn too would equally have been excited by the revelations of an unknown Fromanteel workshop, with their entry into the competitive Hague marketplace; later to found the first Dutch Clockmakers' Guild, in 1688, with Pieter Visbagh as first Master. I am sure horologist pilgrims will make their ways to Zagreb to examine for themselves. I too would be delighted to make Abraham Fromanteel's acquaintance. If anyone knows of any similar movement I should be delighted to know of it and see images: <<mailto:ahasuerus@btinternet.com>>. Here I acknowledge both Dr. Plantić and Hans Kreft as co-authors in this preliminary study, and I also acknowledge the confidence shown by their referral.

**Initial report, pending a fuller evaluation by or for the Museum of Arts & Craft, Zagreb.**

**Copyright Keith Piggott**

**(edited February 2012, original November 2011)**

▲ [\(Back to Top\)](#)

▲ [\(Back to RH\)](#)