

Translated excerpt

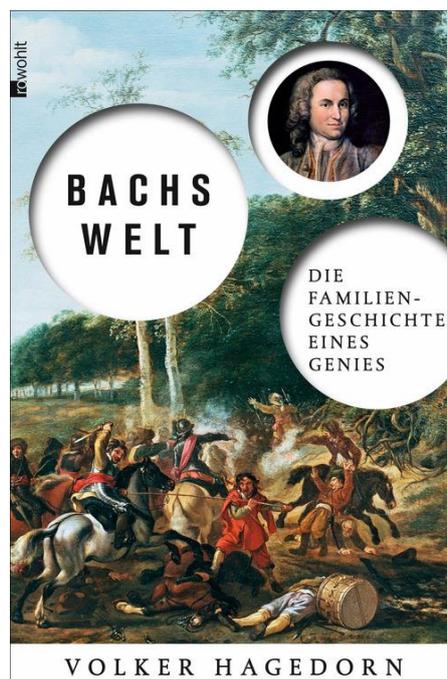
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Bachs Welt. Die Familiengeschichte eines Genies

Rowohlt Verlag, Reinbek bei Hamburg 2016
ISBN 978-3-498-02817-6

pp. 51-66

Volker Hagedorn
Bach's World: The Family History of a Genius

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CHAPTER 2 THE WAR

*In which one musician goes to the “officiers,”
another disappears and Thuringia
is devastated for a full thirty years*

The setting: Near the equator of the earth, in Thuringia; and the clash and crush of its continental plates hoists it to an elevation of more than five thousand meters. The time: 360 million years before the present age. Let us move into the future: Ninety million years later, the terrain sinks; volcanos seethe; a tropical sea encroaches, magma gushing within it; and metals precipitate—iron, copper, silver, manganese, uranium, gold—only to be covered with sediments another million years later. The crust of the earth is raised up once again—with the present age still another 65 million years away—and the Thuringian forest begins to emerge, though as yet without the slightest hint of human life; and the dinosaurs have long since decomposed. What is to become Europe has wandered up toward the north from the equator. Time races on; with the present now only four thousand years away, the first settlers appearing beneath the shadows of a green mountain harbor not the slightest suspicion that it is an extinct volcano elevated nearly a thousand meters above sea level. They soon discover iron and salt under their feet and in the surrounding slopes. In Suhl, just five hundred years before the present age, they fashion weapons out of the iron extracted from their mines, supplying all of Europe with it; in the year 1600, Denmark purchases 6000 gun barrels inscribed with the royal coat of arms, and before long, 20,000 muskets and wheel-lock guns are produced every year. The arms race has begun, and Suhl is flourishing. It is a loud city, with stridently clamorous iron hammers, bore smiths, drilling and grinding mills; it is a beautiful city, a wealthy city—one that also has musicians.

It is here that Johann Bach—born in 1604 in Wechmar as the oldest son of Anna and Hans Bach—is sent for his apprenticeship. “Now, as his father, Hans Bach,” Johann Sebastian later writes, “brought him along on a number of occasions when summoned to the above-named locality, so too did a personage by the name of Hoffmann from the old city of Pfeiffer in Suhl once seek to prevail upon him to place his son in apprenticeship to him. This did then transpire; and thus he was engaged for five years as assistant and two years as journeyman.” Five hours of riding may well have been all that was needed on that day in May of the year 1618 for thirteen-year-old Johann Bach and his father to reach the city and his Meister, Christoph Hoffmann, up in the forests of Thuringia; but even given our uncertainty, the 23rd of May, 1618, is a day the world will never forget.

The news making its way out from Prague on that day was initially just a far-distant event for the residents of Thuringia—namely, that the Protestant nobility in the Bohemian capital had stalwartly defended itself against the Catholic government, which, contrary to all prior assurances, had seized for itself the power of governance. Noblemen and townspeople forcibly penetrated the fortress to confront four of the emperor’s representatives. Precious few of the protesting Protestants were privy to the plan of the Count of Thurn, who had no less in mind than a political murder – and indeed, the burgrave, the castellan and his scribe did fall a full seventeen meters from the open window of the Bohemian Chancellory. A pile of manure, however, covered the spot that day which the conspirators well knew was paved with hard stone. Filthy, running from the bullets raining after them, all three men survived.

It did not remain bloodless, however; following this was a Protestant revolt in Bohemia, whereupon the archbishop and elector of Cologne ominously asserted, “Should it prove true that the Bohemians have the intention of deposing Ferdinand [brother of the Kaiser and King of Bohemia] and electing an opposing king, they may immediately commence with preparations for

a twenty-, thirty- or forty-year war.” And that is precisely what came to pass. The war was to last thirty years and cost four million people their lives. And the region of Thuringia – fragmented and falling to division because of the fissuring of its dynasties, home to wealthy cities and flourishing agriculture, hundreds of court and town musicians, organists and cantors, and traversed by major trade routes – became the domain of all parties to the war in 1620, a region used for amassing supplies and regularly swept through by the military.

The war was to spare only eighty-four houses in Suhl, the city in which Johann Bach spent the first seven years of the conflict. This, however, is not the reason it proves so difficult to gain historical access to the Johann of this time as well as his younger brothers, who also came to town piper Hoffmann. While the utter destruction of the thriving identity of an entire city is all we see when we pay it a visit, it was also not the bombs of the Allies to destroy that which unfolded in full beauty once again in the 17th century. Rather, it was the architectural academy of the East German GDR that brought the historic city center to its demolition for the sake of “socialistic restructuring.” Under the Großer Beerberg, that 250-million-year-old extinct volcano, are vast stretches of prefabricated concrete slab buildings in all their soul-oppressing ugliness; the terraced city center is dismembered, rent asunder. Since the end of the GDR, 20,000 residents have left Suhl; the average age is 50, the city boasts more homes for the elderly than primary schools, and the philharmonic has been shut down.

There are children, however; and there is a music school. Though located near the city center, it is also at the outskirts of town, a three-story historical building painted red next to the light blue of the neighboring “City Casino.” As I enter, a little boy traipses by, large cello case strapped to his back, a child even younger than Johann so long ago; and I hear the muffled sounds of the piano penetrating their way out into the echoing corridors. I have not registered my visit in advance, but the secretary, sitting in a large office—a lady with rosy cheeks and reddish hair—finds it intriguing, if slightly madcap, that because of a music student from Suhl in 1618, I wish to know where music students in Suhl learn today. She even checks if there might be an orchestra rehearsal taking place that I could attend, as it is not permitted visitors to just burst into any given individual lesson. No, she informs me, the next one will be on the following day. No matter, I say. She recommends that I call up the local cantor. I listen a bit more from the corridors, which—scruffy as they are—still emanate a bit of the snug, sheltered feeling of the GDR, even a quarter of a century after its end. The few notes I hear sound astonishingly subdued for the amount of echo in the halls. Even here, Suhl is a quiet city.

It is also quiet in the city center, where the people are gathering to sit in the May sun around a small chestnut tree while listening to a pianist who has rolled his instrument onto the plaza and is pleasantly tickling the ivories as he advertises CDs with the music he is playing. His voice has a hushed, husky quality to it. A bit farther away, young men from southern Europe have sat down on some steps and stubbly-bearded men drinking beer have gathered in the shadows of the bratwurst stand. The display window of the Sparkasse bank features ads for apartments and houses; for just 550 EUR, one can rent an apartment 125 square meters in size in a prime location, including a parking spot. The cantor cannot be reached under any of his three telephone numbers, and I do not leave him a message, either. I have the feeling I should leave this slumbering volcano region in peace.

On the way back to the car, I pass what once was a stately half-timbered latticework building, now rotted and cordoned off with a metal fence; one can still make out the letters of *Feierabendhaus* inscribed upon it. Then I stumble upon a familiar musician name after all above two shuttered-up shop windows on an equally dilapidated house; it is the name of my grandfather, a violinist who participated in his father’s military band already at age fourteen. He had never been to Suhl; someone else with a business here decades prior simply had the same name. My grandfather seems about as far away from this place as the roaring volcano of the Mesozoic era

and the droning of the smithy's hammer in the year 1618 that welcomed the apprentice Johannes Bach to Suhl—but let us just call him Johann.

Anno 1626: Johann is “versed to well-nigh perfection on all manner of instruments,” as is to be expected of a town piper. In addition to the cornet, trumpet, trombone, dulcian and violin, he has also mastered the organ; and the assumption is that he also knows how to operate a pistol. All the townspeople, farmers and craftsmen are familiar with firearms by this point. Word is that town piper Hoffmann, too, dealt in firearms, and there is a connection between Johann and the Flittners, a family in possession of a mine which also dealt in wine and weapons.

Perhaps Johann had also already encountered the new musket type in Suhl, the one the city began delivering to the Swedish army in 1630, which weighed a good five kilograms, measured 1.4 meters in length and was employed without supporting fork. This could be presumed possible, after all, for one who went on to earn his keep for a time “by the officers.” I envision the 21-year-old tall, like his grandfather Veit, with a finely chiseled face, held back but in no way fragile, and armed with a weighty wheel-lock pistol as he makes his way to Wechmar at the beginning of May 1626, traveling five hours by horse right through the heart of the proverbial dragon's lair. He had just learned that the marauding Merodians had stormed through Gotha to appropriate Ohrdruf as their military headquarters, implying nothing other than the possible rampage of Wechmar, where Johann's parents and younger siblings are still—hopefully—living.

Even among the ranks of the Catholic League, led by Wallenstein, the regiment of General of the Artillery Colonel Johann II von Mérode-Waroux held a foul reputation. His Walloons—French-speaking soldiers from Liège, Luxembourg, Limbourg and Hainaut—were known to be particularly ruthless; and 8,000 of them—a fourth on horseback—were now free to help themselves to whatever they deemed necessary within the area spanning from Gotha down to the fringes of the Thuringian Forest. And they were not alone; with them was their entourage, tagging along behind them, a rabble, a mob, at times four times as large as the army it was tailing, consisting of the soldiers' wives, their children of all ages, sutlers, laborers, others profiting from the menagerie. Ohrdruf, a flowering city with 3,000 residents, farmers and craftspeople, was now surrounded on the west and north by a huge camp of carts and tents, likely about 16,000 people in number, their wash fluttering in the summer wind.

Depicted as a tableau, this may seem distinctly more beautiful than the similarly sized industrial development in the same location a good four hundred years later; but Johann Bach, riding past all these people in their camp, knew how the food chain works in such a place. Word had gotten around about the things later able to be read in such chronicles as that of Volkmar Happe. The court council of Ebeleben, which served as the Walloons' point of departure, submitted this report at the beginning of May 1626: “Here, before the gates of Ebeleben, they wholly disrobed my gracious lord, bird catcher Ludewigen, save his shirt, seizing his clothes and shoes. They seized two wagons laden with household goods and the accompanying four horses from kitchen bookkeeper Johann Harprechten; three horses belonging to someone from Abtsbessingen; five horses from the farmers of Billeben; two horses from a certain Rosenstiel from Gundersleben; and a whole herd of sheep from the Niederspiers. Imposing their own day of judgment upon two poor glass transporters from Vollenborn in Ebeleben, they seized their earthly belongings and caused their death with numerous wounds.” Villages were torched, women “taken away and abducted”; in one field lay “a poor small child about 6 years of age,” shot like his mother—and one would much rather not recount the rest of the report regarding this matter.

If Happe's chronicle is any indication, there is no exaggeration or fabrication to be had in the pages of “Simplicissimus,” a novel dedicated to the war and its occurrences, published in 1668 by his contemporary, Hans Jakob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen. “But the consequence exacted by my history / is that I bequeath it to our dear posterity / to know the horrors wrought over and over again in this, our German Civil War.” These are the nearly apologetic words we confront at the

onset of his novel's fourth chapter. With his occasional insertion of sarcastic comparisons, he attempts to shield himself and his readers from the horrors also representative of daily life in Thuringia in the years when Veit Bach's grandchildren were young men and women.

“They stormed through the house, upstairs and down; / yea, the secret chambers were no longer safe, / just as if the golden fleece of Colchis were hidden within,” Grimmelshausen writes. “Others made from linens, / clothing and household goods of the like / large bundles, / as if they wished to make preparation for a rummage sale somewhere, / but whatever they did not conceive to take with / was destroyed. / A number of them stabbed through hay and straw with their rapier, / as if they did not already have enough sheep and pigs to stab! / Some shook the feathers out of the beds / and filled them with bacon, / dried-up meat and other things of the sort, / as if that would clearly improve the sleep to be had upon them; others smashed furnaces and windows, / as if heralds with an eternal summer to announce. / They smashed copper and tin tableware / while packing out the bent and ruined pieces; / bedsteads, / tables, / chairs and benches were set aflame, / as the dry wood lying in piles around the courtyard was clearly too plentiful. / The plates and bowls, they split in two—finally, at last!—either because they much preferred eating roasts / or because, clearly, their design only / bared the intention of holding a single meal. / Our maid was so mauled in the stall, / she could no longer walk outside, / verily, nothing other than great degradation. They laid out the workman, bound up, on the ground, / stuffed plywood in his mouth / and poured a milking pail full of foul dung water into his body (...).”

Even after having encountered a number of riders along the way, Johann Bach arrived in Wechmar unmolested. As long as no words were exchanged, they were able to consider him one of their own, meaning he did not have to attempt to use the little bit of cant he had picked up at the pubs in Suhl. There were no uniforms in this band of mercenaries; identifying marks such as feathers or armlets were worn only in battle. He had clothed himself as a soldier, with rough shirt, leather doublet, cape, broad-brimmed hat and jackboots. Riding along the roaring Apfelstädt River, he passed by fields of woad trampled to the ground; and he was relieved to see the Saint Vitus church steeple towering high above the roofs as it always had. The May air tasted sweet, as seven years prior when he had moved out to Suhl; but then the wind turned, carrying with it the smell of fire. He rode over the stone bridge up to the village, and the first thing to catch his eye as he came around the bend was Hans Stiglitz—but the man, not recognizing him, froze ever so slightly before leaping behind a corner of the house, until Johann, calling out his name, took off his mercenary's hat. Hans had held him to be one of the Walloons, who had just come through and ransacked the village; the church lane had been ablaze with the fires they had set, and there had been deaths—but all the Bachs had been spared. “And your little daughter?” Johann inquired; his mother had accompanied little Anna at Christmas for her baptism as godmother. Anna was fine, he replied.

“But our dear old Hein, the master baker...” Hans hesitated. “He was hiding in the bakery oven. There they found him, barred his escape and kindled a fire.” Hein! Hein Eißer, who had taken in Veit and his sons as a young man. Hein, whose first grandchild, not yet even two years old, was named Vitus, in honor of Veit Bach. Hearing these words shook Johann to the core.

His reunion with his family could only be celebrated in measure; but at least there was no lack of musical instruments, despite all that was gone after the plundering. Since his father Hans was in Gotha that day to assist the town pipers, the ensemble consisted of the three brothers plus one of the Eißers who joined in, and thus, even without lute or virginal, there were four musicians to play through the *Ludi musici*, put to print five years prior by Samuel Scheidt, the famous Kapellmeister and organist in Halle. Johann had brought along the score from Suhl, stowed away in his saddlebags. Christoph, who had just turned thirteen, played the descant on the violin, so agile in its ornamentation that Johann remarked he should go into training. Ten-year-old Heinrich played the second voice on the flute, one of the Eißers took the viola and Johann played dulcian. Their twenty-year-old sister Anna moved gracefully to a *Paduane*, and neighbors with children

were drawn to listen in front of the Bach house—as if, with these notes, the goodness of the far-off south was suddenly wafting into that day in May.

Italy was in the air in those years, musically speaking—even when it came to composers like Scheidt and his mentor, Michael Praetorius, who had not even studied there themselves as had Heinrich Schütz. Madrigals and polychorality were the first to make their way north, and in the time to follow, the *stile concitato* came into fashion—that gripping style portraying the flurried emotional stirrings of the soul, paralleling the altercation between *prima pratica* and *seconda pratica*, between balanced-out polyphony and the monody which allows one voice to follow the words and which had given way to the nascency of the opera in the south. All these were not the doings of lone geniuses but rather a tight network of souls who also took up their pens to communicate beyond borders and confessions in their treatises and countless letters. The fact that one of the greatest innovators was Claudio Monteverdi, Kapellmeister at St. Mark’s Basilica in the Catholic city of Venice, did not bother Lutheran composer Bach in the least. They conceived of music as a collaborative project, particularly at a time when armies were ravaging their way across Germany and barbarism was on the rise. Michael Praetorius had also collated his *Syntagma musicum* previous to that in Wolfsbüttel—three thick volumes summarizing the international stand of compositional techniques and performance practices at the time. The three greatest German composers of this time—Schein in Leipzig, Scheidt in Halle, Schütz in Dresden—all knew him; they were all nearly the same age, around forty at the time, and close friends.

Even by the time the little ones were asleep, the daylight outside still provided enough light to read scores; they wanted to sing, and their mother went into the house and pulled out something by Melchior Franck “brought into this world a year earlier than my Johann,” she joked, as it had been printed back in 1603 in Nuremberg under the title *Opusculum Etlicher Newer und alter Reuterliedlein / welche zuvor niemals musicaliter componirt, ganz lustig auff allerley art zu Musicieren mit vier Stimmen gesetzt*. But these *Reuter* (“riders”) are of a different sort than those who had plundered and murdered their way through Wechmar; and the meaning of *lustig* here is not “comical; funny” but rather “ambitious, challenging, sophisticated.” Franck, Kapellmeister of Coburg, had once been a student of Haßler, who had passed along to him what he had learned in Venice. “This Lied!” called out little Heinrich, recognizing it as he paged through the book in search of the cantus.

Johann furrowed his brow upon seeing it; a rather serious number, it was ill suited to the cheerful mental state they had finally attained despite the circumstances. But then he noticed the presence of a neighbor standing off to one side, almost as if doubled over—Margret, the wife, nay, the widow, of Hein Eißer. “Can you sing all the words to this one?” he asked his youngest brother. Perhaps no one could sing it better than Heinrich, for the words coming from the mouth of that ten-year-old as he carefully read aloud with his clear soprano voice sounded not self-evident but rather like something precious, declaimed with a sense of astonishment, as if not quite able to fathom the deeper sense hidden in its four-part harmony: “No matter how poor and wretched I am, / I possess an abiding purpose, / nourished by hope / granted to me by God; / and no man can bar me from it.” (“Wie wohl ich arm und elend bin / so hab ich doch ein steten Sinn / Hoffnung tut mich ernehen / die mir von Gott bescheret ist / mag mir kein Mensch nicht wehren.”)

When they reached the conclusion after four verses, “Gott tröst all b’trübte hertzen” (“God comforts all despondent hearts”), Hein’s widow was no longer present. Suddenly shocked by the hurried steps of someone else approaching, they were quickly reassured: It was Hans, who had walked the entire hour from Gotha after concluding his workday with the town pipers, rapier under his mantle, worried sick about his own and now overjoyed to find not only them but also his oldest with them as well. And, in the face of it all, that is just what we find ourselves wishing for them: that they might see each other once again—Hans from Pressburg, with his far-distant, blue-

eyed gaze, and the first child of his love for Anna, Johann, who also has his mother's finely curved mouth. Grimmelshausen later describes these war-torn decades with the words, "Hardly had one disaster come to an end / than we found ourselves already enmired in the next."

Perhaps it was the Walloons, or perhaps it was just a rat that brought the fleas to the village; but whatever the case, the Black Death was to visit Gotha again in the summer to follow—and went on to hit Wechmar as well. In October, Johann—by that point engaged to Barbara, oldest daughter of the master to whom he was apprenticed in Suhl—learned of the death of his sister Anna; and even if he did dare to venture a Christmas in infected Wechmar, it is certain his father, too, was no longer still conscious. It is with trembling hand that Parson Töpfer notes in the church register, "On December 26, 1626, our musician Hans Bach passed away; he was buried the following day."

As of June that same year, we see an increasing number of indications in Volkmar Happe's chronicle suggesting a relocation of the troops—followed not only by the pestilence but also an intestinal infection known as the "bloody flux," due primarily to the deficient field camp diet and considered the quintessential wartime illness. We learn of the troops' new location from the court counsel report at the end of August: "In this month, the emperor's General Tylli battled the King of Denmark for two days. Between Seesen and Luterer, the party of the Danish king was finally put to flight; among the several thousands of them who died were many commanders, including a young Landgrave of Hessen, and the rest were scattered to the winds. Tylli also captured 24 cannons. A glorious and mighty victory to present before the emperor." At Lutter, not far from what is today Salzgitter, this battle—which began on August 27 at 11am and lasted not two days but rather seven hours—saw the use of 31,000 foot soldiers and 11,500 cavaliers, 5,000 of whom lost their lives that day. King Christian IV of Denmark, who had positioned himself as head of the Protestants of Lower Saxony, made a tactical error, and 66-year-old Field General Tilly from the Netherlands knew well how to use it to his advantage. Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand in far-distant Vienna—a 38-year-old with helplessly cheerless gaze—was at the peak of his power at this time. But no peace was to follow in Thuringia. On August 30, Wechmar was once again plundered and set ablaze, with 18 homes and 19 barns burnt to the ground over the course of just five hours.

One of the Bachs was missing at this time, a cousin of the three brothers from Wechmar, perhaps the most promising of his generation, with exceptional talent; this auspicious young man was the firstborn and the great hope and pride of his father, town piper Caspar. When he was about 43 years old, Caspar had taken his wife and six children between the ages of two and nineteen, leaving Gotha and an apartment under the eaves of a department store in the year 1620 to move about 25 kilometers southeast to a considerably smaller town along the Gera River by the name of Arnstadt. At the time, Arnstadt had precisely 3187 residents and a huge moated castle in the Renaissance style built by the father of Christian Günther I, Count of Schwarzburg-Sondershausen, who had been residing and reigning here for about two decades—and who was the employer of our chronist, Volkmar Happe. In the year Count Christian summoned Caspar Bach as musician to Arnstadt, the count's sixth child, Anton Günther, arrived in the world—someone who was also to play a significant role in the lives of the Bachs in years still to come.

Caspar Bach had to climb up 164 steps to a height of 33 meters in order to reach his new workplace. It was the tower of the castle, and Caspar, as *Hausmann*, was to sound the hours from its platform—as well as the alarm whenever he sighted fire or foe. Anyone today who stands in the miserably small room dubbed the "tower apartment" for its height realizes the impossible conditions facing Caspar and his family of eight in living here as the accounts report they did. And whoever steps out onto the surrounding platform, holding tight to the railing against the dizziness, sees the castle square far below—in miniature, scaled down to the model proportions of 1:20, placed in the midst of broad remnants of wall, for the moated castle fell victim to a new conceptualization, though not a socialistic one this time; in 1770, the residence was relocated and the castle torn down save the tower. And in 1922, a whole school class immortalized themselves

here as they scrawled out names like Paul and Wilhelm and Max—names that have become fashionable again in the early 21st century—and also gazed down at the red roofs of the city, a city which, in comparison to all the places where the Bachs lived, has seen the least change.

Not only did Caspar serve as the watchman here, he also played dulcian at the court—the bassoon of the time. He and his fellow apprentices were summoned for the sake of court music; also playing along with, initially as *Musikantenjungen* (lit. “musician boys”), were his sons, 17-year-old Melchior and 20-year-old Caspar—and the junior Caspar seems to have duly made a significant impression on the count, who invests considerable amounts of money in his education. At a time when the court was not yet half ruined from the contributions imposed by the armies sweeping through and the losses due to looted cattle and ravaged farmland, the *Kapelle* was equipped at a top-class level with thirteen musicians that could also be doubled when need be. Christoph Klemsee, their director, studied with Heinrich Schütz in Venice as one of the last students of Giovanni Gabrieli and published eighteen five-part madrigals. Christian Günther I was willing to go to some expense for good musicians. At 300 guilders per year, he paid lute player Constantin Göbisch even more than the Kapellmeister; the lute was, after all, the most important instrument when it came to the musical enrichment of primary mealtimes and the evening hours. When Göbisch moved away to Bayreuth in April of 1621 to join its resident *Hofkapelle*, the count soon sent the highly gifted Caspar after him on the two- or three-day journey by horse; and the Margrave of Bayreuth, also a Protestant, agreed to it.

At the onset of a journey traversing the same path long before taken by master baker Veit in coming to Thuringia, Veit’s 21-year-old grandson now travels in thoroughly different attire. Court tailor Nikolaus Ludewig had taken his measurements, perhaps fitting him for a courtier’s suit with doublet and pants of slitted pink satin underlaid with yellow silk. The doublet would have been short and tightfitting, the breeches fastened onto it consisting of a number of parts; and, fitted with laces and a small stand-up collar, the doublet would have had arms wide enough for a white shirt with cuffs underneath. The pants, no longer padded as they were before the war, were cut to be loose-fitting and ended just above the knee, closing with a rosette, then came colored silk stockings with garters and, finally, shoes, round in the front with tall heels—as heels had generally grown progressively taller since the turn of the century in accordance with the dictates of fashion. Increasingly interested in his appearance, Caspar had argued with the tailor about the ruffle. The millstone-like Spanish ruffle, of folded linen made as hard as glass with the use of starch and undergirded with a frame to hold it in place, was becoming outdated; while one would still wear the old style, it now rested soft and flat over the shoulder. Caspar also insisted on a soft lace collar as had been worn ten years prior by some Dutchmen, such as the painter Rubens.

His second suit was simpler, also including bucket top boots that went all the way to the knee, a fashion appropriated from the soldier’s attire, as was the leather collar with arms. The final pieces were two wide-brimmed hats—but not slouch hats as in the decade yet to come—with feathers and, of course, the sleeveless shoulder mantle, still Spanish but without the stiff lining, so that one might also drape it over one’s arm, and a three-quarter-length cape. Caspar’s mother, marveling at her oldest in his new *mundirung*, could only guess at the cost of all that finery; all this attire must have cost more than her husband’s yearly earnings! And indeed, we see from a glance at the count’s financial records that the expenditures for the scholar’s suit, mantle and headgear alone amounted to 139 guilders and three groschen (a guilder totaled twelve groschen, and one could purchase a whole loaf of bread for one groschen); and an additional 18 guilders were added to that for the shoes and boots.

That price may, however, owe to inflation; amidst all the financial seesawing of the *Kipper und Wipper* year of crisis in 1621, the amount of silver in one guilder was doctored down to just a third of the previous 12 grams. Caspar received an additional four guilders for the journey on June 11, 1621; and another 20 guilders were sent after him to allow for his acquisition of a violin and cornet.