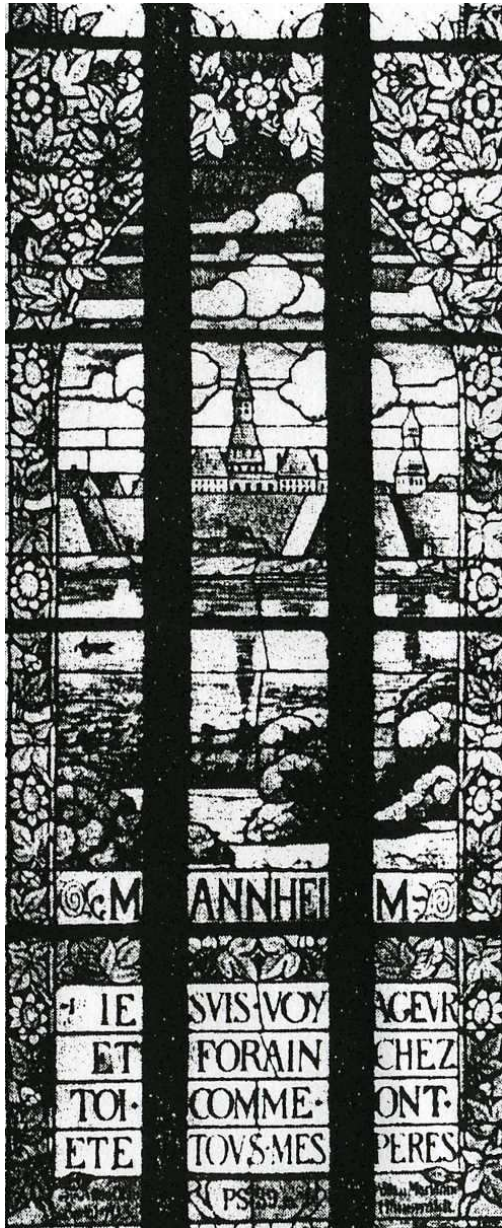


**FROM THE SOUTHERN NETHERLANDS TO AMERICA  
THE LONG EXODUS OF THE HUGUENOT FLEMINGS AND WALLOONS.**

**Francis Devos**

*« Je suis voyageur et forain chez toi comme ont été tous mes pères »*

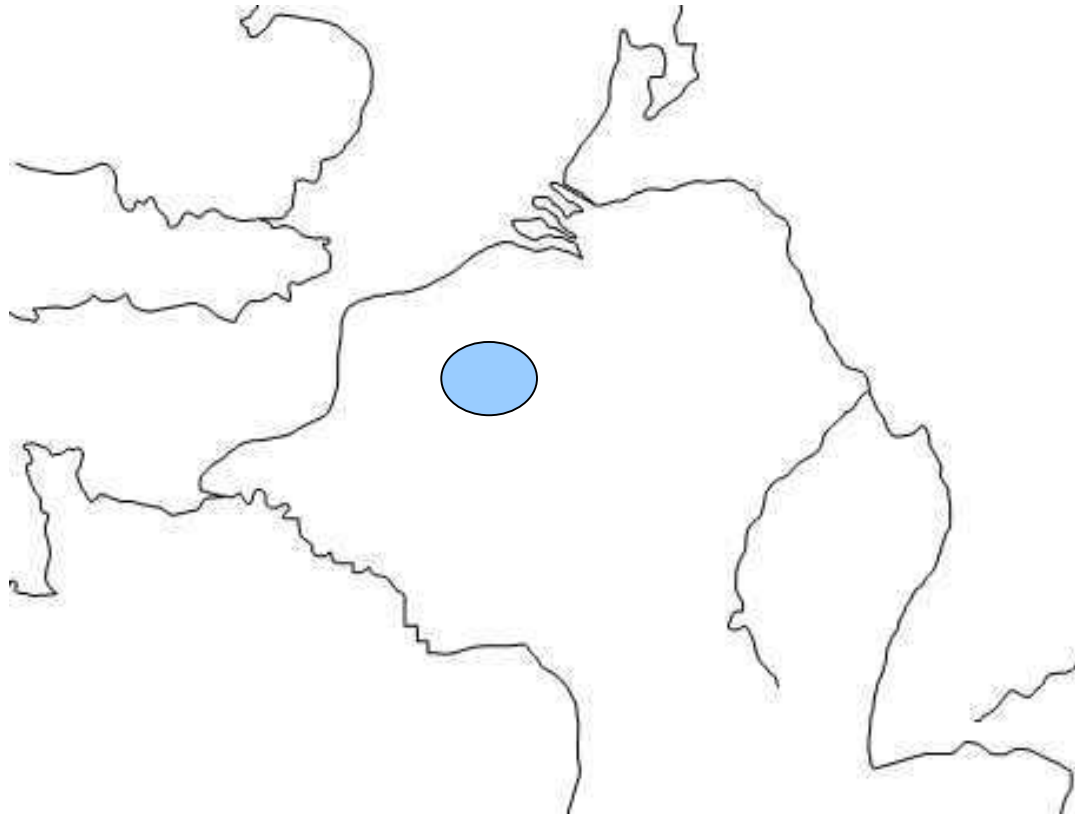
January 2007



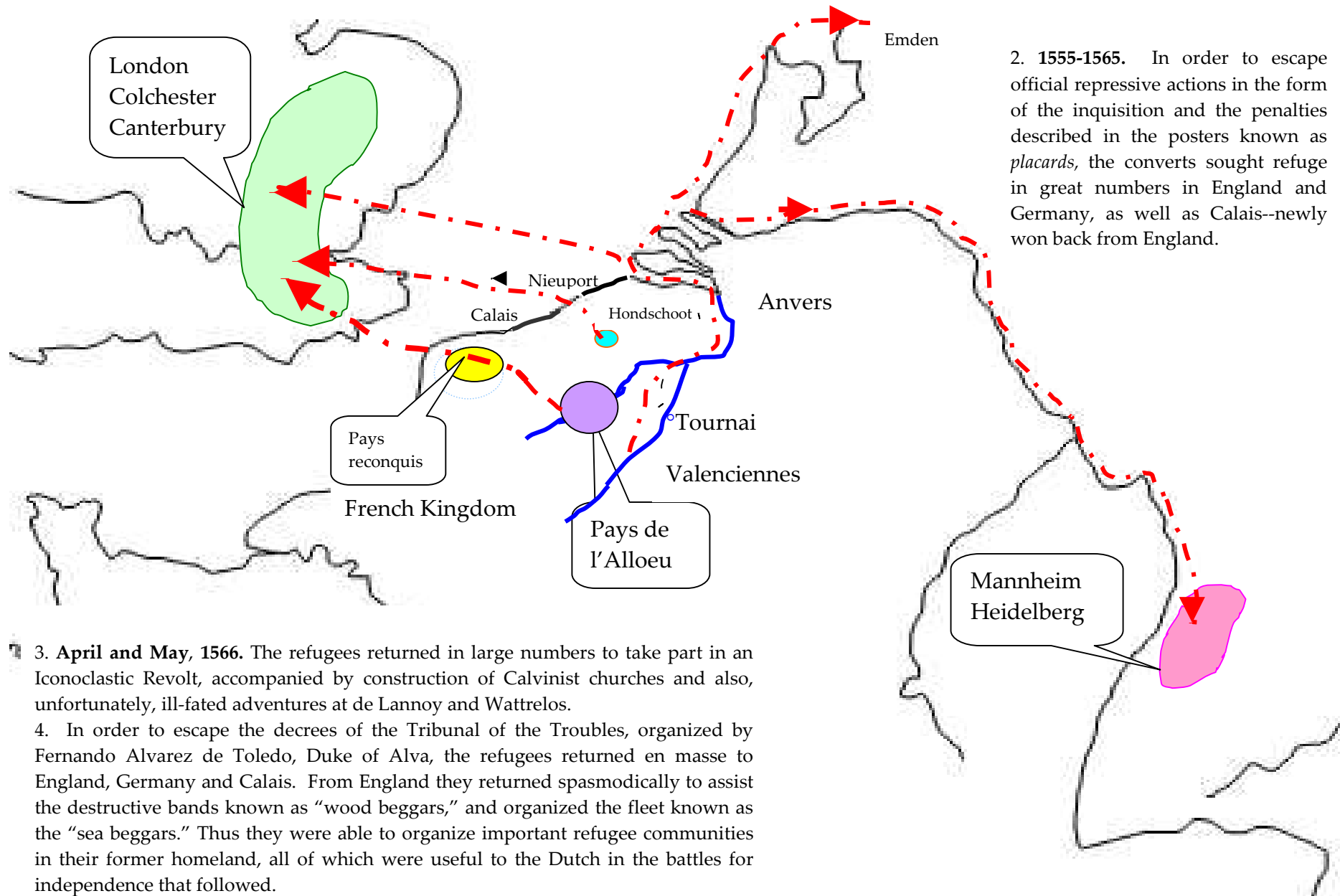
On a stained-glass window of the Walloon Church in Mannheim one may read:

*I am a traveler, a stranger among you, as were my fathers.*

This is a fitting encapsulation of the story of the Walloon Huguenots who came in great numbers at the invitation of the Elector Palatinate between 1655 and 1675 to repair the devastation inflicted on the Palatinate during the Thirty Years' War. Mannheim was the point of departure for those who settled New Harlem and New Paltz between 1624 and 1680. For those who finally settled in western New York State, however, their sojourn in Mannheim was only a small interval in their wanderings.



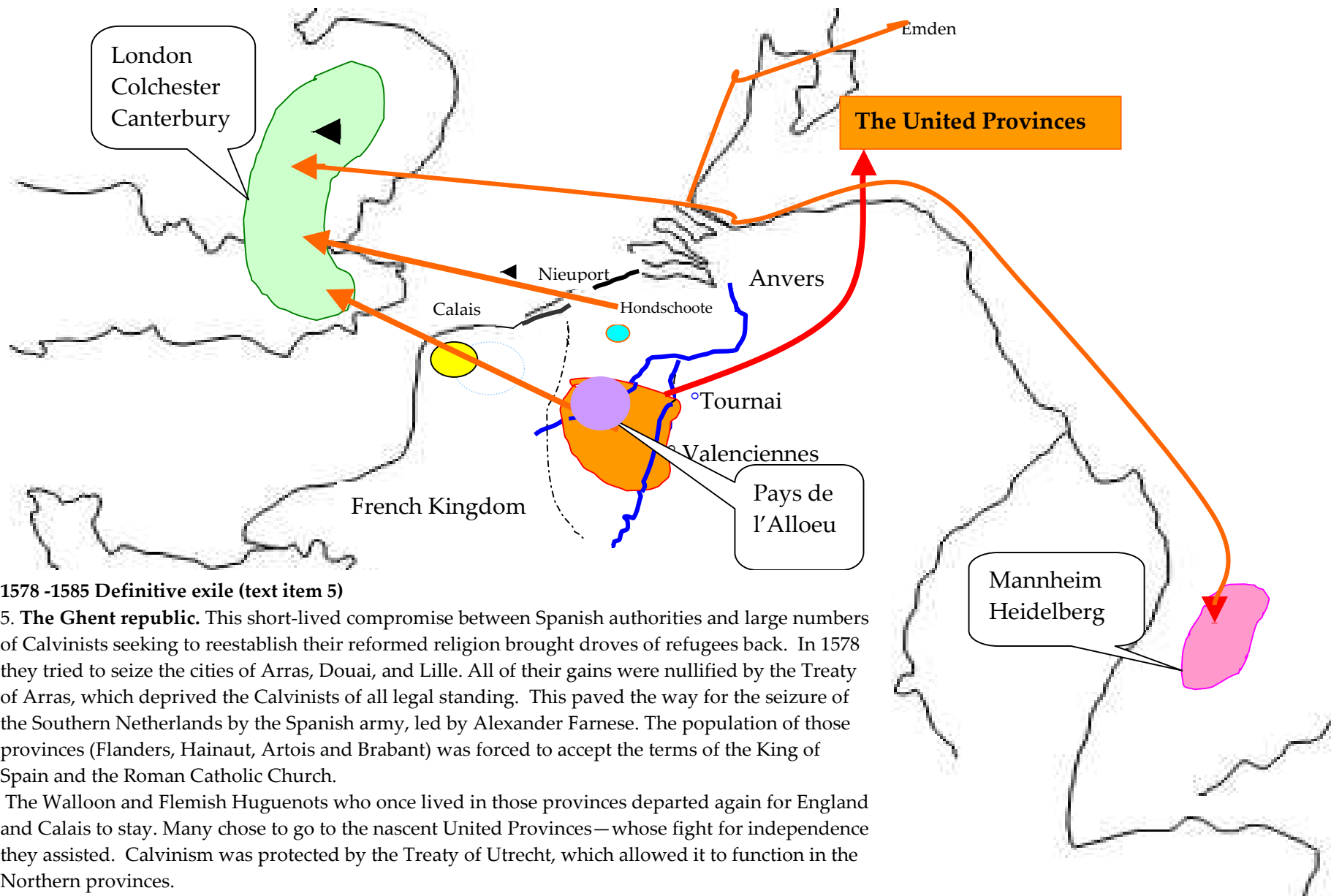
The area of departure for these people can be described in a circle drawn around the Pays de l'Alloeu, Valenciennes, Tournai and Douai. These communities were, in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, part of the XVII Provinces, the northernmost part of the vast domain of the Spanish kingdom. The French knew it as *Pays Bas du Sud*, the Southern Netherlands. The conversions to Calvinism of large numbers of the inhabitants there dated from **1545 to 1550**, the period following the burning at the stake of Peter Brully, who had been sent from Strasbourg by Calvin to preach the new religion.



2. 1555-1565. In order to escape official repressive actions in the form of the inquisition and the penalties described in the posters known as *placards*, the converts sought refuge in great numbers in England and Germany, as well as Calais--newly won back from England.

3. April and May, 1566. The refugees returned in large numbers to take part in an Iconoclastic Revolt, accompanied by construction of Calvinist churches and also, unfortunately, ill-fated adventures at de Lannoy and Wattlelos.

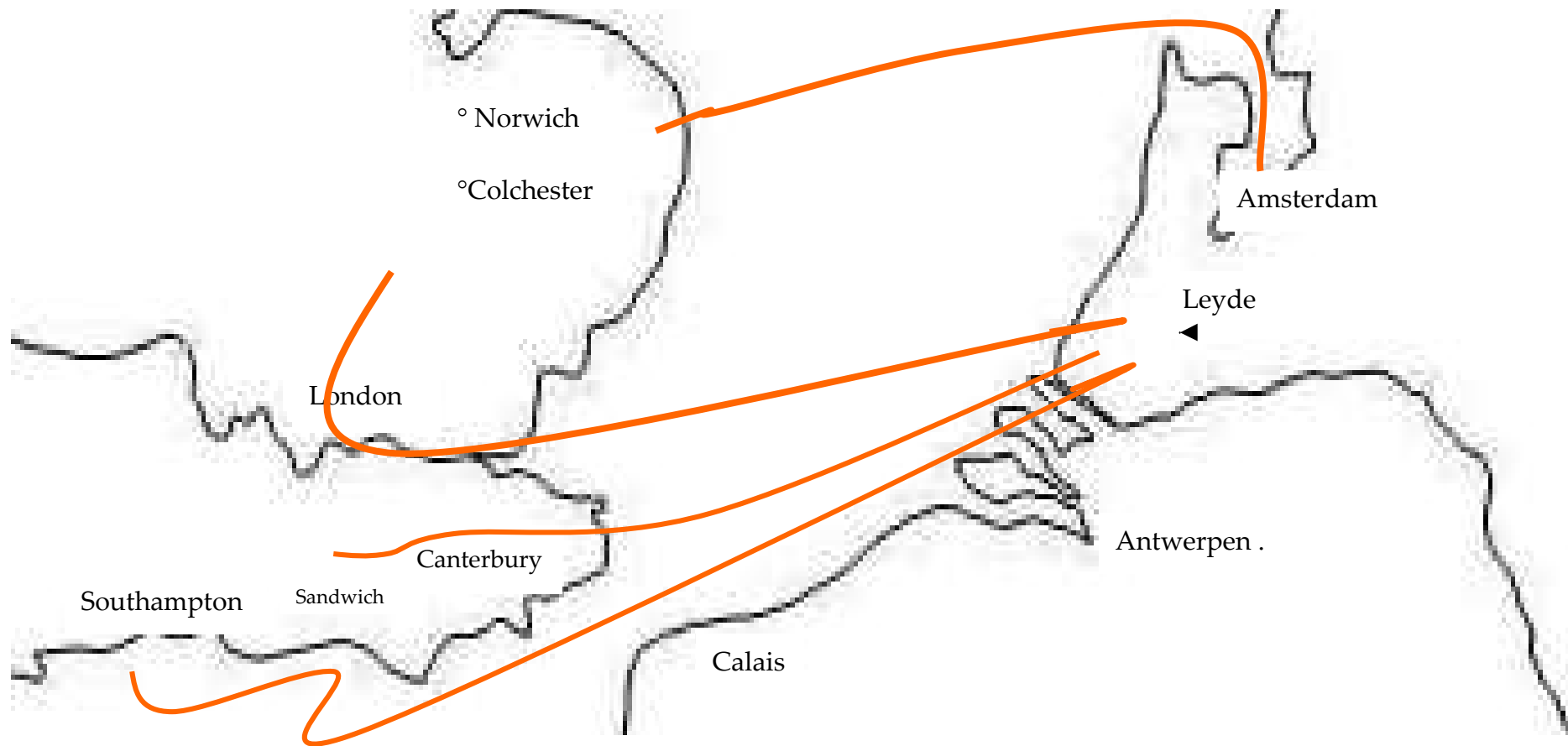
4. In order to escape the decrees of the Tribunal of the Troubles, organized by Fernando Alvarez de Toledo, Duke of Alva, the refugees returned en masse to England, Germany and Calais. From England they returned spasmodically to assist the destructive bands known as "wood beggars," and organized the fleet known as the "sea beggars." Thus they were able to organize important refugee communities in their former homeland, all of which were useful to the Dutch in the battles for independence that followed.



**1578 -1585 Definitive exile (text item 5)**

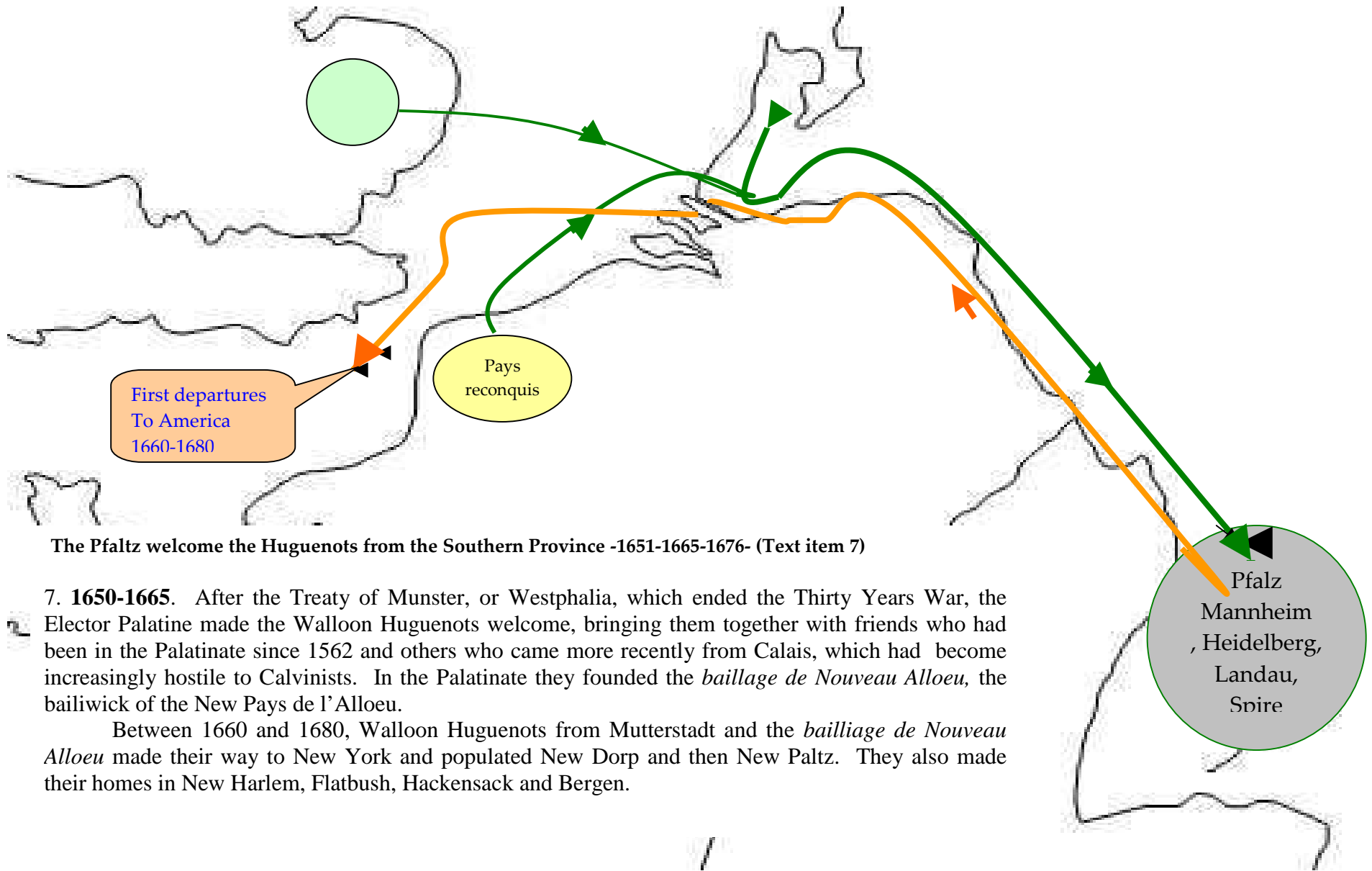
5. **The Ghent republic.** This short-lived compromise between Spanish authorities and large numbers of Calvinists seeking to reestablish their reformed religion brought droves of refugees back. In 1578 they tried to seize the cities of Arras, Douai, and Lille. All of their gains were nullified by the Treaty of Arras, which deprived the Calvinists of all legal standing. This paved the way for the seizure of the Southern Netherlands by the Spanish army, led by Alexander Farnese. The population of those provinces (Flanders, Hainaut, Artois and Brabant) was forced to accept the terms of the King of Spain and the Roman Catholic Church.

The Walloon and Flemish Huguenots who once lived in those provinces departed again for England and Calais to stay. Many chose to go to the nascent United Provinces—whose fight for independence they assisted. Calvinism was protected by the Treaty of Utrecht, which allowed it to function in the Northern provinces.



**Massive Exile from UK to the United Provinces. 1595-1605(Text item 6)**

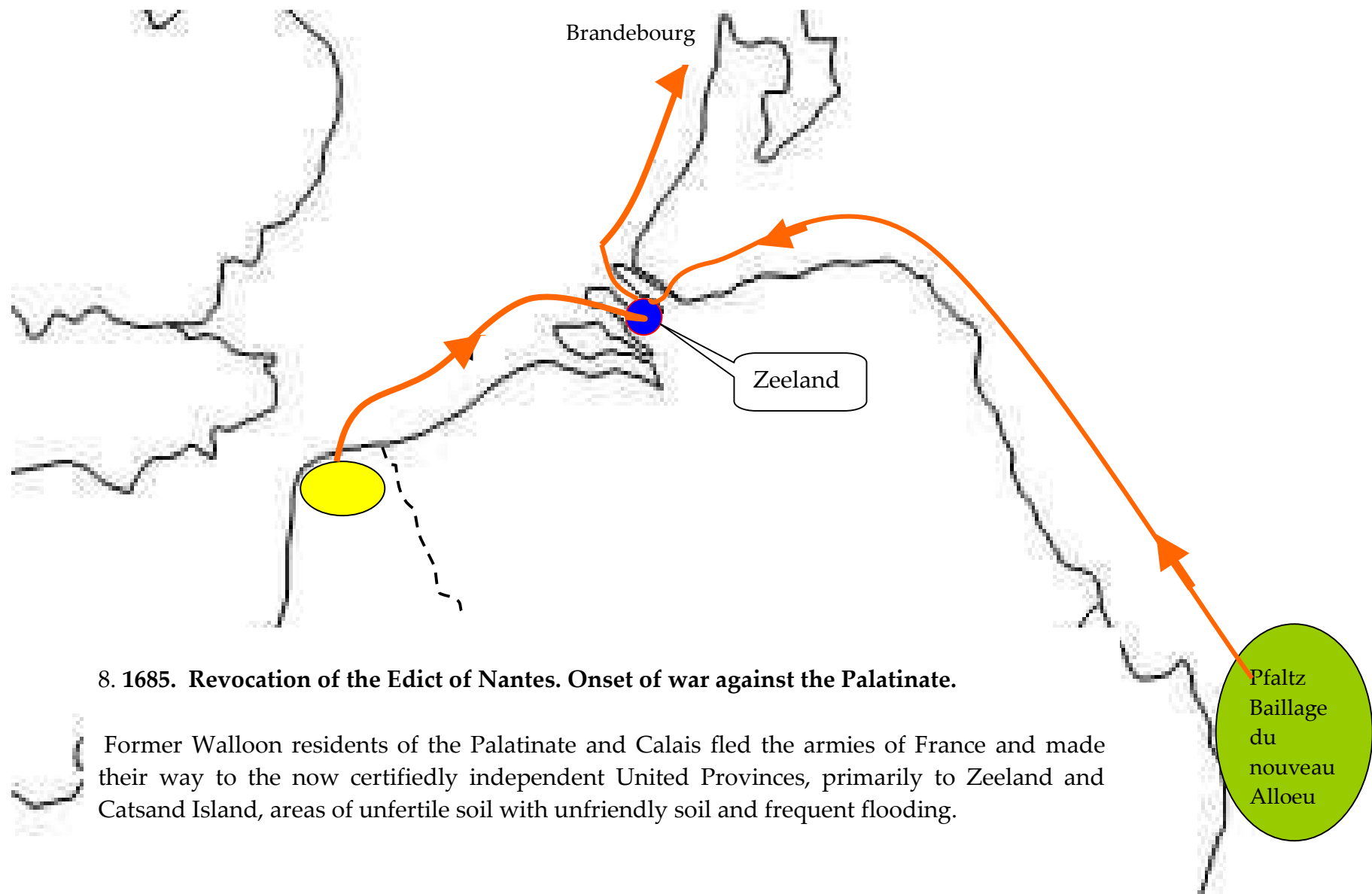
6- **1595-1605.** The Walloon refuge in England was disturbed by persecution under James I, resulting in the mass removal of Huguenot refugees to the Northern provinces, now the United Netherlands, ruled largely from Holland and Zeeland. They settled in large numbers in Leyden, where they were joined by worshipers of minor English sects in Leyden and Middleburg. There in Leyden they met the Separatists who departed in 1620 for America—"a land that divine providence has set aside for the elect"--and became famous there as "the Pilgrims." A year after their departure Jesse de Forest placed his famous "Round Robin" in the hands of the English Ambassador in Amsterdam. Not until 1624 did the first Dutch vessel make its way to the banks of the Hudson with the first settlers—predominantly Walloons, some of whom had signed the Round Robin.



**The Pfaltz welcome the Huguenots from the Southern Province -1651-1665-1676- (Text item 7)**

7. **1650-1665.** After the Treaty of Munster, or Westphalia, which ended the Thirty Years War, the Elector Palatine made the Walloon Huguenots welcome, bringing them together with friends who had been in the Palatinate since 1562 and others who came more recently from Calais, which had become increasingly hostile to Calvinists. In the Palatinate they founded the *bailliage de Nouveau Alloeu*, the bailiwick of the New Pays de l'Alloeu.

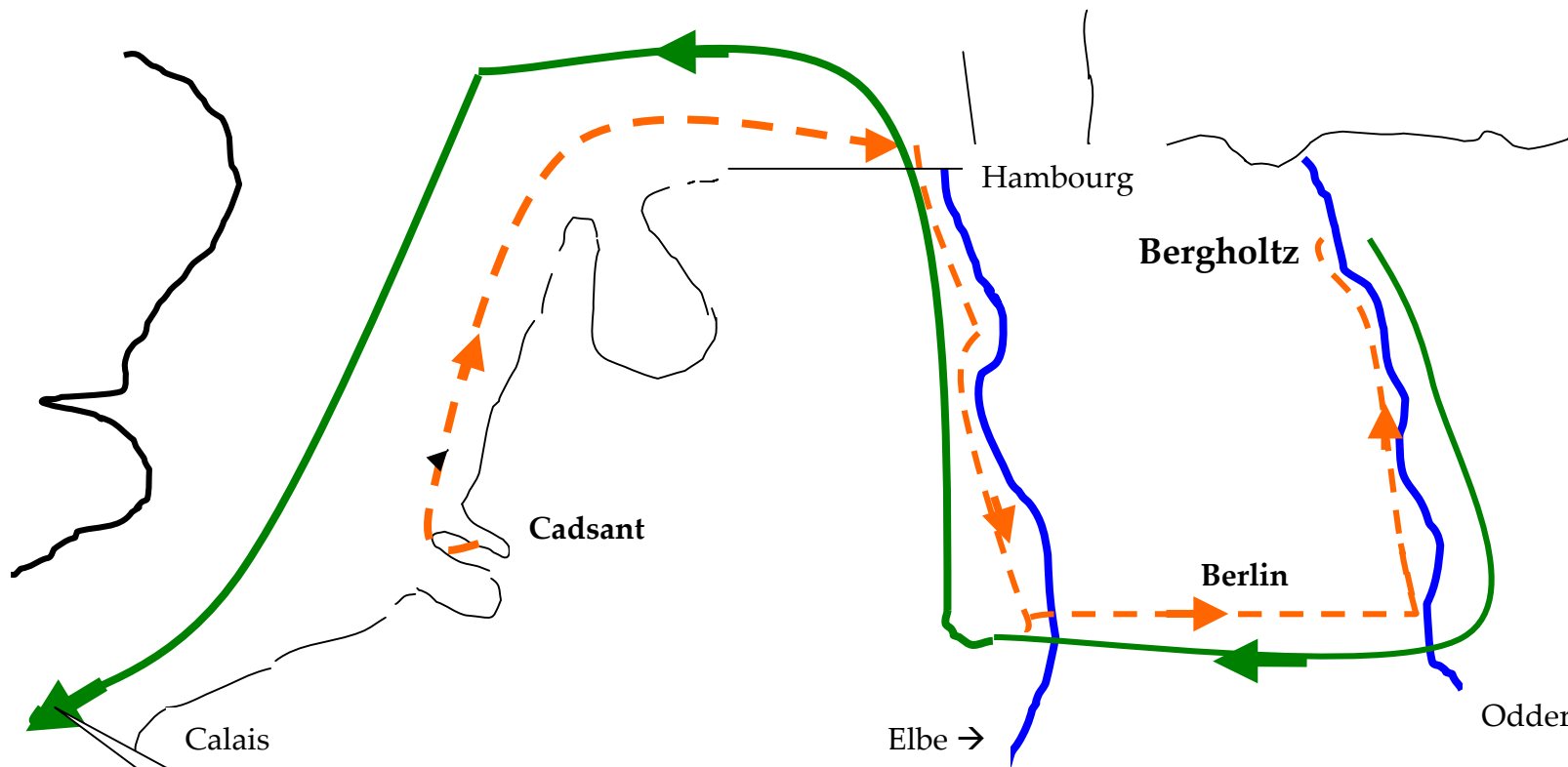
Between 1660 and 1680, Walloon Huguenots from Mutterstadt and the *bailliage de Nouveau Alloeu* made their way to New York and populated New Dorp and then New Paltz. They also made their homes in New Harlem, Flatbush, Hackensack and Bergen.



**8. 1685. Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Onset of war against the Palatinate.**

Former Walloon residents of the Palatinate and Calais fled the armies of France and made their way to the now certifiedly independent United Provinces, primarily to Zeeland and Catsand Island, areas of unfertile soil with unfriendly soil and frequent flooding.





**To America  
New Bergholtz**

9. In response to an invitation from the Great Elector of Brandenburg, a large number of refugees from Calais and the Palatinate left Zeeland for lands on the Elbe and the Oder. They passed through Berlin to the area known as the Uckermark and throve there in peace until 1840, when they departed from the Uckermark for Niagara Falls, where they founded the community known as New Bergholtz.

This is what we know at this time of the extraordinary travels of your ancestors in the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. They illustrate perfectly those words etched in glass in the church at Mannheim:

*"I am a traveler, a stranger among you, as were my fathers."*

Francis Devos. January 2007.