

Gerard Pietersz. van Zijl the portraitist

A ghost story

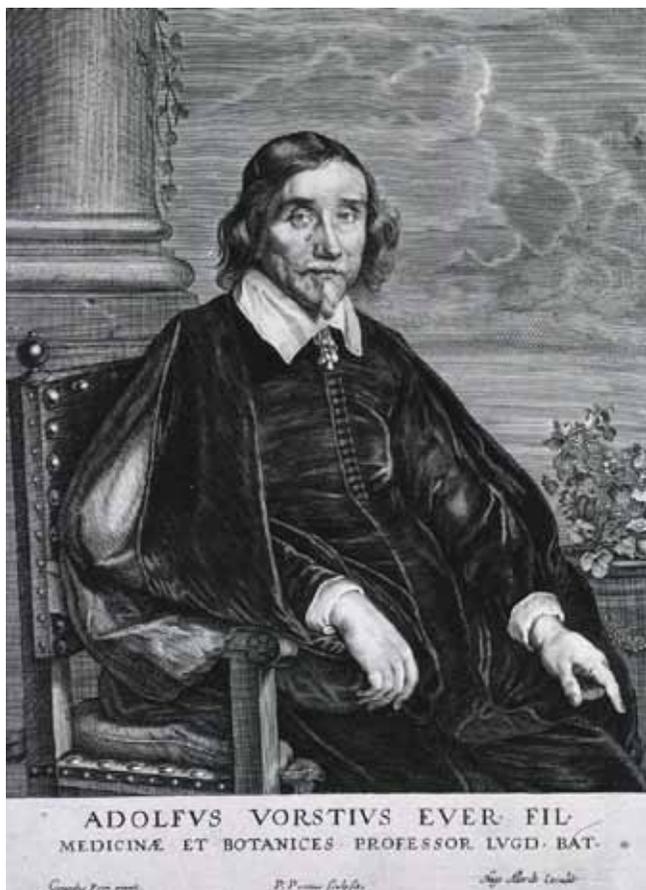
The Leiden(?)–London–Amsterdam painter Gerard or Gerrit Pietersz. van Zijl (c. 1607–1665) is known for his delicate, high-society genre paintings. Elegant figures dressed in silk and satin enjoy innocent pastimes and decorous flirtations in costly interiors or on gracious terraces. Often they play or listen to music, and their poses have a certain choreographic daintiness, painted with subtlety and skill. Despite his talent and the appreciation he enjoyed in his lifetime, he has not made it higher than the lowest rungs of the ladder of recognition in the modern historiography of Dutch painting. Unnoticed until now is that the artist is also the author of one of the better documented small portrait oeuvres of the mid-seventeenth century (see Table 1).¹ The evidence lies in sources of considerable authority: the testament of a sitter; the estate inventory of a sitter's spouse; a poem of praise by Joost van den Vondel (1587–1679); five tributes, naming six sitters, by Jan Vos (1612–1667); and three contemporaneous reproduction prints incised with a credit to Van Zijl's authorship of the two underlying paintings (figs. 1–3). These references show that the artist enjoyed the favor of prominent persons in the great regent families as well as in intellectual, artistic and mercantile circles. What makes this article a ghost story is that not a single one of the ten paintings so documented is known today or even seems to have been noticed again following its initial entry into the historical record.

Gary Schwartz
Director emeritus of CODART
The Hague

A SKETCHY CV

Gerard Pietersz. himself is something of a spook. His biographer Arnold Houbraken (1660–1719) wrote of his origins: 'Some say he was an Amsterdamer; others that he was from Leiden, the son of a framemaker named Pieter Gerretze'.² For nearly a hundred years he has been said – usually with a question mark – to have been born in Haarlem, the son of a framemaker 'who designed him to be a lawyer's clerk'.³ On what grounds this rests I have been unable to ascertain. The issue was seemingly decided in favor of Leiden with the rediscovery of a remarkable document first published in 1875 but that remained unnoticed by art historians until Tom van der Molen came across it in November 2011 and had it inserted into the entry on the artist in the indispensable online database *RKDartists&*. It is the record of Van Zijl's matriculation in Leiden University on 18 November 1652: 'Gerardus Petri van Zyl, Leidensis. 44, Hist. Human. ergo'.⁴ Before closing the case, however, it must be said that a search on the exhaustive online facility of the Leiden archives (*archiefleiden.nl*) turned up no record of a Pieter Gerritsz. or Gerrit Pietersz. van Zijl. Concerning Van Zijl's date of birth we have confirmation of the matriculation entry in a sworn statement of 1646, where his age is said to be approximately 39. Both documents place his birth in 1607 or 1608.⁵ His burial on 19 December 1665 took place in the Oude Kerk, Amsterdam. He lived in the Warmoesstraat and his funeral cost the respectable sum of 15 guilders.⁶ The main facts concerning the career of Van Zijl are reported by Arnold Houbraken thus:

It seems to me that in his artistic drive he followed in the footsteps of Anthonie van Dyck. At least, that is the reason given for why he went to England, where he actually lived upstairs from Van Dyck in Westminster. He was a great friend



1. Paulus Pontius after a lost painting by Gerard Pietersz. van Zijl, *Portrait of Adolf Vorstius* (1597-1633), engraving, 313 x 234 mm, Montreal, McGill University, The Osler Library Print Collection, image no. OPFO0941.

of Van Dyck's and often had the honor of seeing him paint, leading people to believe that he derived his artistic methods from him, in the same way as Graasbeek [Joos van Craesbeeck (1605/06-1660/61)] learned from [Adriaen] Brouwer [1605/06-1638]. If you reconstruct the sequence of events, you find that this was the period when he established the foundation of his art. Nor was it a moment too soon, since Van Dyck died in 1641, at which time Gerards returned to his birthplace Amsterdam. From 1655 to 1658 he lived in a back room on the Hartestraat, where he practiced art in silence. Those who knew him tell me that at the time he was a young man about forty years old. His skillful handling of the brush earned him the nickname 'the small-scale Van Dyck'.⁷

Jaap van der Veen has published previously unknown documents that tell us that Van Zijl lived in the Hartestraat in the Jordaan in Amsterdam by 1647, in the house of the surgeon Jacob Dielofs. Block (1600/01-1664),⁸ and that after his death Jan Meures and his wife Judith Weijntjes claimed to be and were recognized by the courts as Van Zijl's sole heirs, leading Van der Veen to suggest that he had been living in their house when he died.⁹ These ties are of greater significance than a mere landlord-tenant relationship. Both Jacob Dielofs. Block and Jan Meures played roles of some importance in Amsterdam literary and artistic life. As we shall see, in 1651 Gerard Pietersz. was to be accorded a singular honor when a high-standing volume of poetry was dedicated to him. This constellation speaks of more than mere coincidence. The artist would seem to have been taken up in the households of these lovers of literature. The only other detail from the life of the artist that I have found in the literature is that on 7 August 1660 he was appointed guardian to the children of his colleague Jacob van Loo (1614-1670), who after stabbing a wine merchant to death in a fight was preparing to flee the country.¹⁰ Gerard Pietersz. was apparently a man you could turn to when the chips were down. In 1687 a painter named Antonie Geeraards joined the society for painters in The Hague, the Confrerie Pictura. According to Pieter Terwesten he was the son of Gerard Pietersz. and painted genre scenes in his father's style. The absence of any reference to a wife or child in documents pertaining to Gerard Pietersz. makes this unlikely. Yet it is intriguing that Antonie has the forename of Gerard's great hero.¹¹ Concerning Van Zijl's work, Houbraken writes:

Most of the paintings by him that one comes across are merry companies of young women and gentlemen dressed in the fashion of the time. All are painted from life – from attractive models at that. A particularly striking feature are the women's hands, which rival what I have said about Van Dyck in terms of painterly technique as well as in sensitivity and beauty of form.¹²

The rest of the story is told by the anonymous author of the desultory entry on Van Zijl in Thieme-Becker: 'Painted mainly party scenes that were valued very highly by contemporaries and in the eighteenth century still fetched higher prices than Vermeer. Afterwards Van Zijl fell into oblivion and his works, which were seldom signed, rebaptized with better-known names'.¹³ The rest of the twentieth-century literature on the artist consists mainly of a single paragraph by Abraham Bredius in an article of 1905 and two pages in *The Burlington Magazine*, 1922, by J.H.J. Mellaart,



who with the help of Bredius, Cornelis Hofstede de Groot, Georg Gronau and I.Q. van Regteren Altena, compiled a list of 29 extant paintings – 26 genre paintings, two history paintings and one portrait – formerly attributed to 17 different masters. This situation is in marked contradiction to the justified remark by Albert Blankert in his catalogue of the Bredius Museum: ‘Van Zijl is exceptional for his spry touch, with its Flemish overtones, making his work easy to recognize’.¹⁴ Our artist has to date not benefitted from the blessings of connoisseurship.

Following an appreciative paragraph by Wilhelm Martin in his book on Dutch seventeenth-century painting (1935), neither Jakob Rosenberg and Seymour Slive (1966) nor Bob Haak (1984) found him worthy of mention in their own surveys. This neglect is unjustified, on account of Van Zijl’s considerable gifts as a painter, the prominence of his portrait sitters, and the artist’s unique position in literary-artistic life.

VAN ZIJL’S DISTINGUISHED PORTRAIT SITTERS

The regents who patronized Van Zijl were members of the greatest Amsterdam families of all at mid-century, the Bickers and De Graeffs. The death inventory of Pieter de Graeff (1638-1707), drawn up on 2 October 1710, bequeathed to a daughter of the deceased, Agneta de Graeff (1663-1725): ‘Two portraits, one of Mr Pieter de Graeff by [Gerard] ter Borch, and the other of Mrs Jacoba Bicker by Gerard van Zijl [together appraised at] 160 guilders’.¹⁵ Occurring as it does in the probate inventory of Pieter de Graeff himself, as one of the prized family heirlooms, hung ‘op de groote kamer’ (in the large room), the accuracy of this piece of evidence can hardly be doubted. Pieter de Graeff was keen on his artists as well as his family; his inventory is one of the few in which many artists are identified, presumably on the basis of informa-

2. Abraham Bloteling after a lost painting by Gerard Pietersz. van Zijl, *Portrait of Govaert Flinck* (1615-1660), engraving, 273 x 214 mm, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, Rijksprentenkabinet, inv. no. RP-P-1907-310.

3. Wallerand Vaillant after a lost painting by Gerard Pietersz. van Zijl, *Portrait of Govaert Flinck* (1615-1660), mezzotint, 228 x 176 mm, London, British Museum, inv. no. 1874,0808.1052.

tion that he had recorded before his death. Among the painters of family portraits in the inventory we find Thomas de Keyser (c. 1596-1667), Rembrandt van Rijn (1606/07-1669), Bartholomeus van der Helst (1613-1670), Gerard ter Borch (1617-1681), Caspar Netscher (1639-1684), Michiel van Musscher (1645-1705) and Willem van Mieris (1662-1747). That Gerard Pietersz. is named by name in the inventory (not all artists were) shows that 45 years after his death he was still ranked with the great names in Dutch portraiture. Pieter and Jacoba Bicker (1640-1695) were married in 1662, so that if Van Zijl painted her as a pendant to the portrait of Pieter by Gerard ter Borch, as it was hung in the early eighteenth century, it can only have been made in the last three years of his life. In any case it could hardly have been painted much earlier, since Jacoba was only 22 years old when she married. True pendants of the two, standing, in three-quarters length, were painted by Caspar Netscher in 1663.¹⁶

The younger generations of Bickers and De Graeffs in these portraits did not have the political clout exercised by their parents or their uncle Andries de Graeff (1611-1678), the family member painted by Rembrandt. Nonetheless, Jacoba's sister Wendela Bicker (1635-1668) was married to Johan de Witt (1625-1672), the leading personality in national politics from 1653 until his lynching in 1672. They did enjoy the same phenomenal wealth. Wendela left a tidy 160,000 guilders upon her early death. When Agneta de Graeff died childless in 1725 as the widow of Jan Baptista de Hochepped (1669-1709), she left close to 900,000 guilders, one of the largest fortunes in the country. Their mansion in The Hague, across the street from the Mauritshuis, is presently occupied by the Kabinet der Koningin (The Queen's Office).¹⁷ What happened to Van Zijl's portrait of her mother is unknown. If it survived, it was probably stripped in later inventories of its key identifiers.

Van Zijl's portrait sitters in the field of science and literature were even more important than the regents he painted. The Leiden professor of medicine and botany Adolph Vorstius (1597-1663) was a respected proponent of his scientific specialties and the mentor of the better-known Franciscus Sylvius de la Boe (1614-1672). In 1634, in a disputation in Leiden under the responsibility of Vorstius, Sylvius made a name for himself by defending, for the first time in the Netherlands, William Harvey's controversial theory that blood circulates through the body. Van Zijl's name was linked to that of Vorstius in a public form. His portrait of Vorstius was copied in an engraving by the Antwerp graphic artist Paulus Pontius (1603-1658) and published first by the Leiden academic publisher Cornelis Banheining and then by the Amsterdam map publisher Hugo Allardt (c. 1628-1691) (fig. 1).¹⁸ Allardt was an Amsterdam publisher of maps. The print was an item for international dissemination, a graphic contribution to the Republic of Letters. Considering the apparent age of the sitter as a man in his forties or early fifties, the painted portrait that served as the model for the print will have been made not long after the epochal debate in Leiden, the print some decades later.

A learned Dutchwoman also sat for Van Zijl. Suzanna van Baerle (1622-1674) was the daughter of the famous Leiden-Amsterdam professor Caspar Barlaeus (1584-1648). Van Zijl's portrait of Suzanna, which was made in 1652, was praised in 1653 in a poem by Joost van den Vondel, the prince of Dutch poets. The poem ends with the lines:

De scho[o]nheit, jeugt en deugt verzamten hier te gader.
Maer 't rijp verstant verbeelt het oordeel van haer' Vader.
(Beauty, youth and virtue are gathered in one cluster
But ripe intelligence reflects her father's lustre.)

Barlaeus's lustre (word chosen for the sake of rhyme) consisted of his good judgment – which unfortunately he lost to mental illness before his death. Remnants of Suzanna's brilliance are only to be found in a number of poems by her hand.

The title of Vondel's poem in its earliest printing, in a volume of poetry brought out in 1653 as the second volume of *Verscheyde Nederduytsche gedichten* (Assorted Dutch poems) was: 'Op d' Afbeeldinge van / Susanna van Baerle, / De Bruidt van / G. Brandt' (On the picture of Susanna van Baerle, the bride of G. Brandt).¹⁹ The same title, with the bride's name spelled Zuzanna, was placed above the printing of the poem in the second volume of Vondel's collected poetry, published in 1660. In neither is the artist named. Then came the third edition, in 1682, with the title: 'Op Suzanna van Baerle, De bruidt van Geeraerd Brandt, / door Geeraerd van Zyl geschildert' (On Suzanna van Baerle, the bride of Geeraerd Brandt, painted by Gerard van Zijl).²⁰

The absence of the artist's name in the earlier printings of the poem might raise the suspicion that the identification was apocryphal. That suspicion is however removed when one learns that the editor of the 1682 edition of Vondel's poetry was no one other than Geeraerd Brandt (1626-1685), Susanna's bridegroom of 1652 and in 1682 the owner of the painting of his long-departed wife. Also added to the particulars in the latter edition was the date MDCLII.²¹

THE PAINTER AND THE POETS

The portrait of Suzanna van Baerle was not the only tie between Geeraerd Brandt and Gerard Pietersz. van Zijl. Brandt was a tireless writer and editor with dozens of literary, historical and theological publications to his credit, from his debut in 1645 until his death 40 years later. One of his early accomplishments was the editing of the two volumes of *Verscheyde Nederduytsche gedichten* in 1651 and 1653. He shared credit for the first volume with a group of prominent collaborators: Jan Vos (1612-1667), Jan Six van Chandelier (1620-1695), Tobias van Domselaer (1611-1685), Gerard Pietersz. himself and a final editor with the initials CLB. The identity of the sixth editor is left open in the historiography of Dutch literature. Acting on a clue supplied by Gregor Weber, I advance here the name of Cornelis Le Blon (1616-1686), the son of the Swedish agent Michel Le Blon (1587-1656). Michel is the subject of a poem in the volume by Reyer Anslo (1622-1669), a lament on Le Blon's long absence in Sweden put in the mouth of Le Blon's wife Margreet.²² Cornelis, who is named in the poem, was in 1651 in the process of taking over his father's network and wide range of commercial, political and artistic interests. Participation in this prominent literary project fits in nicely with Cornelis's position in life as well as his initials.

Gerard Pietersz. was not only one of the editors in 1651 of *Verscheyde Nederduytsche gedichten*, showing him to have been au courant with the writings of 'Grotius, Hooft, Barlaeus, Huygens, Vondel and others', as the title page has it. The book was moreover dedicated to him, in a letter from 'De uytgever aen Geeraerd Pietersz. van Syl', dated 14 July 1651. In it, the publisher speaks of himself as a poet, writing:

Gracious friend, [...] Poetry, which shows such great resemblance to your painting that [a poet] often paints with words, while [a painter] speaks with colors,



4. Cornelis van Dalen after a lost painting by Gerard Pietersz. van Zijl, *Portrait of Govert Flinck* (1615-1660), back chalk, with wash in black ink, 236 x 183 mm, inscribed: 'G Dov', Leiden, Printroom of the Leiden University Library, inv. no. PK-T-AW 1197.

provides me with the opportunity to offer you poems for paintings and words for colors. These are the assorted poems that I dedicate to you; and publish under your name: not so much to provide pleasure and entertainment to all speakers of the Dutch language, as to avoid the appearance of ingratitude for your courtesy.²³

The nature of Van Zijl's courtesy is not specified, but the text makes much of 'favors that you granted me so unexpectedly and unasked for', for which the dedication is a recompense.²⁴ Nor are we sure who the publisher is. Lodewyck Spillebout is unknown as a writer, and the same dedication appears in the 1659 edition of *Verscheyde Nederduytsche gedichten*, which was published by Gerrit Willemsz. Doornick. It makes more sense to seek the 'publisher' in the editor, in which case Geeraerd Brandt, who is assumed to have performed the real editorial work on the volume, is the most likely candidate; the unsolicited favor would have been the presentation of a painting. Tom van der Molen, in his contribution to the present volume, demonstrates that a poem published in 1658 contains the very same message – that is, an expression of gratitude by Brandt to a painter for the gift of a painting; the painting, Van der Molen proposes, was a (lost or as yet unrecognized) portrait of the recipient's fiancée, Suzanna van Baerle, and the painter Gerard Pietersz.²⁵

However this may be, the place of Gerard Pietersz. van Zijl in the prestigious *Verscheyde Nederduytsche gedichten* is an honorable one and a sign of his high standing in the Amsterdam literary world. The dedication of a serious work of literature to a professional painter is to my knowledge unique in Dutch letters and merits more attention than it has hitherto been granted. Was it this honor that led him to register 13 months later in Leiden University? To live up to the reputation as a learned painter that had already been bestowed on him? The wording of Van Zijl's registration – 'Hist.' – means that he was inscribed as a 'Historiae studiosus', a student of history. The rest of the inscription tells us something else of interest: 'Human. ergo' is short for 'Humanitatis ergo inscriptus', meaning that tuition was waived on humanitarian grounds, because the student was unable to pay.²⁶ Apparently, Van Zijl fell victim to the collapse of the market for paintings that followed on the outbreak of the First Anglo-Dutch War in 1652.

Van Zijl's celebrity reached a highpoint in 1654, when Jan Vos published a paean to the art of painting in Amsterdam, *Strydt tussen de doodt en natuur, of Zeege der schilderkunst* (The battle between Death and Nature, or The triumph of painting).²⁷ In a famous line from the poem, he lists seventeen of the most renowned painters and sculptors active in the city, starting with Rembrandt and Govert Flinck. Halfway through, Vos lauds Van Zijl, 'wiens daade' / In 't kleen zoo groot zijn dat de Doodt moet vliên' (whose small-scale achievements are so vast that Death is put on the run). The wording calls to mind the designation that Arnold Houbraken later said was assigned to Van Zijl in the 1650s in Amsterdam: 'Van Dyk, in 't kleyn' (a small-scale Van Dyck).

That the artists of Amsterdam also accorded Van Zijl a place of honor in their midst is attested by his best-known portrait. Three early sources provide us with images of Van Zijl's lost portrait of Govert Flinck (1615-1660), made in the years of Flinck's ascendancy in the Amsterdam art world in the latter 1650s. Two of the sources are portrait prints of Flinck – an engraving by Abraham Bloteling (1640-1690; fig. 2),²⁸ and a mezzotint by Wallerand Vaillant (1623-1677; fig. 3)²⁹ – with inscriptions saying that the image is based on a painting by Van Zijl. The third is a drawing after it attributed to Bloteling's former master Cornelis van Dalen (1638-1658/64; fig. 4). (The presumption proffered with great certainty by A. Welcker that the prints were made after the drawing – which was in Welcker's collection at the time – and not after Van Zijl's painting is unnecessary and contrary to the evidence of the inscriptions on the prints).³⁰



Van Zijl's vanishing act in the art market and art history awaits further study. As a final contribution to rescuing him from oblivion, I close with an undocumented and unsigned painting, which if the attribution to Van Zijl is correct would be his most significant surviving portrait. It is a group portrait of three generations of a prosperous family and their servants, with a chamber ensemble playing for them on a balcony above their salon (fig. 5). When the painting was auctioned at Christie's in New York on 19 April 2007, as by Van Zijl, the catalogue entry said of it:

[...] members of an extended family gather around a table within an elegant and spacious interior. Like a merry company scene it features food, drink, and animated conversation but the attention to particular physiognomies and the presence of the seated man at the right looking directly at the viewer place it firmly within the realm of portraiture. Van Zijl's handling of materials and surfaces recalls the best of the Leiden *fijnschilders* and passages such as the classicizing arch that reveals a cloudy sky at the center of the scene and the hands of the woman entering from the left are reminiscent of Van Dyck. Mellaart mentions a lost portrait by Van Zijl of his own family and it is tempting to speculate about whether this fits such criteria, as the man looking out at the viewer follows contemporary conventions of self portraiture.³¹

5. Gerard Pietersz. van Zijl, *A group portrait of a family in an elegant interior*, canvas, 83.8 x 101.6 cm, present whereabouts unknown.

In keeping with the spectral nature of Gerard Pietersz. van Zijl, Mellaart's reference cannot be traced. The absence in the documents of any family connections and the suggestion they contain that Gerard Pietersz. lived a solitary life, lead one to suspect that Mellaart was deceived.

There is another reason to cite the painting here. Before the German invasion of the Netherlands in May 1940 the painting was held by the Dutch Jewish art dealer Jacques Goudstikker (1897-1940). It was acquired by the Germans in a forced sale and recovered after the war by the Allies. The Christie's catalogue says of its post-war status that it was 'in the custody of the Dutch Government' until it was returned to the Goudstikker family in February 2006. This is not quite the case. For half a century after the 1950s the Dutch government considered itself to be the legal owner of the painting. It was only because of the courageous recommendations in 2003 and 2004 of a government-appointed committee chaired by Rudi Ekkart and named after him the Ekkart committee that formal 'legalities' were overridden and the portrait was restituted, with 201 other paintings, to the widow of Goudstikker's son Edo.³²

The buyer of what may well be Gerard Pietersz. van Zijl's masterpiece at Christie's for \$50,400 plus charges got a terrific bargain. Let us hope that a good museum will be able to take advantage of the opportunity to acquire it.

TABLE I – Documented portraits by Gerard Pietersz. van Zijl

SITTER	SOURCE
Susanna van Baerle (1622-1674), the wife of Geeraerd Brandt	'Op Suzanna van Baerle, De bruidt van Geeraerd Brandt, door Geeraerd van Zyl geschildert. MDCLII' (On Suzanna van Baerle, the bride of Geeraerd Brandt, painted by Geeraerd van Zyl) <i>J. v. Vondels Poëzy of Verscheide gedichten, op een nieu by een vergadert, en met veele ook voorheen nooit gedrukte dichten vermeerdert. Mitsgaders een aanleidinge ter Nederduitsche dichtkunste en het Leven des dichters</i> , Franeker (Leonard Strik) 1682 (edited by the spouse of the sitter), p. 604
Jacoba Bicker (1640-1695), the wife of Pieter de Graeff (1638-1707)	'Twee portraicten, 't eene van den Hr. Pieter de Graeff door Ter Burgh ende 't ander van Vrouwe Jacoba Bicker door Gerard van Zijl 160:--' (Two portraits, one of Mr Pieter de Graeff by Ter Burgh [Gerard Terborch] and the other of Mrs Jacoba Bicker by Gerard van Zijl, 160 [guilders for both]) Inventory of the widower of the sitter, Pieter de Graeff, 9 March 1709, Stadsarchief Amsterdam, Notarial Archive, inv. no. 5001, fols. 425-549, p. 7, item 112b ³³
Jacomo Borchgraeff (c. 1606-1673), Maria van Uffelen (1616-80) and their children	'[Aan] Geertruy het groot stuk uytbeeldende haar en haar overleede mans geheele huysgesin, gedaan door Gerards tot Amsterdam in de Hertestraat' (To Geertruy the large painting portraying her and her late husband's entire family, made by Gerards in Amsterdam in the Hertestraat) Testament of the sitter, Maria van Uffelen, 28 April 1679, Stadsarchief Amsterdam, Notarial Archive, inv. no. 2160, notary J. d'Amour, pp. 36-40 and 39A ³⁴
Hendrick Bugge van Ring with his wife Aeltge Hendricksdr. van Swieten and their daughter	A painting by Gerard Pietersz. van Zijl with three portraits, being Hendrick Bugge van Ring, his wife and their daughter Inventory of sitters Hendrick Bugge van Ring and Aeltge Hendricksdr. van Swieten, 30 maart 1667, Regionaal Archief Leiden, Old Notarial Archive, inv. no. 1005, notary Lambertus van Swieten

SITTER	SOURCE
Sybrandt Camay (1615-1674) and Maria Koppen (born c. 1627)	'Sybrandt Kamey, En Maria Koppen Zyn Huisvrouw. Door Geeraarts geschildert' (Sybrandt Kamey and Maria Koppen his wife. Painted by Geeraarts) J. Vos, <i>Alle de gedichten</i> , Amsterdam (Jacob Lescaille) 1662, p. 263
Govert Flinck (1615-1660)	Known from two contemporaneous copies in which the artist is named: Engraving by Abraham Bloteling (Hollstein 13/I), inscribed: 'GPr. Zyll Pinx.' (G and P entwined) / 'Ablotelingh sculp.' (A and B entwined) Mezzotint by Wallerand Vaillant (Hollstein 174/II), inscribed: 'Geraers Pinx. W. Vaillant f et Exc.' and 'Govaert Flinck / Celebris apud Amstelodamenses Pictor'
Cornelia Pauw	'Juffrouw Kornelia Pauw. Door Geeraarts geschildert' (Miss Kornelia Pauw. Painted by Geeraarts) J. Vos, <i>Alle de gedichten</i> , Amsterdam (Jacob Lescaille) 1662, p. 200
Willem Pauw	'Op d'afbeelding van den E. Heer Willem Pauw, Door Geeraarts van Zyl geschildert' (On the picture of Mr. Willem Pauw, painted by Geeraarts van Zyl) J. Vos, <i>Alle de gedichten</i> , Amsterdam (Jacob Lescaille) 1662, pp. 784-785
Hendrick Sandra (1619-1707), husband of Margreet Tortarolis	'Den Eed. Gestr. Heer Hendrik Sandra, Ridder, &c. Ritmeester. Door Geeraarts van Zyl geschildert' (Mr Hendrik Sandra [with title indicating that he was a jurist], Knight etc. Officer in the Cavalry, painted by Geeraarts van Zyl) J. Vos, <i>Alle de gedichten</i> , Amsterdam (Jacob Lescaille) 1662, p. 146
Margreet Tortarolis (1627-1681), wife of Hendrick Sandra	'Mejuffer Margareta Tortarolus, Zyn Gemaalin, door de zelfde geschildert' (Miss Margareta Tortarolus, his wife, painted by the same) J. Vos, <i>Alle de gedichten</i> , Amsterdam (Jacob Lescaille) 1662, pp. 146-147
Adolf Vorstius (1597-1663)	Engraving by Paulus Pontius (Hollstein 136), inscribed: 'Gerardus Petri pinxit. Paulus Pontius sculpsit', in second state with address: 'C. Banheining excud.', in third state: 'Hugo Allard Excudit'

* The author is pleased to acknowledge the kind advice and assistance of Nina Geerdink, Ad Leerintveld, Anton van der Lem, Tom van der Molen, Jef Schaeps and – for generously sharing unpublished documents with me – Jaap van der Veen. A colleague I was unable to consult without endangering the surprise effect of his festschrift was Rudi Ekkart. I look forward confidently to the solutions he will come up with to the riddles presented in this paper.

- Gerard is also known as Gerards or Geeraards; his family name is often spelled Zyl, sometimes Syl, sometimes with two l's.
- A. Houbraken, *De groote schouburgh der Nederlantsche konstschilders en schilderessen [...]*, 3 vols., Amsterdam 1718-1721, vol. II (1719), p. 226: 'Zommigen zeggen dat hy een Amsterdammer is, anderen willen dat hy geboren is tot Leyden, daar zyn Vader een Lystemaker was, Pieter Gerretze genaamt'.
- J.H.J. Mellaart, 'The works of G.P. van Zyl', *The Burlington Magazine* 41 (1922), pp. 146-149.
- Album Studiosorum Academiae Lugduno Batavae MDLXXV-MDCCCLXXV*, The Hague 1875, col. 425 (18 November 1652).

- A. Bredius, *Künstler-Inventare. Urkunden zur Geschichte der holländischen Kunst des XVIIten, XVIIIten und XIXten Jahrhunderts*, 7 vols., The Hague 1915-1921, vol. IV (1917), p. 1244. The deposition, made at the request of Steven van Goor, concerns a stolen painting.
- Amsterdam, Stadsarchief (hereafter SAA), Doop-, trouw- en begraafboeken, no. 1047, pp. 132-133; published by: A.D. de Vries, 'Biografische aantekeningen betreffende voornamelijk Amsterdamsche schilders, plaat snijders, enz. en hunne verwanten', *Oud Holland* 4 (1886), p. 302.
- Houbraken 1718/21 (note 2), vol. II (1719), p. 225: 'My schynt toe dat hy tot leyding zyner konstdrift het spoor van Ant. van Dyk gevolgt heeft. Immers meent men dit de reden geweest te zyn waarom hy in Engelant, en zelf over zyn deur in Westmunster ging wonen. Hy hield groote vrintschap met van Dyk, en had de eer van hem dikwils te zien schilderen, waar door men gelooft dat hy hem de konstbehandeling (gelyk Graasbeek van Brouwer) heeft afgezien. Want als men den tyd narekent zal men bevinden dat hy toenmaals den grond zyner Konst gelegd heeft. En wel ter rechter tyd, aangezien van Dyk 1641

kwam te sterven, als wanneer GERARDS weder na zyn geboorteplaats Amsterdam overscheepte. Van den Jare 1655 tot 58 woonde hy in de Hartestraat op een agterkamer, oeffenende de Konst by zich zelf in der stilte. En die hem doen gekent hebben, zeggen my, dat hy op dien tydt een Jongman van omtrent veertig Jaren was. Zyn konstige penceelhandeling heeft hem den bynaam van *Van Dyk*, in 't kleyn, doen hebben'.

- J. van der Veen, 'Onbekende opdrachtgevers van Rembrandt (2). Dirck van der Noen en Elisabeth Danckerts en hun portretten door Rembrandt', *Kroniek van het Rembrandthuis* (1999), no. 1-2, pp. 24-40, especially p. 39, note 58.
- J. van der Veen, 'Onbekende opdrachtgevers van Rembrandt. Jacomo Borchgraeff en Maria van Uffelen en hun portretten door Rembrandt, Jonson van Ceulen, Van Zijl, Van Mol en Jacob Backer', *Kroniek van het Rembrandthuis* (1998), no. 1-2, pp. 14-31, especially p. 29, note 28. In an e-mail of 26 January 2012, he specified the source: on 19 January 1666 Meures and Weijntjes submitted a declaration to the High Court

- of Holland stating that the 'konstrijck schilder' Gerard Pietersz. van Zijl, in a testament of 19 December 1665, had named them sole legatees of his estate. He had since died, and they request that a summons be issued to inventory his belongings. The request is granted. The Hague, Nationaal Archief, Rekesten Hoge Raad.
10. A. Bredius, 'Waarom Jacob van Loo in 1660 Amsterdam verliet', *Oud Holland* 34 (1916), pp. 47-52.
 11. E. Buijsen, *Haagse schilders in de Gouden Eeuw. Het Hoogsteder lexicon van alle schilders werkzaam in Den Haag 1600-1700*, The Hague/Zwolle 1998, p. 306.
 12. Houbraken 1718/21 (note 2), vol. II (1719), p. 225: 'De meeste schilderyen die men van hem ziet zyn vrolyke Gezelschappen van Juffrouwen en Heeren naar dies tyds gewoonte gekleed, alles naar 't leven geschildert, en meest naar schoon leven. Inzonderheit steken de hantjes der Vroutjes, zoo in konst van schilderen, als teederheit, en schoonen omtrek uit, even als ik van van Dyk gezegt heb'.
 13. U. Thieme & F. Becker, *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künstler von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, 37 vols., Leipzig 1907-1950, vol. XXXVI (1947), p. 615: 'Malte bes. Gesellschaftsstücke, die von den Zeitgenossen hochgeschätzt und noch im 18. Jahrh. höher bezahlt wurden als die des Vermeer. Später geriet Z. in Vergessenheit u. s. Arbeiten wurden, da selten bezeichnet, auf bekanntere Namen getauft [...]'.
14. 'Uitzonderlijk is Van Zijl door zijn vluchtige, Vlaams aandoende toets, waaraan zijn werk makkelijk herkenbaar is'; A. Blankert, *Museum Bredius. Catalogus van de schilderijen en tekeningen*, Zwolle/The Hague 1991 (nieuwe, bijgewerkte en vermeerderde editie), p. 247.
 15. SAA, Notarial Archives, inv. no. 5001, fols. 425-549; quoted from the Getty Provenance Index, item 0004b from Archival Document N-474 (Graeff), accessed on 26 January 2012.
 16. M.E. Wieseman, *Caspar Netscher and Late Seventeenth-century Dutch Painting*, Doornspijk 2002 (*Aetas Aurea*, no. XVI), pp. 179-180, nos. 20-21. The paintings are in the Rijksmuseum, inv. nos. SK-A-3977 and SKA-A-3978.
 17. C.J.J. Stal, 'Bewoners en eigenaren', in: Ch. Dumas & H.P.R. Rosenberg (eds.), *Het Kabinet der Koningin. Geschiedenis van het instituut en het huis aan de Korte Vijverberg*, The Hague 2004 (2nd ed.), pp. 65-87, especially p. 73.
 18. Inscribed; 'ADOLFVS VORSTIVS EVER. FIL. / MEDICINÆ ET BOTANICES PROFESSOR LVGD. BAT. / Gerardus Petri pinxit. // P. Pontius sculpit. / Hugo Allerdt Excudit'; F.W.H. Hollstein, *Dutch and Flemish Etchings, Engravings and Woodcuts ca. 1450-1700*, 72 vols., Amsterdam etc. 1949-2010, vol. XVII (1976), p. 195, no. 136. Adolf's father Everard Vorstius (1565-1624) was also famous as a professor of medicine in the University of Leiden.
 19. *Verscheyde Nederduytsche gedichten [...] Tweede Deel. Verzamelt door. / J.v.M.*, Amsterdam (Lodewyck Spillebout) 1653, p. 55.
 20. In J. van den Vondel, *Poëzy of Verscheide gedichten*, Franeker (L. Strik) 1682, p. 604.
 21. E.K. Grootes, 'Geeraardt Brandt en de Nederlandse poëzie', in: *Geschiedenis godsdienst letterkunde. Opstellen aangeboden aan dr. S.B.J. Zilverberg*, Roden 1989, pp. 139-146.
 22. R. Anslor, 'Op de komste van den Heer Michiel le Blon, uyt Sweeden', in: *Verscheyde Nederduytsche gedichten [...]*, Versamelt door J.V. JS. TVD. B.G.P. CLB., Amsterdam (Lodewyck Spillebout) 1651, pp. 351-353. The poem is printed in a signature that was inserted into the regular pagination, between pp. 144 and 145. Among the other items there are strident anti-Orangist poems.
 23. 'BELEEFDE VRIENDT, [...] De Poësy, die sulck een groote gemeenschap met uw Schilderkunst heeft, dat d'eene dikwils met woorden schildert, en d'ander met verwen spreekt, geeft my nu gelegenthey om uw E. Gedichten voor schildery en woorden voor verwen aen te bieden. Dit zijn de VERSCHEYDE DICHTEN die ik u opdraegh; en onder uwen naem de dagh laet sien: niet soo seer om al wat Neêrduytsch spreekt genoeg en vermaek te geven, als om niet ondankbaer te schijnen by uw beleeftheyt'; *Verscheyde Nederduytsche gedichten* 1651 (note 21), pp. (*2)r-v. For an analysis of the complex of factors underlying the anthology, see: G. Schwartz, 'Apelles, Apollo en The Third Man: schilderkunst, letterkunde en politiek rond 1650', *De zeventiende eeuw* 11 (1995), pp. 122-131 (available online at dbnl.nl).
 24. '[...] de gunsten t'erkennen, die my van u E. soo onverwacht en ongeverght bewesen zijn'. *Verscheyde Nederduytsche gedichten* 1651 (note 21), p. (*2)r.
 25. 'Op de gift van een schilder aan een vryer', in: *Apollos harp [...]*, Amsterdam (Jan Hendriksz. and Jan Rieuwertsz.) 1658, p. 14. The poem is signed N.N. However, as Van der Molen points out, virtually the same poem was later published by Brandt as his own, with the date 1674, in: G. Brandt, *Poëzy*, Amsterdam (Aart Dircksz. Ooszaan) 1688, p. 460, under the title 'Op d'afbeelding van Susanna van Baerle, de bruidt van G. Brandt'. Although the artist is not named, the link with the dedication of *Verscheyde Nederduytsche gedichten* as well as Vondel's poem on a portrait of her by Gerrit Pietersz. makes the latter the only known contender for the honor.
 26. For the interpretation of the inscription I am indebted to Anton van der Lem of the Leiden University Library.
 27. J. Vos, *Strydt tusschen de doodt en natuur, of Zeege der schilderkunst*, Amsterdam (Jacob Lescaille) 1654; printed as well in the collected works of J. Vos, *Alle de gedichten*, in the editions of 1662 (pp. 127-141) and 1726.
 28. Inscribed: 'Dus leefde Apelles FLINCK, te vroegh de stad ontruckt, / Toen hy, behantvest van haere edele overheden, / Het heerlyck raethuis met historien zou kleeden. // Gelyckze Tacitus van outs heeft uitgedruckt, / Die Rome strycken leert voor t recht der Batavieren. / Bekranst dien schilderhelt met eeuwige laurieren. / J. v. Vondel / Gr. Zyll Pinx. / ABlotelingh sculp.' (This is how that Apelles Govert Flinck, robbed too soon from the city, looked in life, when he was chartered by the noble government to furnish the splendid town hall with histories, as told by Tacitus in ancient times, of Rome learning its lesson about the rights of the Batavians. Crown that hero of painting with everlasting laurel.); Hollstein (note 18), vol. II (1950), p. 167, no. 13, ill. The poem by Vondel is also printed, with a few differences in spelling, in the 1682 edition of Vondel's poetry, pp. 591-592. There it is followed by a second rhyme on the same subject: 'OP DEN ZELVEN. Hier ziet men FLINCK, gelyk hy leeft, Die 't leven aen zyn doeken geeft' (On the same. Here you see Flinck as he looked in life. He who endowed his canvases with life).
 29. Inscribed: 'Govaert Flinck / Celebris apud Amstelodamenses Pictor / Geraers Pinx. / W. Vaillant f et Exc.'; Hollstein (note 18), vol. XXXI (1987), p. 171, no. 174, ill.
 30. A. Welcker, 'Schildersportretten. I. Govaert Flinck. Tevens een bijdrage tot het probleem van Rembrandt's veronderstelde reis naar Engeland in 1640', *Oud Holland* 57 (1940), pp. 115-122. Among other indications, the head of the sitter in Bloteling's engraving is not the same size as in the drawing. The prints are far richer in modelling than the drawing as it appears today, in the Printroom of the Leiden University Library, inv. no. AW 1197. It was acquired from Welcker in 1953.
 31. Sale New York (Christie's), 19 April 2007, lot 31, ill. in color; see http://www.christies.com/lotfinder/gerrit-pietersz-van-zijl-haarlem-1597-1665-a/4892887/lot/lot_details.aspx?from=salesummary&intObjectID=4892887&sid=d697103a-ee8c-41da-a17d-97f22199eab5 (accessed 17 December 2011).
 32. See the Dutch government website page <http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/tweede-wereldoorlog/teruggave-kunst-tweede-wereldoorlog/commissie-ekkart> (accessed 17 December 2011).
 33. Getty Provenance Index, item 0112b from Archival Inventory N-470 (Graeff), accessed 26 January 2012.
 34. Van der Veen 1998 (note 9), no. 1-2, pp. 14-31, especially pp. 15-20 and 29.