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**Pieter Codde**

1599 – Amsterdam – 1678

*A Painter in his Studio, Tuning a Lute*

Signed and dated on the cross bar of the easel: PCodde 162[9?]

Oil on panel

41 x 54 cm.

**Provenance:**

Brussels, with art dealer Gaston Neumans, by whom sold to

Munich, collection Hermann Heinemann (d. 1920) and Sophie Heinemann née Alexander, 1912

Munich, collection Sophie Heinemann née Alexander, 1920, by whom sold to

Munich, Galerie Heinemann, 1928

Munich, collection Friedrich Heinrich Zinckgraf (Galerie am Lenbachplatz, formerly Heinemann), 1938

Dietramszell (art repository Kloster Dietramszell), Friedrich Heinrich Zinckgraf, 1942

Munich, Central Collecting Point, 1947, from where restituted by the allied authorities to

Munich, Galerie Zinckgraf, 1949

Gundelfingen, collection Eugen Zaiss and Erika Zaiss née Haas, thence by decent to the previous owners

**Literature:**

R. van Eijnden, A. van der Willigen, *Geschiedenis der vaderlandsche schilderkunst, sedert de helft der XVIII eeuw*, 4 vols, Haarlem 1816-1840, 1 (1816), p. 144

C.B. Playter, *Willem Duyster and Pieter Codde : the "Duystere Werelt" of Dutch genre painting, c. 1625-1635*, 2 vols., diss. Cambridge (MA), Harvard University 1972, 1, p. 91; 2, fig. 134

P. Torresan, 'Per una rivalutazione di Pieter Codde', in: *Antichità Viva* 14 (1975), pp. 12-23, p. 20, fig. 16

H.-J. Raupp, 'Musik im Atelier : Darstellungen musizierender Künstler in der niederländischen Malerei des 17. Jahrhunderts', in: *Oud Holland* 92 (1978), pp. 106-128, pp. 127-128, fig. 12

R.E. Fleischer, 'Quirijn van Brekelenkam and *The Artist's Workshop* in the Hermitage Museum', in: R.E. Fleischer, S.S. Munshower (eds.), *The Age of Rembrandt : Studies in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Painting (Papers in Art History from The Pennsylvania State University, vol. 3)*, University Park (PA) 1988, pp. 70-93, p. 74, note 9

L.J. Deboer, *Martial Arts: military themes and imagery in Dutch art of the Golden Age*, diss. Ann Arbor, University of Michigan 1990, pp. 136-137, fig. 82

H. Buijs, in: Q. Buvelot, H. Buijs, *A choice collection : seventeenth-century Dutch paintings from the Frits Lugt collection*, exh. cat. The Hague, Mauritshuis 2002, pp. 82-83, under cat. no. 10, fig. 10c (as Pieter Codde, circle of)

K. Kleinert, *Ateliendarstellungen in der niederländischen Genremalerei des 17. Jahrhunderts : realistisches Abbild oder glaubwürdiger Schein?*, Petersberg 2006, pp. 137-138, 141-142, 152, 196-197, cat. no. 8

J. Rosen, 'Codde not Brekelenkam: a case of mistaken identity', in: *The Burlington Magazine* 160 (2018), pp. 112-117, p. 116, fig. 7





The fourth child of Maria Jansdr and Jacob Pietersz Codde, an Amsterdam 'paalknecht' or clerk to merchants and shippers, Pieter Codde and his family lived in the 'Paalhuis' on the Nieuwebrug on the shore of the IJ.<sup>1</sup> Codde was first recorded as a painter in 1623, when he married 18 year old Marritge Aerents Schilt, daughter of the wealthy hat manufacturer and deputy sheriff Aerent Elbertsz Schilt. On 25 April 1624, their daughter Clara was baptized in the Oude Kerk. Like many other artists, Codde was still renting a house in the St. Anthonisbreestraat in 1628 at the latest, for following the deaths of both his father and his father-in-law he was able to buy his own house in 1630. In 1657 he purchased No. 385 Keizersgracht for 5000 guilders, where he lived until his death in 1678.

Codde was active in both artistic and literary circles. In 1627 the poet and playwright Elias Herckmans (c. 1596-1644) dedicated his tragedy *Tyrus* to the artist, inspired by Codde's now lost painting of the subject. In 1633 Codde's own poem of pastoral love 'Waerom vlucht ghy Millibe' was published in the volume of poetry *Hollands Nachtegaeltien*. The artist apparently had quite a temper, for on Pentecost, 1625, he is recorded as having thrown a jug on the head of his peer Willem Duyster (1599-1635), presumably his pupil. In 1635 Codde's only child, Clara, died, and the following year he and his wife separated. The inventory of Codde's possessions drawn up at the occasion, listing paintings by artists such as Frans Hals Jr. (1618-1669), Pieter de Molijn (1595-1661), Jan Porcellis (1584-1632), Salomon van Ruysdael (1600/03-1670) and Pieter Claesz (1597/98-1660/61), has led some to believe that the artist spent time in Haarlem. However, no direct evidence for this hypothesis exists. Codde is known primarily as a painter of genre interiors with elegant figures and merry companies, or Guardroom scenes featuring soldiers in waiting rooms, the so-called 'kortegaardjes'.<sup>2</sup> In addition, he produced several history works and a considerable number of portraits. In 1637 he finished the so-called *Meagre Company*, now in the Rijksmuseum, an Amsterdam militia piece begun by Frans Hals (1582/83-1666) in 1633. He was particularly prolific during the 1620s and the 1630s, rarely signed after 1645, but remained active as a painter in the 1650s.

The present painting, a splendid, early example of a studio scene, has only recently been rediscovered. It was previously known only from a photo taken in Munich between 1912, when the painting was acquired from a Brussels art dealer, and 1929, when Cornelis Hofstede de Groot inspected the painting.<sup>3</sup> In addition to the newfound signature – a full signature 'PCodde 162[9?]' discovered on the easel's cross bar – the

painting's recent restoration has brought about some notable changes, about which more below. The work depicts a painter in his wooden floored studio, seated in front of his easel, on which we see a blank canvas on a stretcher. Seated on a chair, with sheet music on a stool in front of him, the painter – who wears a dark artist's cloak over a green jacket, a rather large grey hat and house shoes – is tuning his lute, while glancing over his shoulder at the beholder. Behind the easel a number of frames, as well as square and octagonal panels, are propped up against the back wall. To the left of the painter we see a table covered with a heavy, dark red cloth. Leaning against it is a large bass viol, and on the floor a pile of books, the black lute case and a sheaf of papers, some of which seem to be prints, form a beautiful still life. As such, the scene is entirely fitting with other works by Codde from the late 1620s and early 1630s.

The theme of the artist in his studio was beloved among the Dutch painters of the Golden Age, Codde being among those who favoured it. In addition to the present work, at least two autograph works by Codde depict artists regarding the beholder while sitting behind an easel (figs. 1, 2) and several more are attributed to him. Moreover, Codde also painted pictures of studios in which art lovers are studying paintings, or artists are seen in contemplation, or in discussion with visitors.<sup>4</sup> For centuries attempts have been made to identify those artists depicted in



Fig. 1 Pieter Codde, *A Portrait of a Painter*, oil on panel, 30.5 x 25 cm., Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen

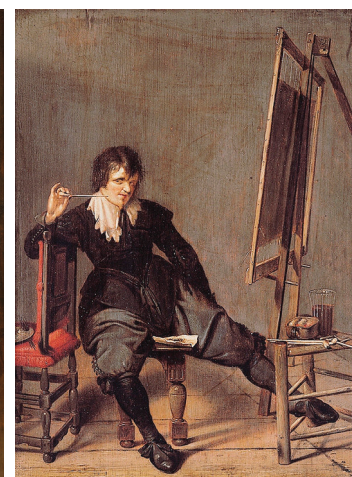


Fig. 2 Pieter Codde, *Smoking Painter in front of his Easel*, oil on panel, 32 x 25 cm., Stockholm, Hallwylska Museet



Fig. 3 Cornelis van Voorde after Pieter Codde, *Supposed Portrait of the Painter Quiringh van Brekelenkam*, 1752, pen in black, grey wash on paper, 23.6 x 21 cm., private collection



Fig. 4 Taco Hajo Jelgersma after Pieter Codde, *Supposed Portrait of the Painter Quiringh van Brekelenkam*, c. 1752, watercolour, 18 x 15.5 c.m., Haarlem, Noord Hollands Archief

studio scenes as real historical individuals, with reference to Codde's studio scenes too. The painter in the Rotterdam work (fig. 1), for example, was long thought to be Harmen Hals (1611-1669), the son of Frans Hals (1582/83-1666).<sup>5</sup> In this respect the history of the present work is every bit as noteworthy. In 1752 the Haarlem draughtsman Cornelis van Noorde (1731-1795) made a pen and wash drawing after the painter in our work, the caption identifying this man as the Leiden painter Quiringh van Brekelenkam (1622/3-after 1669) (fig. 3). In the right upper corner Van Noorde added a palette (absent in the painting), no doubt to emphasise the sitter's identity as an artist. Van Noorde doubtlessly made his drawing while sitting in front of the present painting, most probably in conjunction with his teacher, the versatile artist Taco Hajo Jelgersma (1702-1795). This, at least, is to be gathered from a watercolour by the latter that also depicts our painter (fig. 4). Jelgersma's drawing differs from Van Noorde's drawing in several details, such as the lute that he apparently removed (of which traces are still visible) and the easel with the empty canvas that he drew into the picture plane, both changes adding to the effect that the sitter is actually painting. Jelgersma's watercolour is neither signed nor dated, yet bears an inscription on the reverse reading 'Q: Brekelenkamp after the painting of himself by T. Jelgersma'.<sup>6</sup> To summarize so far: half way through the eighteenth century, the present painting was with (or in the possession of?)

Taco Hajo Jelgersma in Haarlem, and at that point Jelgersma and his student Van Voorde made copy drawings after the sitter, erroneously presuming that the work was painted by the Leiden painter Quiringh van Brekelenkam (which it is clearly not; it is a signed and dated work by Codde), who had supposedly depicted himself as the painter in the picture.

Elaborately described by Jochai Rosen in a recent article in *The Burlington Magazine*, Jelgersma's drawing ended up in the collection of the artist biographer Adriaan van der Willigen (1766-1841).<sup>7</sup> While preparing the first volume of his *Geschiedenis der vaderlandsche schilderkunst*, an important compilation of artists' biographies published in 1815, Van der Willigen must have approached the engraver Jacob Ernst Marcus (1774-1826), and requested him to engrave a number of artist portraits to enliven his book. Van der Willigen clearly provided Marcus with the drawing by Jelgersma that he owned (and which he believed to depict Brekelenkam), for on the page facing page 144 of Van der Willigen's

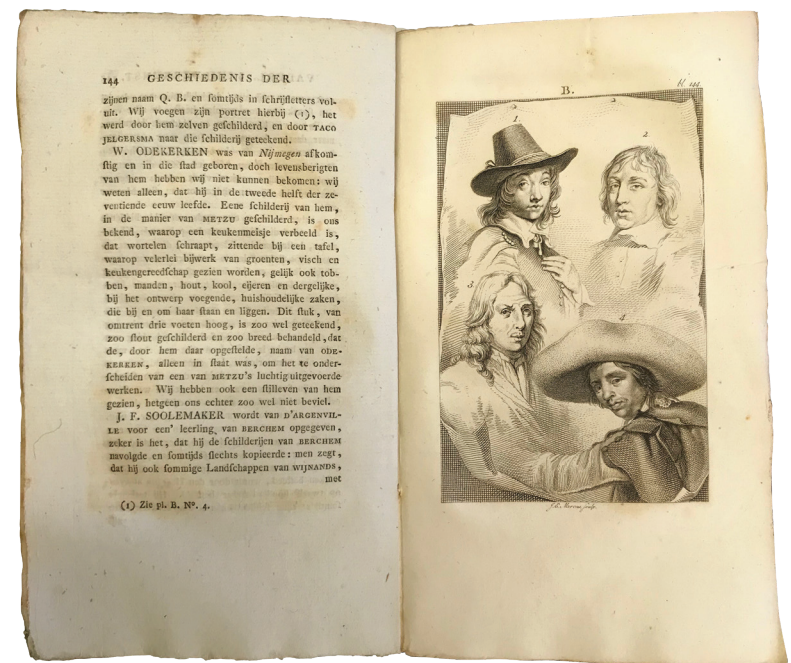


Fig. 5 Jacob Ernst Marcus, *Portraits of the painters Cornelis Visscher, Jan de Visscher, Richard Brakenburgh and Quiringh van Brekelenkam*, etching, in: Roelof van Eynden, Adriaan van der Willigen, *Geschiedenis der vaderlandsche schilderkunst, sedert de helft der XVIII eeuw*, vol. 1, Haarlem 1815, opposite p. 144





Fig. 6 Photo of cat. no. 7, taken c. 1912-1929

book, we find an engraving by Marcus depicting our painter, in the company of three other artists (fig. 5). As the text at the top of page 144 reads ‘We hereby affix his [Brekelenkam’s] portrait, it was painted by himself, and drawn by Taco Jelgersma after that painting.’ This erroneous identification, then, persisted well into the twentieth century.<sup>8</sup>

If the identification of the painter in the present picture as Van Brekelenkam was flawed, the question remains if Codde could have depicted another colleague, or possibly even himself. Current art historical research tends to be critical towards all too literal interpretations of studio scenes and the identification of specific artists in the figures portrayed in these paintings.<sup>9</sup> However, some studio scenes undeniably depict figures in which we recognise the features of certain painters that are known to us through other sources. In other cases, alternative kinds of evidence – such as typical paintings visible in the painting, or recognisable studio props used by a specific painter – justify an identification. In his afore mentioned article, Jochai Rosen has recently argued that Pieter Codde depicted not Van Brekelenkam, but himself in the present work. At the time of the article’s publication in February 2018, the present work’s whereabouts were still unknown, and the only material available to Rosen was the black and white photo taken in Munich between 1912 and 1929 (fig. 6). In that photo (N.B. the colour

photos shown here, taken after the recent rediscovery of the painting, before and during its restoration in 2018, resemble the black and white photo completely, as nothing had been done to the painting since that photo was taken) one sees, amongst others, a landscape with cows in the background, and a scene depicted on the stretched canvas on the easel (figs. 7, 8). Based on this visual information Rosen argues that the painting on the easel is a typical *Codde-esque* ‘Cortegaerdje’, or a guardroom scene, which he rightly compares to a similar painting by



Fig. 7 Cat. no. 7 before restoration, detail of the painting on the back wall



Fig. 8 Cat. no. 7 before restoration, detail of the stretched canvas on the easel

Codde in Crakow, signed and dated 1628.<sup>10</sup> Following this analysis – i.e. the painting on the easel is by Codde – Rosen consequently identifies the painter as Codde himself. This would seem to be an agreeable hypothesis, were it not that the painting's appearance has undergone a rather significant change during its recent restoration. When taking off the varnish (a standard procedure in the restoration process, for which a very light solvent is used, which cannot affect the original paint layers), the two paintings – the *Guardroom Scene* on the stretched canvas and



Fig. 9 Cat. no. 7 during restoration, detail of the stretched canvas on the easel



Fig. 10 Cat. no. 7 before restoration, detail of the painting on the back wall

the *Landscape with Cows* on the far wall – dissolved with it (figs. 9, 10).<sup>11</sup> They must have therefore been later additions, not painted by Codde himself but by someone of a later period. At any rate, the disappearance of the *Guardroom Scene* in particular from the stretched canvas on the easel necessarily affects the identification of the painter as Codde himself, as proposed by Rosen. Although we can't completely rule out the possibility that the painter is *not* Codde, the painting on the easel was the essential identifying key, and with its disappearance there are no visual leads anymore to support the identification. Clearly, the fact that Codde painted the work in itself does not qualify as a valid argument as to the sitter's identity. After all, Codde also painted other artists in their studios (e.g. figs. 1, 2), and as they all have different appearances, they cannot all depict the artist.

Although we cannot be sure about when exactly the painting was so substantially altered, and the reasons underlying it, there is an interesting observation to be made. When re-examining the drawings by Van Voorde en Jelgersma, and comparing them to our painting before the recent restoration, we realise that the artist's large grey hat seen in the drawings was later considerably reduced, before it was brought back to its original shape during the recent restoration (fig. 11). This overpainting must have taken place between 1752 – the date of Van Noorde's and Jelgersma's drawings – and at the latest 1929, the ultimate dating for the black and white photo. On this basis, we might reasonably assume that this significant alteration coincided with the other huge alterations: the painting-in of the empty canvas and the addition of the landscape with cows. In retrospect this latter 'painting' actually looked slightly anachronistic, as it seemed to imitate a Paulus Potter-like landscape of the 1640s, rather than a landscape of the 1620s.<sup>12</sup> Why, one wonders, were these alterations brought about? Arguably they were at least in part painted for aesthetic reasons. For instance, there seems to have been no other reason to reduce the size of the large grey hat, other than that the owner at that time felt that it was somewhat monstrous. Likewise, the landscape with cows might have been added out of a sense of *horror vacui*, to fill the empty wall. As for the guardroom scene, it might have been painted in because the empty canvas (about which more below) was not understood, or considered unsatisfactory. Also, one should not exclude the possibility that it was done to strengthen the attribution to Pieter Codde (after all the signature and dating of the work were overlooked for centuries), and quite possibly – as the choice of subject matter was so 'spot on' – to reinforce the idea that Codde had depicted himself.



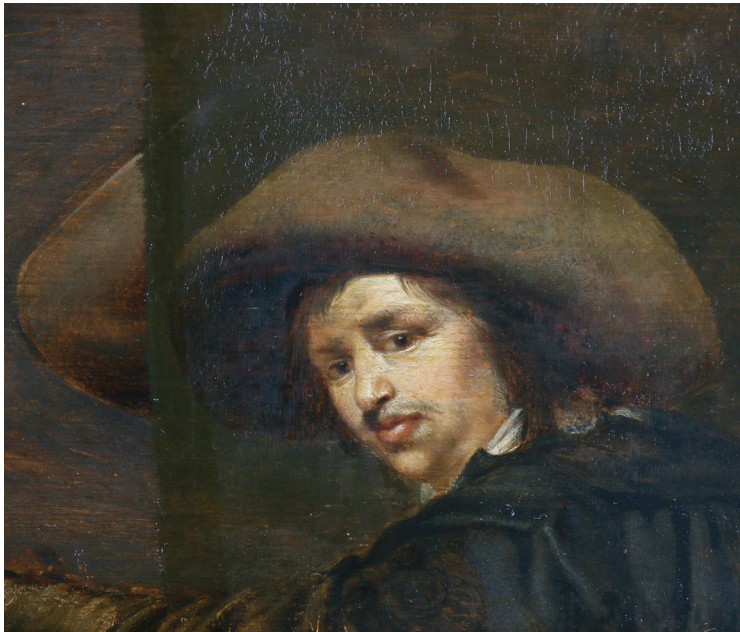


Fig. 11 Cat. no. 7 during restoration, detail of the reappearance of the original large hat

What are we to make, in the final analysis, of the painting's iconography? Brought back to its authentic state through the removal of the later additions, we can now again appreciate Codde's original intentions, namely the depiction of a painter in his studio, tuning his lute in front of an empty canvas. The presence of musical instruments in scenes involving artists is very common. Not only were *Musica* and *Pictura* considered kindred arts within the realm of the five senses, music could stimulate the creative impulse and carried a certain social standing.<sup>13</sup> As such, we find musical instruments in many studio scenes, sometimes standing or lying around, but also often being played upon, either by the painter or by his model.<sup>14</sup> The empty canvas, too, features in a significant number of studio scenes, sometimes indeed in combination with the painter playing an instrument (fig. 11).<sup>15</sup> Clearly, this combination alludes above all to the finding of inspiration – the most essential part of the artistic process – right in front of the empty canvas, the *tabula rasa*. In this way, these paintings are the visual counterparts of such topical anecdotes as the one about the painter Gerard de Lairesse (1640-1711), as told by Arnold Houbraken in his *grootte schouburgh*.<sup>16</sup> Upon Lairesse's arrival in Amsterdam, the art dealer Gerrit Uylenburgh put the painter in front of an empty canvas ('een ledigen doek'). Asked when he wanted to start, Lairesse countered by asking 'what would you want me to paint?'



Fig. 12 Isaac Jouderville, *Painter in his Studio Playing a Violin*, oil on panel, 47.4 x 63 cm., whereabouts unknown

The subject was to be of the artist's choice, and Uylenburgh gave him painting materials. Then Lairesse sat down, pulled out a violin from underneath his mantle and played a little tune on it, after which he took his chalk and drew in one go a whole stable with beasts, Joseph, Mary and her Child. He then played some more, and before the afternoon had finished he had painted nearly the whole scene, to the amazement of all. Codde's present *Painter in his Studio* is likewise an allusion to artistic inspiration and creativity, a candid opportunity for the beholder to witness this mysterious process, and as such represents an ode to the art of painting itself.

JH

## Notes

- 1 For biographical references, see C.M. Dozy, 'Pieter Codde : de schilder en de dichter', in: *Oud Holland* 2 (1884), pp. 34-67; A. Bredius, 'Iets over Pieter Codde en Willem Duyster', in: *Oud Holland* 6 (1888), pp. 187-195; P. Brandt, 'Notities over het leven en werk van den Amsterdamschen schilder Pieter Codde', in: *Historia : maand-schrift voor geschiedenis en kunstgeschiedenis* 12 (1947), pp. 27-37; N. van de Kamp, in: J. Turner (ed.), *The Dictionary of Art*, 34 vols, New York 1996, 7, pp. 510-511. For Codde's activities as a history painter, see E.J. Sluijter, *Rembrandt's Rivals : History Painting in Amsterdam 1630-1650*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia 2014, pp. 297-310.
- 2 See especially J. Rosen, *Soldiers at leisure : the guardroom scene in Dutch genre painting of the Golden Age*, Amsterdam 2010, pp. 50-55.
- 3 The painting was bought by Hermann and Sophie Heinemann from the Brussels art dealer Gaston Neumans on 27 December 1912. In August 1929 Cornelis Hofstede de Groot wrote an expertise on the painting after first-hand inspection. The inventory card of the Heinemann firm (Neuremberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Galerie Heinemann archive, inv. card no. 18720, recto) states that an 18 x 24 cm. photo was taken by 'Kaufmann'. This is in all probability the photo now still at the RKD in The Hague, no doubt donated by Hofstede de Groot, who presumably received the photo during his inspection. See also RKD, Hofstede de Groot fiche no. 1667147.
- 4 See Kleinert 2006, cat. nos 6-9. For more possible attributions of studio scenes to Codde, and especially the Rotterdam work (here fig. 1), see F. Lammertse, *Dutch genre paintings of the 17th century : collection of the Museum Boijmans van Beuningen*, Rotterdam 1998, cat. no. 11, pp. 38-40; H. Buijs, in: *The Hague* 2002, cat. no. 10.
- 5 See Lammertse 1998, cat. no. 11.
- 6 'Q: Brekelenkamp / na het schilderij / van hemzelven / Door T. Jelgersma'. See Rosen 2018, p. 113.
- 7 Rosen 2018, p. 114.
- 8 See H. van Hall, *Portraits of Dutch painters and other artists of the Low Countries*, Amsterdam 1963, p. 47, no. 1; Fleischer 1988, pp. 73-74, 92, fig. 4-19. See also Rosen 2018, pp. 115-116.
- 9 See Kleinert 2006, pp. 133-163 (ch. 6, 'Zum Realitätsgehalt der Ateliendarstellungen'), esp. pp. 151-159 (6.2, 'Ateliendarstellungen als einer Form des Selbstporträts?').
- 10 Rosen 2018, pp. 216-217, fig. 9, Pieter Codde, *Guardroom Scene*, 1628, panel, 41 x 54 cm., Cracow, Wrawel Castle.
- 11 Restoration carried out by Lara van Wassenauer, Atelier Van Wassenauer, Amsterdam 2018 ([www.ateliervanwassenauer.nl](http://www.ateliervanwassenauer.nl)). The old and strongly fluorescing varnish, of a natural resin kind (*damar* most probably), has been removed easily with an ethanol:isooctane 2:1 solution. This removed the varnish as well as the discoloured retouches simultaneously. The original paint layer was, and is, very stable and does not dissolve in the tested and used solvent mixture. I thank Lara van Wassenauer for her informed explanation regarding the procedure followed.
- 12 This anachronism was also remarked upon by Playter 1972, p. 91 "a landscape with cows, remarkably like compositions Paulus Potter will effect in the later 1640s."
- 13 See on this subject Raupp 1978.
- 14 The examples are numerous. See, for instance, Kleinert 2006, pp. 86-87 (5.5.4. 'Musikinstrumente') and cat. nos. 3-5, 8 (the present work), 11-16, 19, 25, 28, 32, 36, 39, 42-44, 46-48, 51, 56, 67-73.
- 15 Kleinert 2006, cat. nos. 8 (the present work), 24, 32, 36, 39, 42, 64.
- 16 A. Houbraken, *De groote schouburgh der Nederlantsche konstschilders en schilderessen*, 3 vols., Amsterdam 1718-1721, 3 (1721), pp. 110-111.