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Gerard ter Borch the Elder began his artistic training in his native Zwolle, likely under Arent van Bolten (fl. 1580–1600). At the age of 18, in 1600 or 1601, Gerard the Elder traveled to Southern Europe, where he would stay until about 1612.<sup>[1]</sup> During this period, the artist lived in Rome and Naples, producing the atmospheric *vedute*, or carefully rendered depictions of Italian landscapes and architectural monuments, for which he is best known. These drawings, most of which are dated between 1607 and 1610, comprised a sketchbook that Gerard the Elder brought back with him to the Netherlands, where it was later disassembled.<sup>[2]</sup>

By mid-1612, Gerard the Elder had returned to Zwolle. There, he married Anna Bufkens, the mother of artist Gerard ter Borch the Younger (1617–81).<sup>[3]</sup> Gerard the Elder's drawings from the 1610s represent expressive depictions of Old and New Testament subjects, as well as mythological scenes, which depart from the carefully executed draftsmanship of his Italian period. By the early 1620s, Gerard the Elder's artistic output began to decrease. In 1621, he assumed the role of his aged father, the Licencemaster of Zwolle, a position Gerard the Elder would hold for about 40 years.<sup>[4]</sup> That same year, he married his second wife, Geesken van Voerst (1599–in or before 1628). With Van Voerst, Gerard the Elder had two daughters, Sara, born in 1622, and Anna, born in 1624.<sup>[5]</sup> In addition, he would have nine children with his third wife, Wiesken Matthias, among them Gesina, who was born in 1631.<sup>[6]</sup> Despite his professional responsibilities, Gerard the Elder continued to pursue some artistic activity, focusing his attentions on the talents of his offspring and capturing them in a group of figure studies from the 1630s, to which the Leiden Collection's *Little Girl at a Table Holding a Slice of Melon* (GB-110) belongs.<sup>[7]</sup>

-Alexa J. McCarthy

### Endnotes

1. On Gerard ter Borch the Elder's biography, see Alison McNeil Kettering, *Drawings from the Ter Borch Studio Estate*, 2 vols. (The Hague, 1988) and Alison McNeil Kettering, "Gerard [Gerhard] ter Borch (i)," *Grove Art Online: Oxford Art Online*, accessed 28 October 2016.



2. Alison McNeil Kettering, *Drawings from the Ter Borch Studio Estate*, 2 vols. (The Hague, 1988) 1:5. See also J. M. Blok, "Romeinsche teekeningen door G. Terborch, Sr. en W. van Nieulandt II in 's Rijksprentenkabinet te Amsterdam," *Meded. Ned. Hist. Inst. Rome*, 5 (1925): 128–129 and I. Q. van Regteren Altena, *Vereeuwigde Stad Rome door Nederlanders Getekend* (Wormerveer, 1964).
3. Gerard ter Borch the Younger's work is well-represented in the Leiden Collection, including his *Musical Company* of ca. 1642–1644 (GB-105), and his portraits of the four older Craeyvaenger children (GB-111a-d) executed in ca. 1658.
4. Alison McNeil Kettering, *Drawings from the Ter Borch Studio Estate*, 2 vols. (The Hague, 1988) 2:5: Appendix II, A I.
5. Alison McNeil Kettering, *Drawings from the Ter Borch Studio Estate*, 2 vols. (The Hague, 1988), 1: GSr 107.
6. Gesina (1631–90) would preserve the family estate, which included her own drawings and poetry books, as well as drawings by her father and her siblings.
7. See Peter Schatborn's essay in this catalogue on Gerard the Elder's *Little Girl at a Table Holding a Slice of Melon* (GB-110).

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