



**Pieter de Hooch**

(Rotterdam 1629 – in or after 1684  
Amsterdam)

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According to the single sentence Houbraken devoted to Pieter de Hooch, the artist "was outstanding in the painting of interiors with companies of gentlemen and ladies".<sup>[1]</sup> De Hooch was born in Rotterdam in 1629. His parents were the master bricklayer Hendrick de Hooch (d. 1657) and the midwife Annetge Pieters (d. 1648). Pieter was twenty years old when his father took a second wife, Adriaentje Philipsdr de Wijmer. He grew up on the Vissersdijk, near the Blaak, before the family moved in 1651 into a house on the Lombartstraat that his father had purchased for 1700 guilders. Hendrick had four sons from his first marriage, but as emerges from his will, Pieter was the only one still alive in 1657. In 1661 Hendrick married Christina Langenberg of Middelburg, where the couple settled.

Although Houbraken claims that De Hooch, together with his fellow townsman Jacob Ochtervelt (1634–82), "studied for a period with the renowned N. Berchem," the accuracy of this statement is often doubted.<sup>[2]</sup> De Hooch's early work has so little in common with the Italianate landscapes of Haarlem-based Nicolaes Berchem (1621/2–83) that it is hard to imagine he trained with him. A more plausible teacher is Ludolf de Jongh (1616–1679), his fellow townsman and a skillful painter of genre and hunting scenes, who had returned to Rotterdam in 1642 after a seven-year sojourn in France. De Hooch was thirteen at the time. While there is no evidence of such an apprenticeship, De Jongh's work from the 1640s displays so many similarities with De Hooch's early interiors of inns and stables populated with farmers and soldiers that at the very least he was De Hooch's chief source of inspiration.<sup>[3]</sup>

De Hooch is first mentioned in Delft in 1652, where the work on which his present fame primarily rests originated. In that year, together with his future brother-in-law, the painter Hendrick van der Burch (1627–after 1666), he signed a document in which both are recorded as "wonende tot Delft" (residing in Delft).<sup>[4]</sup> The two



painters witnessed other documents as well. Even though there is no documentary proof, the idea that De Hooch was active in Van der Burch's workshop in the early 1650s—De Hooch registered in the Delft Guild of Saint Luke only on 20 September 1655—does not seem far-fetched.<sup>[5]</sup>

Whether De Hooch had already moved to Delft prior to 1652 is unknown, nor do we know if he lived there consecutively until 1660, the year in which he probably left for Amsterdam. When he married Hendrick's sister, Jannetje van der Burch, in 1654, he gave his address as the Lombardstraat in Rotterdam, which is where his father had been living since 1651. De Hooch is also recorded in Leiden several times, and that he therefore resided there for a while cannot be excluded.<sup>[6]</sup> This hinges in part on the nature of his affiliation with Joost de la Grange (1623–64), a wealthy Leiden linen merchant.<sup>[7]</sup> In a lawsuit brought before a court in The Hague in May 1653, De Hooch is called De la Grange's "schilder" (painter) as well as "dienaer" (servant).<sup>[8]</sup> What this employment entailed precisely is not mentioned in the document, but interpreting "dienaer" as "huisknecht" (house servant), De Hooch must have lived with De la Grange for some time. Extrapolating from what is known about De la Grange, this would have been Leiden and not Delft.<sup>[9]</sup> Given the usual usage of "dienaer" in notarial documents, however, the word should be more likely interpreted as "kantoor knecht" (office assistant), meaning that De Hooch aided De la Grange with his cloth business. This does not imply that De Hooch lodged with his employer per se, but that he did have accommodations in his vicinity.<sup>[10]</sup> Despite the most tenable interpretation of their affiliation, De Hooch is still thought to have painted for the art lover on a contractual basis.<sup>[11]</sup> When in 1655 De Grange settled a debt with pictures, the more than seventy works in his possession with a total value of 1450 guilders, included eleven by De Hooch.<sup>[12]</sup>

Possibly in 1660, or at the latest in the spring of 1661, De Hooch moved to Amsterdam, where his brother-in-law Hendrick van der Burch of Leiden had settled a year earlier. Van der Burch would return to Leiden in 1663, but De Hooch stayed on in Amsterdam, probably until his death. De Hooch maintained contact with Delft, the home of his in-laws. For example, he signed a document there in 1663; and, related and simultaneous innovations in the work of both De Hooch and Johannes Vermeer (1632–75) suggest he was a regular visitor there.<sup>[13]</sup> De Hooch also sought out painters in Amsterdam whom he had known in his Delft years, such as Emanuel de Witte (1671–92).<sup>[14]</sup>

Judging from where he lived in Amsterdam, De Hooch does not seem to have been prospering. Before settling in the Konijnenstraat, not far from the Lauriergracht in 1668—in a neighborhood where many artists were working at the time—De Hooch was living outside the old city walls. His first address was the Regulierspad, located beyond the Regulierspoort, in an area home to some of the city's most impoverished citizens.<sup>[15]</sup> When this ground was confiscated for the sake of the fourth city expansion, De Hooch and his family moved to Kattenburg on the Oostelijke Eilanden, an area largely belonging to the Admiralty and consisting primarily of shipbuilding yards. He never bought a house, and one searches in vain for his name in the tax records of 1674 of citizens with a capital of a 1000 or more guilders.

Yet, as appears from Amsterdam estate inventories, he did not lack for clients. In 1663 an unknown patron commissioned the splendid family portrait now in Cleveland.<sup>[16]</sup> And around 1670 he painted a similar group portrait for the Jacott-Hoppesack family.<sup>[17]</sup> In this context, his extant oeuvre is also worth mentioning: 100 of the approximately 150 pictures that can be securely attributed to him were painted in Amsterdam.<sup>[18]</sup>



He was long assumed to have died in 1684 after having lost his mind, for he was taken from the Dolhuys, or insane asylum, to be buried. However, it was recently demonstrated that this annotation in the burial register did not in fact bear on the painter, but on his son Pieter, who was born in Delft in 1655 and committed by his parents to the Dolhuys in 1679.<sup>[19]</sup> When De Hooch himself actually died is unknown. A painting by the artist dated 1684 is presently his last sign of .

- Piet Bakker, 2017

## Endnotes

1. “Uitmundend is geweest in ’t schilderen van Kamergezigten, en daar in Gezelschapjes van Heeren en Juffrouwen” Arnold Houbraken, *De groote schouburgh der Nederlantsche konstschilders en schilderessen* (Amsterdam, 1718–21; rev. ed., The Hague, 1753; reprint, Amsterdam, 1980), 35.
2. “eenigen tyd by (den beruchten) N. Berchem geleert [heeft]” In the literature, De Hooch’s training is generally said to begin in 1646, the year in which Berchem returned to Haarlem following a presumed trip to Italy. De Hooch would have been around seventeen at the time, which is fairly old to begin training. Biesboer recently argued that Berchem most likely did not travel in this period, making it possible that De Hooch trained in Haarlem earlier. See Pieter Biesboer, “Nicolaes Pietersz Berchem, meester-schilder van Haarlem,” in *Nicolaes Berchem: In the Light of Italy*, ed. Pieter Biesboer (Exh. cat. Haarlem, Frans Hals Museum, Ghent 2007), 21–24. For the various opinions on Berchem’s presumed trip to Italy, see Albert Blankert, *Dutch 17th-century Italianate Landscape Painters* (Soest, 1978), 148n10.
3. From the point of view of fees, an apprenticeship in Rotterdam would make more sense. De Hooch’s father was a bricklayer, and certainly not wealthy. For example, for the house on the Lombartstraat, which was priced at 1700 guilders, he only paid 300 guilders in cash, taking out a mortgage for the remainder.
4. Stadsarchief Delft, Notarial Archives, Notary F. Boogert, inv. 1999, deed 73, 5 August 1652. See Peter C. Sutton, *Pieter de Hooch. Complete edition* (Oxford 1980), 145, doc. 14; Peter C. Sutton, “Hendrick van der Burch,” *The Burlington Magazine* 122 (1980): 325, doc. 9. Hendrick van der Burch is regularly referred to as “possibly” being De Hooch’s brother-in-law. This reticence is due to the absence of a baptismal record for De Hooch’s later wife, Jannetge van der Burch, which raises uncertainty as to the identity of her parents. Caution is thus called for, certainly in a town that was home to a number of “Van der Burch” families. However, the indirect evidence that Jannetge and the painter Hendrick van der Burch were siblings is so extensive and convincing that there is really no reason to question the family relationship. This also holds true should it emerge that Jannetge was Rochus’ daughter from an earlier marriage. While there is no concrete evidence to this effect, certain formulation in his will of 1657 could bear on an earlier marriage with issue. Peter C. Sutton, “Hendrick van der Burch,” *The Burlington Magazine* 122 (1980): 315n5.
5. The possibility that the two artists shared a workshop has never been seriously forwarded. Yet this seems to be an obvious idea, given their close ties particularly in the first half of 1650. They signed documents together in Delft in 1652, 1654 and 1655, and in 1656 De Hooch traveled to Leiden to witness the baptism of Hendrick’s first child. See Peter C. Sutton, *Pieter de Hooch. Complete edition* (Oxford 1980), 145–46, docs. 14, 20, 24, and 28. In addition, one

can point to the far-reaching stylistic affinity between their work; several paintings by Van der Burch were earlier attributed to De Hooch, and the reverse also occurred. Finally, it is worth noting that the date of De Hooch's registration in the Delft Guild of Saint Luke, 20 September 1655, took place shortly after Van der Burch relocated in Leiden and joined the guild. See John Michael Montias, *Artists and Artisans in Delft: A Socio-Economic Study of the Seventeenth Century* (Princeton, 1982), 88. De Hooch's registration in Delft so soon after Van der Burch's definitive departure to Leiden could be a coincidence, however given their regular association in the previous years, De Hooch's registration could well mark the moment when he took over his brother-in-law's workshop.

6. De Hooch was present in Leiden in 1653 at the baptism of the first child of his future brother-in-law, Barend Gast. Gast was a Delft silversmith who settled in Leiden after he had married Anna van der Burch in 1649. See Cornelia Willemijn Fock, "De Leidse zilversmid 'Bl' definitief geïdentificeerd," in *Leids Jaarboekje* (1978), 97–99. In 1656 De Hooch was in Leiden, and witnessed the baptism of Hendrick van der Burch's first child. See Peter C. Sutton, *Pieter de Hooch. Complete edition* (Oxford 1980), 145–46, docs. 17 and 28. In this connection it may be significant that Hendrick van der Burch assumed the rental of the house on the Rapenburg (no. 42) from the painter Adriaen Cornelisz Beeldemaker (1618–1709). See Theodoor Herman Lunsingh Scheurleer, Cornelia Willemijn Fock, and A.J. van Dissel, eds., *Het Rapenburg. Geschiedenis van een Leidse gracht* (Leiden, 1990), 5: 390, 409. This Rotterdam painter must have been acquainted with Pieter de Hooch. When Beeldemaker married in Rotterdam in 1649, he stated that he was living on the Vissersdijk, which had already been the address of the De Hooch family for many years.
7. Joost (Justus) de la Grange was born in Leiden in 1623. His parents were the silk dyer Pieter de la Grange and Hester Berten, the daughter of the fabulously wealthy linen merchant Joost Berten and Christina du Pree. Joost was apprenticed in Leiden to be a linen merchant. He paid his first contribution to the Leiden Drapers' Guild in 1640. See Nicolaas Wilhelmus Posthumus, *Bronnen tot de geschiedenis van de Leidsche textielnijverheid*. Vol. 4, *1611-1650* ('s-Gravenhage, 1914), 4: 1611–50, 362. He completed his training in 1641. His father, who had remarried, moved in 1641 to Delft, where he took a third wife in 1656, and was living on the Oude Delft. Joost is also recorded in Delft in 1642 and 1643, and most likely stayed with his father as he was only just twenty years old. In 1646 he was living in Leiden on the Korte Nieuwe Breestraat and made a statement that same year before Notary Karel Outerman as "woonende binnen deser stede" (residing in this city). In 1651 he married Margaretha Persijn, the daughter of Dr. Aernout Persijn and Adriana Burchgraeff, in Leiden, at which time he was residing on the Nieuwe Rijn. Three years later he purchased co-ownership of *De Witte Eenhoorn* brewery for 21,000 guilders. He is also documented in various nearby villages, including Rijnsburg (1652), Koudekerk a/d Rijn (1654), "in huysen Offen buyten Noordwyck" (in Offen Manor outside of Noordwijk) (1655–56), Oegstgeest (1658), Wassenaar (1659–60), and Warmond (1661). Between 1648 and 1661 he appeared

regularly before Notary Outerman, mentioned above. Initially, these matters pertained to his grandfather Joost Berten's inheritance, which had made De la Grange a wealthy man. However, these visits became increasingly related to ongoing financial difficulties. He ultimately went bankrupt in June 1661 and emigrated [emigrate is correct here] to New Netherland with his family in 1662. There, in that same year he bought Tinicum Island near Philadelphia. See Abraham Bredius, "Bijdragen tot de biographie van Pieter de Hooch," *Oud Holland* 7 (1889): 164. To finance this purchase he returned briefly to Leiden in 1663. He died in 1664, possibly aboard the ship on his return voyage to America. See John Blythe Dobson, "A note on Arnoldus de La Grange," *New Netherland Connections* 7 (2002): 63–70.

8. According to the extant records of this lawsuit in The Hague, De la Grange employed two servants. In 1653, when De la Grange stayed in The Hague accompanied by them, the first one disappeared, stealing some of his master's possessions, as well as some belonging to De Hooch. Not long thereafter a suitcase owned by the fugitive was found and its contents auctioned, but not before "a cloth coat with silver trimming [was] handed over to the painter De Hooch, also a servant of the aforementioned De la Grange, being a coat that was taken from the aforementioned servant" (een lakense mantel met zilveren passementen, behandicht [te hebben] aen de Hooch schilder, mede Di[e]naer van de voors[egde] de la Grange, welcke mantel van deselve genomen is van de voors[egde] sijnen gewesen dienaar). See Abraham Bredius "17e Eeuwsche reisherinneringen (*Journal des Voyages de Monsieur de Monconys etc. etc. Paris 1677*)," *Nederlandsche Kunstbode* (1881): 126.
9. See Wayne Franits, "The Depiction of Servants in Some Paintings by Pieter de Hooch," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 52 (1989): 559–66. Franits interprets "dienaer" as meaning "servant" and considers it likely—although he acknowledges that the precise nature of the affiliation escapes us—that De Hooch was living in his employer's home. Whether this was in Delft—Franits incorrectly calls De la Grange a Delft linen merchant in various publications—is doubtful (see note 7). It was Joost's father Pieter who relocated here in 1641 from Leiden, and was still living there in 1661. When Joost visited Delft, he will have stayed with his father. The famous "inventory" of 1655 listing eleven works by De Hooch confirms this. While the document was indeed drawn up in Delft, according to the salutation Joost was living "on the estate of Offen outside of Noordwijk" (op de heerlickheit van Offen buyten Noordtweijck) at the time (see note 11).
10. Many of the documents in the Rotterdamse Oud Notarieel Archief can be consulted in summary form via the site of the Stadsarchief Rotterdam. A modest investigation of around one hundred entries from the period 1620 and 1670 with the word "dienaer" revealed that it generally occurs with three meanings. It can refer to preachers (servants of the word of God) and civil servants, primarily involving the maintenance of law and order (servants of justice). In all other instances, the word is linked to the occupation of merchant and means assistant, usually called "dienaer," but also as "comptoirknecht" (office assistant) or "factor" (factor),

depending on the precise nature of the position, the responsibilities involved and the degree of authority. Many documents were drawn up to empower the “dienaer” to act in behalf of the merchant, his employer. Given that De la Grange was active in the linen trade, the latter meaning seems the most likely one with respect to De Hooch.

11. See Wayne Franits, *Pieter de Hooch. A Woman Preparing Bread and Butter for a Boy*, 71n5. Most authors believe that in the case of De Hooch, “dienaer” implies a contract indenturing the painter to give a share of his production to De la Grange, a type of agreement occurring more often in the seventeenth century. For example, around 1660 Emanuel de Witte agreed to give all the work he painted to Notary Joris de Wijs in return for an annual stipend of 800 guilders and food and lodging. See Ilse Manke, *Emanuel de Witte 1617–1692* (Amsterdam 1963), 3. The most important indication for such an agreement in De Hooch’s case was the inventory De la Grange had drawn up in Delft in 1655 with an eye to settling a debt, and which included no fewer than eleven works by De Hooch. See Abraham Bredius, “Bijdragen tot de biographie van Pieter de Hooch,” *Oud Holland* 7 (1889):162–64; Peter C. Sutton, *Pieter de Hooch. Complete edition* (Oxford, 1980), 146, doc. 23.
12. Stadsarchief Delft, Notarial Archives, Notary J. Spoors, inv. 1676, fol. 637–39. Abraham Bredius, “Bijdragen tot de biographie van Pieter de Hooch,” *Oud Holland* 7 (1889): 162–64, lists only the attributed paintings, forgetting one of the in total eleven works by De Hooch. Peter C. Sutton, *Pieter de Hooch. Complete edition* (Oxford, 1980) 146, doc. 23, also mentioned the non-attributed paintings. However, he once reads, incorrectly: “ses stuckies [schilderijen]” (six small [pictures]) instead of “ses stoelen” (six chairs), and forgets: “10 stucx schilderijen samen waert 60 [gld.]” (ten pictures together worth 60 [guilders]).

The idea of De la Grange as an art lover is based on this inventory. The impression is often given that De la Grange had to settle his debt to his brother-in-law Pieter Persijn in Hoorn with his collection of paintings, but this is incorrect. The total transport with a value of 4000 guilders consisted of other goods as well, including tables, chairs, a bed with bedclothes and hangings, a harpsichord and a violin, and even a horse and cart. De la Grange thus sent a part of his (?) property to Hoorn. The four paintings by Pierre Porreth (1606–before 1671), in any case, came from the estate of his grandfather and grandmother as part of a substantial inheritance. See Regionaal Archief Leiden Notarial Archives, Notary K. Outerman, inv. 443, deed 121. Unfortunately, the majority of the more than fifty paintings in this estate are unattributed; had they been, it might appear that Joost had inherited more paintings from his grandparents. The same applies to the almost fifty paintings of his great uncle Mattheus Berten and his wife Jannetje du Pree. A substantial share of their estate also devolved to Joost de la Grange. See Regionaal Archief Leiden, Notarial Archives, Notary K. Outerman, inv. 438, deed 157, 25 August 1645.

13. Wayne Franits, *Pieter de Hooch. A Woman Preparing Bread and Butter for a Boy*, 30–33.



14. The contact between the two painters emerges from the testimony Pieter de Hooch gave in a lawsuit involving a painting that Adriana van Heusden, the widow of the notary Joris de Wijs, brought against Emanuel de Witte in November 1670 (see note 11). De Hooch maintained that he knew the painting in question, a fish market with the portrait of the plaintiff (possibly National Gallery, London, inv. 3682) from the various visits he paid to De Witte in the time that the painter was lodging with De Wijs. Given that De Witte stayed with De Wijs until 1663, and that De Hooch may have moved to Amsterdam in 1660, these visits must have taken place between 1660 and 1663.
15. Generally, the poorest citizens lived outside of the city walls, in part because of lower taxes or even full exemption from them.
16. *Portrait of a Family Making Music*, signed and dated 1633 (The Cleveland Museum of Art); Peter C. Sutton, *Pieter de Hooch. Complete edition* (Oxford, 1980), 93–94, no. 53.
17. *Portrait of the Jacott-Hoppesack Family*, 1670 (Amsterdam Museum). See Peter C. Sutton, *Pieter de Hooch. Complete edition* (Oxford, 1980), 103, no. 92.
18. Between 1660 and 1720, close to fifty paintings by De Hooch are mentioned in (primarily) Amsterdam estate inventories, which are recorded in The Getty Provenance Index, The Montias Database; and Peter C. Sutton, *Pieter de Hooch. Complete edition* (Oxford, 1980). The value of the appraised works varies, with a few lowlights between 15 and 75 guilders.
19. Frans Grijzenhout, “New information on Pieter de Hooch and the Amsterdam lunatic asylum,” *The Burlington Magazine* 150, (2008): 612–13.

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