



Portrait of a Gentleman with a Walking Stick

Gerrit Dou
(Leiden 1613 – 1675 Leiden)

ca. 1645
oil on oval panel
49.2 x 39.7 cm
signed “GDov” (GD in ligatur) in dark paint along
right midpoint
GD-113



How to cite

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Gerrit Dou portrays this dignified man with a penetrating gaze and austere, unsmiling expression, suggesting a stern and forthright individual. He is shown wearing a burgundy-plum woolen suit with a matching cloak draped over his shoulder. An embroidered hanger crossing over his gorget holds a rapier, visible near his hip, indicating his service as an officer in one of Leiden's two militia companies.^[1] The military connotation of his attributes correspond with Salomon Savery's engraving "Standing Officer with Walking Stick," ca. 1630–35 (fig 1), from a series of prints illustrating officers of rank. Indeed, the man's stately pose in the present painting, with one hand on a cane and the other nonchalantly resting on his hip akimbo, recalls the pictorial conventions for depicting civic leaders and political dignitaries. Yet rather than a life-size portrait in accordance with those norms, the scale of Dou's portrait is more intimate and recalls the small-scale portraits of Thomas de Keyser (1596–1667) that had become the vogue in Amsterdam in the 1620s.

This three-quarter length portrait is a pendant to a painting now with the Norton Simon Foundation, Pasadena, *Portrait of a Woman*, which depicts an equally dignified lady dressed almost exclusively in black (fig 2). The woman's extended right arm, resting on a table next to a copy of the *Statenbijbel* and the family's strongbox, mirrors the man's pose.^[2] The complementary poses of the figures, analogous settings, and the similar palette and dimensions of the oval panels leave little doubt that the two portraits were painted as a pair. With this portrait and its pendant Dou provides the perfect visual illustration of the two complimentary social spheres: the male world of public and military affairs, and the private female world of a well-run and pious household^[3]. Although the identity of the couple is unknown, they were most likely part of Leiden's socioeconomic elite in the early 1640s.^[4]

Marieke de Winkel has identified the man's *kastoor* hat as a fashion popular from 1644 to 1646, probably not much earlier or later, about the same time Dou painted *Portrait of a Man* in the State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg (fig 3).^[5] Both men wear the conical wide-brimmed hat made of felted beaver hair that became fashionable with the opening up of the North American fur trade in the early decades of the seventeenth century.^[6] The leather sword hangers with intricate tooled designs are also identical and suggest that both men served in a militia company that issued standardized weaponry.^[7] Another clue supporting a date in the mid-1640s is the similar, broad linen collar worn by a man in a securely dated portrait of 1646,

Comparative Figures



Fig 1. Salomon Savery, "Standing Officer with Walking Stick" nr. 3/10 from his series *Gewapende officieren en soldaten*, ca. 1630–35, Rijksprentenkabinet, inv. nr. RP-P-OB-5531 Hollstein Dutch 64-2(2)



Fig 2. Gerrit Dou, *Portrait of a Lady*, ca. 1635–40, oil on panel, 49.2 x 38.7 cm, The Norton Simon Foundation, Pasadena, CA, inv. no. F.1969.43.P



Dou's *Portrait of Johan Wittert van der Aa* in the Rijksmuseum.^[8] Moreover, the asymmetrically draped curtains that theatrically frame the figure within an arched surround is another feature Dou frequently included in the backgrounds of many of his portraits from this period.^[9]

Infrared reflectography reveals that Dou initially sketched an elaborate architectural setting behind the man that included an arched doorway in the center of the composition as well as a column and base at the far left (fig 4).

^[10] It is unclear whether the pendant in Pasadena retains a similar early sketch, for the painting has not undergone infrared examination as of yet.^[11] In the final composition, Dou separated the figure from the background with a gentle aureole of light, reinforcing the man's dignity and commanding presence.



Fig 3. Gerrit Dou, *Portrait of a Man*, ca. 1640–45, oil on panel, 9.8 x 15.7 cm, The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, GE-891, image from www.hermitagemuseum.org, courtesy of The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia

- Dominique Surh and Henriette Rahusen, 2017



Fig 4. Infrared reflectogram of *Portrait of a Gentleman with a Walking Stick* (GD-113) showing initial sketch of arched doorway in the background and column with base on the left, captured with InGaAs camera at 1500–1680 nm, bandpass filter, photograph: Shawn Digney-Peer



Endnotes

1. The authors would like to thank Marieke de Winkel for clarifying the terminology of the figure's dress and for pointing out the reference of the gorget, hanger, and rapier to militia membership (personal communication with Dominique Surh, September 2013, correspondence kept on file at the Leiden Gallery). Two militia companies, named after their patron saints Sebastiaan and Joris (George), kept the citizens of Leiden safe. The figure's dress is similar to the painting attributed to the young Dou, *A Leiden Militia Member with an Arms Still-Life*, in the Szépm?vészeti Múzeum, Budapest; see Bob van den Boogart, "A Leiden Militia Member with an Arms Still-Life," in *The Mystery of the Young Rembrandt*, ed. Ernst van de Wetering and Bernhard Schnackenburg (Exh. cat. Kassel, Staatliche Museen Gemaldegalerie Alte Meister; Amsterdam, Museum Het Rembrandthuis) (Amsterdam, 2002), no. 68, 336–39.
2. The pendants remained together until they entered different collections when sold at auction in 1906.

The *Statenbijbel*, the Dutch translation of the Bible as authorized by the Synod of the Reformed Church and the States General, was printed in Leiden in 1637.

3. See also Arthur K. Wheelock Jr. and Adele F. Seeff, eds., *The Public and Private in Dutch Culture of the Golden Age* (Newark, Del. 2000). Conference proceedings, University of Maryland, College Park, 1993.
4. The earliest known provenance of *Portrait of a Gentleman with a Walking Stick* dates from the early twentieth century when it and the pendant *Portrait of a Lady* (fig. 1) were in the Marquis de Forbin-Janson Collection in Paris. The two paintings were acquired by separate owners when they were sold at public auction in 1906, with the male portrait being purchased by the Baron von Goldschmidt Rothschild in Frankfurt.
5. Marieke de Winkel similarly dates the pendant *Portrait of a Lady* in Pasadena to ca. 1645 based on the details of her dress (personal communication with Dominique Surh, September 2013, correspondence kept on file at the Leiden Collection). Ronni Baer, however, dates the portraits to about 1640–44. See Ronni Baer, "The Paintings of Gerrit Dou (1613–1675)," 3 vols. (PhD diss, New York University, 1990), no. 35 a–b. On the portrait in St. Petersburg, see cat. 36.1–36.4.
6. The Dutch word *kastoor* (beaver hat) derives from the Latin (and French) word *castor*, meaning beaver. As French trappers in the Canadian wilderness caught the furriest beavers, European hatters preferred those pelts. Refer to the Old-Dutch Online Dictionary.
7. Based on age and appearance, it is possible that the subject of this portrait is depicted (on the far right) in an earlier group portrait of the Leiden militia: *Company of Captain Nicolaes*



van der Meer, 1626, by Joris van Schooten (Museum De Lakenhal, Leiden, inv. no. S-387). Unfortunately, in this militia painting only Van der Meer has been identified.

For weaponry and other military attributes, see J. B. Kist and J. P. Puype, "Wapens op schuttersstukken," in *Schutters in Holland: Kracht en zenuwen van de stad*, ed. M. Carasso-Kok and J. Levy van Halm (Zwolle, 1988), 167–68.

8. Ronni Baer, "The Paintings of Gerrit Dou (1613–1675)," 3 vols. (PhD diss. New York University, 1990), no. 45; and Ronni Baer, in *Gerrit Dou 1613–1675: Master Painter in the Age of Rembrandt*, ed. Arthur K. Wheelock Jr. (Exh. cat. Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art; London, Dulwich Picture Gallery; The Hague, Mauritshuis) (Zwolle, 2000), under no. 12, 86, fig. 1.
9. In addition to the *Portrait of a Lady* in the present collection (GD-116), this device appears in works such as *Painter with Pipe and Book*, ca. 1645 in the Rijksmuseum; and in Dou's *Self-Portrait*, ca. 1645, in a private collection in Spain.
10. A portrait pair by Dou from about the same time shows a similar background scheme. See: Ronni Baer, *Gerrit Dou 1613-1675: Master Painter in the Age of Rembrandt*, Arthur Wheelock Jr., ed. (Exh. cat. Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art; London. Dulwich Picture Gallery; The Hague, Mauritshuis) (Zwolle, 2000), nos. 12 & 13, 86-89.
11. According to Amy Walsh, the pendant in Pasadena has not been examined under IRR (personal communication with the author, September 2013, correspondence kept on file, The Leiden Collection).

Provenance

- Marquis de Forbin-Janson, Paris (his sale, Paris, Hôtel Drouot, 4 December 1906, no. 25, together with the pendant no. 24 [for 15,700 francs]; sale, Paris, Hôtel Drouot, 17 June 1910, no. 13 [Galerie Charles Brunner, Paris, 1912]).
- Baron von Goldschmidt Rothschild, Frankfurt am Main.
- [Kunsthandel Douwes, Amsterdam, 1928].
- Semmel, Berlin (his sale, Frederik Muller, Amsterdam, 21 November 1933, no. 11 [for 5,000 francs])
- De Geus van den Heuvel, Nieuwersluis, by 1951 (his sale, Sotheby Mak van Waay, Amsterdam, 26–27 April 1976, no. 12 [for 44,000 florins]).
- [Salomon Lilian B. V., Amsterdam, 2006].
- From whom acquired by the present owner in 2006.



Exhibition History

- Eindhoven, Stedelijk van Abbe Museum, on loan with the permanent collection, 1949–51.
- Schiedam, Stedelijk Museum, “Schilderijen uit de zeventiende, achttiende negentiende en twintigste eeuw der Nederlandse school uit de verzameling van B. De Geus van den Heuvel, Amsterdam,” 22 December 1951–13 January 1952, no. 15 [lent by Geus van den Heuvel].
- Dordrecht, Dordrechts Museum, “De Tijd vam de Tachtigjarige Oorlog,” 19 July–14 September 1952 [lent by Geus van den Heuvel].
- Arnhem, Gemeentemuseum, “Collectie B. de Geus van den Heuvel te Nieuwersluis,” 11 December 1960–26 February 1961, no. 12 [lent by Geus van den Heuvel].

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- Galerie Charles Brunner. *Troisième catalogue de la Galerie Charles Brunner*. Sales cat. Paris, Galerie Charles Brunner. Paris, 1912, no. 9.
- Hofstede de Groot, Cornelis. *A Catalogue Raisonné of the Works of the Most Eminent Dutch Painters of the Seventeenth Century Based on the Work of John Smith*. Edited and translated by Edward G. Hawke, 1: 448-49, no. 333. 8 vols. London, 1907–28. Originally published as *Beschreibendes und kritisches Verzeichnis der Werke der hervorragendsten holländischen Maler des XVII. Jahrhunderts*. 10 vols. Esslingen and Paris, 1907–28.
- Martin, Wilhelm. *Gerard Dou, des Meisters Gemälde*. Klassiker der Kunst in Gesamtausgaben 24. Stuttgart and Berlin, 1913, 29.
- Stedelijk Museum. *Schilderijen uit de zeventiende, achttiende negentiende en twintigste eeuw der Nederlandse school uit de verzameling van B. De Geus van den Heuvel, Amsterdam*. Exh. cat. Schiedam, Stedelijk Museum. Schiedam, 1951, 9, no. 15.
- Gemeentemuseum. *Collectie B. de Geus van den Heuvel te Nieuwersluis*. Exh. cat. Arnhem, Gemeentemuseum. Arnhem, 1960, 10, no. 12.
- Baer, Ronni. “The Paintings of Gerrit Dou (1613-1675)”. 3 vols, PhD diss. New York University, 1990, no. 35.
- Surh, Dominique, Ilona van Tuinen, and John Twilley, “Insights from Technical Analysis on a Group of Paintings by Gerrit Dou in the Leiden Collection.” *JHNA* 6:1 (Winter 2014): 1–3, 9, 30–31, figs. 5 a-b, 23 a-b, 24 a-b, DOI:10.5092/jhna.2014.6.1.3.
- Walsh, Amy. *Northern European Paintings at the Norton Simon Museum*. New Haven and London (forthcoming).



Technical Summary

The support is a vertically-oriented oval panel made from one plank of vertically-grained wood. The back of the panel is beveled along the perimeter. It was prepared with a thin, light-colored ground. The paint was built up in thin, successive layers. X-radiography and infrared reflectography at 780 to 1680 nm show several artist's changes. Originally there was an arched doorway behind the sitter and a column on the left side of the painting. Dou also changed the shape of the curtain on the left of the painting and adjusted the position of the sitter's proper right hand.

The painting is in good condition and the panel remains in plane. The thinly-applied paint has become more transparent with age, allowing the pattern of the woodgrain to become more visible. The appearance of the woodgrain may have been enhanced in some areas, such as the shadow under the sitter's hat brim, by an overly aggressive cleaning at some point in the painting's history. In 2007 the painting underwent treatment during which the areas of visible woodgrain were carefully inpainted.