



Frans van Mieris the Elder and His Four Leiden Patrons

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After Rembrandt van Rijn (1606–69) moved to Amsterdam in 1631, his pupil Gerrit Dou (1613–75) soon took over his master's prominent position as Leiden's leading painter.^[1] Dou's meticulous and detailed manner of painting exerted a great influence on scores of young and ambitious local artists. Only one of them, however, ever attained his high level: Frans van Mieris the Elder (1635–81), "the prince of his pupils," who, according to Dou, "carried off the crown from them all" (fig 1).^[2] Van Mieris's work, like that of his master, was exclusively in the reach of the elite and, given the prices he commanded, only the very wealthiest of them. This essay examines these buyers, specifically the four whom Houbraken deemed to be the artist's most important patrons: Isaac Gerard (1616–94), Franciscus de le Boë Sylvius (1614–72), Cornelis Paets (1636–94), and the mysterious "Vredenburg."^[3]

Van Mieris vis-à-vis Dou

Van Mieris initially worked in the style of his master; his *Kitchen Maid Drawing Water from a Well* made before 1655 is even a literal copy of an original by Dou.^[4] He most likely produced other early work while in Dou's workshop, including *Elderly Couple in an Interior* from The Leiden Collection (fig 2). After 1658, the year Van Mieris joined the Leiden Guild of Saint Luke, however, he increasingly distanced himself from his teacher. Though he still derived subjects from Dou, he now drew inspiration from the Haarlem genre painter Adriaen van Ostade (1610–85), whose work found particular favor in Leiden.^[5] Other important influences were his fellow townsmen Quiringh van Brekelenkam (after 1622–ca. 1669) (fig 3), with whom he had worked as a pupil in Dou's workshop for some time, and Gabriel Metsu (1629–67) (fig 4). Moreover, he and his good friend Jan Steen (1625/26–79), who had returned to Leiden from Delft in 1657, mutually influenced each other. Van Mieris based his various versions of *Oyster Meal* on Steen's somewhat earlier *Girl Eating Oysters* now in The Hague, while Steen derived his variations of *Doctor's Visit* from Van Mieris's famous "prototype" in Vienna (fig 5). Van Mieris's definitive break with his master's style, however, can be credited to Gerard ter Borch (1617–81), whose genre paintings of prosperous figures in elegant interiors had a substantial impact on Van Mieris.^[6] Van Mieris must have already been quite familiar with Ter Borch's work in the 1650s, judging from the affinity between his *Child's Lesson (Hannah Entrusting Her Son Samuel into the Care of the High-Priest Eli?)* (fig 6) from the second half of the 1650s and Ter Borch's *The Reading Lesson* from just after 1650 (fig 7).^[7]



Fig 1. Frans van Mieris the Elder, *Self-Portrait at the Age of 32*, 1667, oil on panel, 45 x 39 cm, The National Trust, Polesden Lacey, Surrey, The National Trust, inv. no. NT 1246501.



Fig 2. Frans van Mieris the Elder, *Elderly Couple in an Interior*, ca. 1650–55, oil on panel, 52 x 39.6 cm, The Leiden Collection, New York, inv. no. FM-100.



Fig 3. Quiringh van Brekelenkam, *Fisherman and His Wife in an Interior*, 1657, oil on panel, 47 x 60.3 cm, The Leiden Collection, New York, inv. no. QB-100.



Van Mieris lived up to Dou's expectations and, already quite early in his career, gained a reputation equal to and sometimes even surpassing that of his master. For instance, Cornelis de Bie's (1627–1715) comment in 1661 that whoever sees a picture by Van Mieris "has the work of Dou in mind," underscores the parity between the two painters.^[8] The Amsterdam city physician Jan Sysmus, in about 1670, even deemed Van Mieris to be "better than Dou."^[9] The view that Van Mieris eclipsed his teacher was also held by the Frenchman Roger de Piles (1635–1709), who noted in his *La vie des peintres* of about 1695 that Van Mieris improved on Dou particularly with respect to composition and coloration.^[10] Gerard de Lairesse (1641–1711) also estimated Van Mieris above Dou in some respects: "Francis Mieris has not only curiously followed his master Gerrard Dou, in the elegant modern manner, but is, in some things, his superior."^[11]

Surprisingly, however, much as with Dou, extant estate inventories in Leiden and other cities do not list many of Van Mieris's paintings and provide little documentation about his reputation.. His name is not among the most frequently cited artists in seventeenth-century estate inventories (see Tables 2 and 3 in the essay *Leiden Fijnschilders and the Local Art Market in the Golden Age* in this catalogue). Of the 258 Leiden estate inventories used for this research, only ten list works by Van Mieris.^[12] This seeming anomaly is not as strange as it might initially appear, for Van Mieris's work, like that of Dou, was so expensive that only a select few could afford to buy it.

Isaac Gerard and the Price of Van Mieris's Work

Van Mieris was one of the best-paid painters in the Dutch Republic. Attestations of this fact are found primarily in literary sources, and they generally touch on the exorbitant amounts that foreign princes were willing to pay for his work. These were often substantially higher than the valuations given in the estate inventories of burghers and dealers.^[13] Of the more than 750 paintings evaluated in the 258 Leiden estate inventories, only 22 were worth 100 or more guilders. Of this modest number, 15 works—including the three most valuable ones, all by Van Mieris—were the property of a single individual. The owner of this first-rate collection was Isaac Gerard, one of the four patrons of Van Mieris mentioned by Houbraken in his *Schouburgh*.^[14] Gerard, a bachelor, was a fabulously wealthy merchant with businesses in Leiden and Amsterdam.^[15] He was also a member of the *vroedschap*, or town council. He lived in Leiden in a splendid house at 24 Rapenburg that had formerly been the property of the banker Francois Tortarolis, from whose heirs Isaac Gerard bought it in 1654 for the steep price



Fig 4. Gabriel Metsu, *Old Woman at Her Meal in an Interior*, ca. 1654–57, oil on canvas, 82.6 x 68.7 cm, The Leiden Collection, New York, inv. no. GM-102.



Fig 5. Frans van Mieris the Elder, *The Doctor's Visit*, 1657, oil on panelcopper, 33.84 x 26.87 cm., Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, inv. no. 590.



Fig 6. Frans van Mieris the Elder, *Child's Lesson (Hannah Entrusting Her Son Samuel into the Care of the High Priest Eli?)*, ca. 1656–57, oil on panel with arched top, 29.2 x 21.7 cm, © 2026 The Leiden Collection



of 25,000 guilders.^[16]

Little else is known about him, but the estate he left behind in 1694 confirms that Houbraken was right—Gerard was a great aficionado of Van Mieris.^[17] Among the close to two hundred paintings with a total value of more than 6,100 guilders, five were by Van Mieris, three of which were the most highly valued of them all. “Een stuckje daer osters gegeten warden” (A picture in which oysters are being eaten), possibly *The Oyster Eaters* in St. Petersburg (fig 8), was valued at 750 guilders by the painter Jacob Toorenvliet (1640–1719) and the art dealer Cornelis Berckhey; “een slapent mannetje” (a man sleeping), possibly *The Sleeping Officer* in Munich (fig 9), at 660 guilders; and “een stuckie met drie figuurties” (a picture with three figures) at 500 guilders.^[18] No such high valuations occur in any of the other Leiden estate inventories. Moreover, the fourth most expensive painting was also the property of Gerard, “een nagtstuckie” (a nocturnal scene) by Gerrit Dou worth 300 guilders according to the appraisers. Whether these generous amounts correspond to the prices Gerard actually paid for the works is not certain. Gerard’s inventory dates from 1697, long after the death of both Dou and Van Mieris, and in a period when their work fetched record prices at auction.^[19]

Franciscus de le Boë Sylvius

The most important of the four patrons mentioned by Houbraken in his biography of Van Mieris was Franciscus de le Boë Sylvius, who also features elsewhere in this catalogue as a benefactor of Dou (fig 10). Originally of French-Flemish origins, Sylvius was born in Hanau, Germany in 1614 to the merchant Isaac de le Boë (1588–1643) and Anna Vignet (d. 1648). He moved to Leiden to study medicine in 1634.^[20] Disappointed with the academic climate, he left the following year and went on to obtain a doctoral degree in Basel, before returning to Leiden in 1638 as a professor. This second sojourn too was short lived, for he moved to Amsterdam in 1641 and opened what proved to be a highly successful and profitable physician’s practice. There, in 1649, he married Anna de Ligne (1626–57), the youngest daughter of the wealthy grain merchant Abraham de Ligne and Catharina de Willem.^[21]

After the death of his wife in 1657, Sylvius accepted a position as professor of medicine in Leiden for an honorarium of 1,800 guilders per year, twice what his colleagues received. By then his reputation extended far beyond the Dutch Republic. For instance, a German student commended “Sir Dr. Sylvio [...] [for] his erudition, which brought him fame unequaled in Holland and Germany. All

The Leiden Collection, New York, inv. no. FM-102.



Fig 7. Gerard ter Borch, *The Reading Lesson*, ca. 1652, oil on panel, 27 x 25 cm, Musée du Louvre, inv. no. M.I. 1006, © RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY, Photo: Gérard Blot.



Fig 8. Frans van Mieris the Elder, *Oyster Eaters*, 1659, oil on panel, 44.5 x 34.5 cm, The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, inv. no. ??-917, © The State Hermitage Museum. Photo: Vladimir Terebenin.



Fig 9. Frans van Mieris the Elder, *Sleeping Officer in an Inn*, ca. 1666, oil on panel, 42.5 x 34.5 cm, The Leiden Collection, inv. no. FM-102. © 2026 The Leiden Collection



of the great men in Europe sought his council and gave him lavish gifts.”^[22] Foreign scholars who spent some time in Leiden also spoke of him with respect. The Danish scholar Ole Borch (1626–90), who was in Leiden between 1661 and 1663, took detailed notes of Sylvius’s lectures and the chemistry experiments he conducted in his laboratory at his house on the Rapenburg. Borch also wrote extensively about his discussions with Sylvius.^[23] Borch, thus, was speaking from first-hand experience when he lavished praise on Sylvius, extolling his character in a letter in 1661 to the Danish physicist and mathematician Thomas Bartholinus (1616–80).^[24]

Sylvius was a great art lover, who at the time of his death in 1672 left behind 185 pictures, though whether he personally purchased them all is unknown. For example, research on his second wife, Margareta Lucretia (ca. 1647–69) makes it clear that her contribution to the collection was significantly larger than has hitherto been assumed. Not only did she inherit family portraits, but presumably also the portraits of Queen Christina of Sweden, and of Martin Luther and his wife, as well as the portrait of King Charles I of England by Anthony van Dyck (1599–1640). The picture by Adam Elsheimer (1578–1610) described in the estate inventory as “een groot Duyts landschap” (a large German landscape) most likely also came from her father’s estate.^[25]

Margareta Lucretia was the daughter of Johann Friedrich Schlezer (1609/10–ca. 1673), from Mecklenburg, and Maria Tentenier (d. 1648), of Utrecht.^[26] Her mother hailed from a family of merchants that had gained entry into Utrecht’s patriciate. Her father was born to a distinguished Lutheran family, several members of which moved in the social circles around the Swedish court.^[27] Johann’s father, as well as his grandfather, had been the personal physician of the Swedish king, and his brother Adolf was ambassador of Brandenburg in Stockholm. Schlezer came to the Dutch Republic to read mathematics at the Leiden Academy in 1629.^[28] He continued his study in Rostock, but was back in Leiden once more in 1634 as a student of mathematics.^[29]

Schlezer was in Utrecht in 1641 and 1644, perhaps serving as a diplomat. His compatriot and a co-student from his Leiden years, Martinus Tancken, who assisted him in drawing up his wedding contract in Utrecht in 1641, stated that he was an envoy of the Danish crown in The Hague. Schlezer was, in any event, a diplomatic agent between 1644 and 1658, and took part in many important missions as “secretaris van de Geheime Kamer” (secretary of the Privy Council) in the service of Elector Frederick William I (1620–88) of Brandenburg. Schlezer seems to have played a key role in 1646 in the

x 33 cm, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Alte Pinakothek, Munich, inv. no. 241. © bpk, Berlin / Art Resource, NY.



Fig 10. Fig 10. Cornelis van Dalen II, *Portrait of Franciscus de le Boë Sylvius*, 1659, engraving, 306 x 238 mm, British Museum, London, inv. no. 1864,0714.17, © Trustees of the British Museum.



Fig 11. Frans van Mieris the Elder, *Portrait of Florentius Schuyl* (1619–1669), 1666, oil on copper on panel, 21.3 x 16.5 cm, Mauritshuis, The Hague, inv. no. 107.



wedding negotiations between the Great Elector and Louise Henriette of Nassau (1627–67), daughter of Stadholder Frederik Hendrik (1584–1647) and Amalia van Solms (1602–75). Margareta Lucretia Schlezer was born in Kleve, which probably indicates that she was born soon after the electoral wedding, since Frederick William and his bride spent the first years of their marriage in that city.^[30] Schlezer later served as ambassador on behalf of Brandenburg in Hamburg in 1651, and again in London in 1655.^[31]

Some art historians believe that Sylvius and Van Mieris enjoyed a relationship similar to that between Pieter Spiering and Dou.^[32] Houbraken, however, writes that Van Mieris “regularly requested that any work that he [Van Mieris] created might be for him, or that he might be granted the privilege of paying a price commensurate with what another [collector] had already offered.”^[33] Words such as “dikwerf” (regularly), “verzogt” (requested), and “mogt wezen” (might be) are not indicative of an existing situation, but rather a desired one.^[34] It is also highly questionable whether Sylvius could afford the kind of financial agreement that existed between Dou and Spiering. There is no doubt that he was wealthy, but whether he was rich enough to pay 500 guilders a year for the right of first refusal is unlikely.^[35] That Sylvius greatly admired Van Mieris’s work, however, is evident: at his death he owned no fewer than seven pictures by the artist. Still, that is four fewer than by Dou.

Patronage involved more than buying works of art; there were other ways of promoting one’s protégé. For instance, Sylvius ensured that Van Mieris gained entry into his scholarly network. This is suggested by the portraits Van Mieris made of two professors, Florentius Schuyl (1619–69) (fig 11) and Francois Gomarus (ca. 1615–69), the latter of which is known only from his estate inventory.^[36] In 1722, a double portrait of Sylvius and wife (fig 12) was in the possession of Maria Justina Kraij, the only traceable Haarlem owner of a work by Van Mieris.^[37] Since she possessed several more pictures by Van Mieris, as well as paintings by other Leiden artists, it is plausible that she, or her parents, inherited them from a relative in Leiden.^[38] A suitable candidate is Susanna Claessens, Maria’s great-aunt and the wife of Paulus Barbette (1620–65), a famous physician who died in Amsterdam in 1665.^[39] Barbette admired Sylvius greatly and knew him well.^[40] No inventory of his estate was made after his death, but one that was drawn up when his widow passed away seven years later mentions “de print van Silvius” (the print of Sylvius), which probably refers to a portrait print by Cornelis van Dalen of 1659 (fig 10).^[41] Although there is no direct indication that Barbette was the original owner of Van Mieris’s double portrait of Silvius and his wife, given the family relationship he seems ideally suited for ordering an expensive portrait of



Fig 12. Frans van Mieris the Elder, *Double Portrait of Franciscus de le Boë Sylvius and His Wife, known as "The Music Lesson,"* 1672, oil on panel with arched top, 41 x 31 cm, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Dresden, inv no. 1743.



Fig 13. Frans van Mieris the Elder, *The Cloth Shop*, 1660, oil on panel, 54.5 x 42.7 cm, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, inv. no. 586.



Fig 14. Frans van Mieris the Elder, *A Sleeping Courtesan*, 1669, oil on copper, 27.5 x 22.5 cm, Uffizi Gallery, Florence, inv. no. 1263, © 2015. Photo Scala,



someone he knew well, but who was not a relative.

Sylvius sometimes mediated actively on behalf of Van Mieris. Houbraken writes that in 1660 Van Mieris “through the grace of the gentleman mentioned, his patron [Sylvius]” had the opportunity to paint a picture for Archduke Leopold Wilhelm of Austria (1614–62), which became one of the Archduke’s favorite paintings: “a beautiful woman in a silk cloth shop, and an officer,” presently known as *The Cloth Shop* (fig 13).^[42] The commission could have radically altered the course of Van Mieris’s career. Not only did he receive the astonishingly high sum of 1,000 guilders for the work, but he was also invited to become Leopold’s court painter in Vienna for a staggering annual stipend of 2,500 guilders.^[43] The painter thanked the Archduke most kindly for this signal honor, but asserted that he was compelled to decline because his wife was unwilling to leave Leiden. The truth of the matter, however, was that Van Mieris did not lack in profitable commissions in Leiden and therefore felt no acute need to leave his hometown.

Van Mieris found favor with yet another princely admirer: Cosimo III de’ Medici (1642–1723). In 1667 and 1669—before succeeding his father as Grand Duke of Tuscany in 1670—Cosimo made two incognito trips to the Dutch Republic, during which he met many magistrates, scholars and artists.^[44] He also visited Sylvius’s home on the Rapenburg, which is probably where he first became acquainted with Van Mieris’s paintings.^[45] It also seems likely that Sylvius actually introduced the artist to Cosimo. During the 1669 trip, Cosimo collected the paintings he had ordered from Van Mieris the previous year, likely *The Sleeping Courtesan* (fig 14) and *The Quacksalver*, both in the Uffizi in Florence.^[46] Van Mieris was not the only Leiden *fijnschilder* whom Cosimo held in high esteem.^[47] He also visited Gerrit Dou, from whom he probably bought *Woman Making Pancakes*.^[48] This notwithstanding, the future Grand Duke seems to have been impressed most by Van Mieris, whom he engaged to produce another five paintings in the years after his return to Florence. Van Mieris was renowned for his self-portraits, such as the one in The Leiden Collection in which he expresses surprise (fig 15). It is, thus, not surprising that one of the paintings Cosimo ordered was a self-portrait for his gallery of European celebrities.^[49]

Cornelis Paets and the Mysterious “Vredenburg”

While staying in Leiden, Cosimo also called on Cornelis Paets and took a tour of his splendid picture collection. He was particularly struck by “a cabinet picture depicting a young lady in a swoon, along with a doctor, and an old

Florence -courtesy of the
Ministero Beni e Att. Culturali.



Fig 15. Frans van Mieris the Elder, “Self-Portrait” with a Plumed Beret, 1668, oil on oval panel, 11.3 x 8.2 cm, The Leiden Collection, New York, inv. no. FM-108.



Fig 16. Frans van Mieris the Elder, *The Doctor's Visit*, 1667, oil on panel, 44.5 x 31.1 cm, The J. Paul Getty Museum, inv. no. 86.PB.634.



Fig 17. Frans van Mieris the Elder and His Four Leiden Patrons
© 2026 The Leiden Collection



woman weeping" (**fig 16**).^[50] Van Mieris had begun this painting in 1663. In that year French envoy Balthasar de Monconys had called on Van Mieris and found him at work on it. He was astonished to hear that Van Mieris wanted 1,200 guilders for the piece once it was completed.^[51] According to Houbraken, Paets had agreed to pay Van Mieris 6 guilders for every hour he worked on it (this is the famous *Doctor's Visit* now in Los Angeles).^[52] This agreement ultimately cost Paets a staggering 1,500 guilders, or 300 guilders more than the already exorbitant initial amount. Cosimo was eager to acquire the work and offered Paets twice as much for it, an enticement to which Paets did not succumb.

Unfortunately, no inventory of Paets's collection has been preserved. Nevertheless, it enjoyed such renown that Cosimo visited his home on the Breestraat to see the works.^[53] On this occasion Cosimo surely admired the stunning portrait of Agatha van Couwenhoven (**fig 17**), Paets's wife, which Van Mieris had painted in 1665 and which in Houbraken's time was held to be "one of his most skillful paintings in this country."^[54]

Paets seems to have granted commissions primarily to Van Mieris. Indications that he also served as an agent, like Sylvius, have not been found, although such a role cannot be definitively excluded. Van Mieris may have owed the commission for the portrait of Allard van Couwenhoven, Agatha's father, to Cornelis Paets.^[55] Paets was Van Mieris's contemporary and had known him since his youth. According to Houbraken, Paets was a fervent amateur painter and had received instruction in drawing from Van Mieris. Paets's involvement with and encouragement of painting (which had landed him in a deep crisis) became apparent yet again shortly after Van Mieris's death in 1681, when Paets helped found a drawing academy.^[56]

The fourth patron mentioned by Houbraken in his *Schouburgh* is a certain "Vredenburg," about whom he offers no further details. Since the only "Vredenburg" living in Leiden after mid-century was the notary Willem van Vredenburch (ca. 1621–64), he is generally assumed to be the individual Houbraken had in mind. On first consideration, he does appear to be an excellent candidate. The Dou follower Adriaen van Gaesbeeck (1621–50) was Van Vredenburch's brother-in-law and could have stimulated his interest in *fijnschilder* art. On the other hand, however, the notary had neither an extensive network of contacts nor the kind of wealth that would allow him to buy paintings from Van Mieris on a regular basis.^[57] In fact, it is doubtful whether he was in a position to acquire even one work by Van Mieris; the four Leiden estate owners with only a single work by the artist were, in any case,

Elder, *Portrait of Agatha Paets*, 1665, oil on panel, 27 x 21.5 cm, Private Collection, United States.



much richer than Van Vredenburch.^[58] The only other person from Leiden who could vie for the designation “Maecenas” was the merchant Alexander de Koninck from Zeeland. In 1681 five undescribed paintings by Van Mieris hung in his house on the Nieuwe Rijn.^[59]

In light of all this, the “Vredenburg” cited by Houbraken was probably someone who was not from Leiden. A suitable contender might be Gerard van Vredenburch (ca. 1640–90), who came from a wealthy Rotterdam regent family and was closely related to Cornelis Paets. Prior to his successful career in the Rotterdam town council, Van Vredenburch had studied law in Leiden in the early 1660s.^[60] Upon his return to Rotterdam in 1665, he married Maria van Couwenhoven, a first cousin of Agatha van Couwenhoven, the wife of Cornelis Paets.^[61] Van Vredenburch surely knew Van Mieris’s portrait of Agatha mentioned above, given that in May 1667 he was staying with Paets in Leiden to witness the baptism of his nephew Allard Paets. He could also have been exposed to Van Mieris’s work through his uncle, namely Agatha’s father, for the fabulously wealthy Allard van Couwenhoven had his likeness limned by Van Mieris.^[62] When the Rotterdam city secretary and owner of more than 140 pictures died in 1683, this portrait was in his house at the Wijnhaven, together with works by Jan Both (1615/18–52), Balthasar van der Helst (1613–70), Rembrandt van Rijn (1606–69), and Jan Lievens (1607–74), among others.^[63] Van Vredenburch’s grandson, Willem Paets (1665–1740), inherited the portrait, and it was returned to Leiden, where it hung—until Willem was old enough—in the house of Cornelis Paets, doubtless in the vicinity of Agatha’s likeness.^[64] It is therefore entirely plausible that the “Vredenburg” described by Houbraken was someone not from Leiden, but rather from Rotterdam. Nevertheless, so long as information is lacking about the pictures owned by Gerard van Vredenburch or other members of this wealthy Rotterdam brewers’ family, this identification remains hypothetical.

- Piet Bakker, 2017



Endnotes

1. See the essays *Gerrit Dou and His Collectors in the Golden Age* and *Leiden Fijnschilders and the Local Art Market in the Golden Age* in this catalogue.
2. "Den Prins van zyne Leerlingen ... de kroon van hun allen weg droeg." Arnold Houbraken, *De groote schouburgh der Nederlantsche konstschilders en schilderessen*, 3 vols. (Amsterdam, 1718–21; revised edition published in The Hague, 1753; reprinted in Amsterdam, 1980) 3: 2.
3. Equally important for Van Mieris's career was Cosimo III de' Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany, but he can be discussed only briefly here. For his role as Van Mieris's patron in the 1670s, see the painter's biography in this catalogue.
4. Otto Naumann, *Frans van Mieris (1635–1681) the Elder* (Doornspijk, 1981), 1:43.
5. See Tables 2 and 3 in the essay *Leiden Fijnschilders and the Local Art Market in the Golden Age* in this catalogue.
6. Quentin Buvelot, "De reputatie van Frans van Mieris," in Quentin Buvelot, ed., *Frans van Mieris 1635–1681* (Exh. cat. The Hague, Mauritshuis; Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art) (Zwolle, 2005), 15; Otto Naumann, "Frans van Mieris' Personal Style," in *Frans van Mieris 1635–1681*, ed. Quentin Buvelot (Exh. cat. The Hague, Mauritshuis; Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art) (Zwolle, 2005), 33.
7. Quentin Buvelot, ed., *Frans van Mieris 1635–1681* (Exh. cat. The Hague, Mauritshuis; Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art) (Zwolle, 2005), 15, 104–6, no. 12.
8. Voor 't werck van Dau beooght." Cornelis de Bie, *Het gulden cabinet van de edel vrij schilder const*, (Antwerp, 1661), 404.
9. "Beter als Douw." Abraham Bredius, "Het Schilderregister van Jan Sysmus, Stads-Doctor van Amsterdam," *Oud Holland* 8 (1890): 8.
10. "François Miris. (...) disciple de Girard Dau (...) si ce n'est qu'il avoit un meilleur goût de dessein, plus de gentillesse dans ses Compositions, & plus de suavité encore dans ses couleurs (...)," in Roger de Piles, *Abrégé de la vie des peintres, avec des reflexions sur leurs ouvrages, et un Traité du peintre parfait; De la connoissance des desseins; De l'utilité des estampes* (Paris, 1715), 430, cited in Otto Naumann, *Frans van Mieris (1635–1681) the Elder* (Doornspijk, 1981), 1: 192.
11. Gerard de Lairesse, *Groot Schilderboeck* (Amsterdam, 1707; English edition, London, 1778), 101, cited in Otto Naumann, *Frans van Mieris (1635–1681) the Elder* (Doornspijk, 1981), 1: 194.
12. See Tables 2 and 3 in the essay *Leiden Fijnschilders and the Local Art Market in the Golden Age* in this catalogue. In addition to the Leiden estate inventories listed in Otto



Naumann, *Frans van Mieris (1635–1681) the Elder* (Doornspijk, 1981), 1: 168, 170, 175, 189, and Eric Jan Sluijter, “Schilders van ‘cleyne, subtile ende curieuse dingen’: Leidse fijnschilders in contemporaine bronnen,” in *Leidse Fijnschilders: van Gerrit Dou tot Frans van Mieris de Jonge, 1630–1770*, ed. Eric Jan Sluijter, Marlies Enklaar, and Paul Nieuwenhuizen (Exh. cat. Leiden, Museum De Lakenhal) (Zwolle, 1988), 39–40, and excluding the inventories in the main text, there are those of the cloth merchant Abraham le Pla and Johanna Mabuse (Regionaal Archief Leiden, Notarial Archives, Notary C. van Scharpenbrant, inv. 1103, deed 35, 1673), in which are listed “een tafereel van een out mannetje dat een pen versnyt” (a scene of an old man cutting a quill) and “Een out mannetje en wijfje om tafel” (An old man and woman at a table). See Otto Naumann, *Frans van Mieris (1635–1681) the Elder* (Doornspijk, 1981), 2: 8, no. 2; 7, no. 1.

13. For the prices mentioned in written sources, see Otto Naumann, “Van Mieris, riant betaald schilder,” *Tableau 3* (1981): 649–56. For the various ways in which an asking price was determined, see Eric Jan Sluijter, “Determining Value on the Art Market in the Golden Age: An Introduction,” in *Art Market and Connoisseurship: A Closer Look at Paintings by Rembrandt, Rubens, and Their Contemporaries*, ed. Anna Tummers and Koenraad Jonckheere (Amsterdam, 2008), 7–28.
14. Arnold Houbraken, *De groote schouburgh der Nederlantsche konstschilders en schilderessen* (Amsterdam, 1718–21; revised edition, The Hague, 1753; reprinted in Amsterdam, 1980), 3: 3.
15. Gerard left behind a fortune worth 457,500 guilders in 1694. K. Zandvliet, *De 250 rijksten van de Gouden Eeuw* (Amsterdam, 2006), 143, no. 73.
16. Lunsingh Scheurleer, Theodoor Hermann, Cornelia Willemijn Fock, and A.J. van Dissel, eds., *Het Rapenburg: Geschiedenis van een Leidse gracht* (Leiden, 1989), 4: 439.
17. Gerard died in 1694, but his estate was divided only in 1697 (Stadsarchief Amsterdam, Notarial Archives 4264, Notary D. van der Groe, fol. 1-52v, 27 August 1697). For a review and a transcription of the entire estate inventory, see Lunsingh Scheurleer, Theodoor Hermann, Cornelia Willemijn Fock, and A.J. van Dissel, eds., *Het Rapenburg: Geschiedenis van een Leidse gracht* (Leiden, 1989), 4: 454–57, 494–508.
18. For an identification of the pictures, see Quentin Buvelot, “De reputatie van Frans van Mieris,” in *Frans van Mieris 1635–1681*, ed. Quentin Buvelot (Exh. cat. The Hague, Mauritshuis; Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art) (Zwolle, 2005), 18.
19. Examples of prices for the work of Van Mieris and Dou outside of Leiden are extremely rare. In the 1674 stock inventory of Gerrit Uylenburgh is “een slapend vrouwje” (a woman sleeping) valued at 250 guilders (Abraham Bredius, *Künstler-Inventare: Urkunden zur Geschichte der holländischen Kunst des XVIten, XVIIten und XVIIIten Jahrhunderts* [The Hague, 1915–22], 1570), and in the 1682 Amsterdam stock of Diego Duarte “een nacht met vier figuren en een lanterne keers en maenlicht, capitaal en curieus” (a nocturnal scene with four figures and a lantern, capital and curious).



four figures and a candle lantern and moonlight, outstanding and meticulous) valued at 403 guilders, and “een cleynder syn conterfeyteltien op sen Italiaens gekleet spelende op een Luyt” (a smaller one being a portrait [of a figure] dressed in Italian clothing playing a lute) valued at 170 guilders (Otto Naumann, *Frans van Mieris (1635–1681) the Elder* [Doornspijk, 1981], 1: 188).

20. Unless mentioned otherwise, the information on Sylvius is taken from: Evert H. Baumann, *Francois de le Boë Sylvius* (Leiden, 1949), and G.E. Dann, “Beitrag zur Biographie und Familiengeschichte des Leidener Professors Franz de la Boë Sylvius,” in *Die Vorträge der Hauptsammlung der Internationalen Gesellschaft für Geschichte der Pharmazie e.V. während des Internationalen Pharmaziegeschichtlichen Kongresses in Rotterdam vom 17. – 21. September 1963*, ed. G.E. Dann (Stuttgart, 1965), 29–46.
21. Information on Abraham de Ligne and his family can be found in the Montias database in the Frick Collection.
22. The original German reads: “Herrn Dr. Sylvio (...) Seine Erudition den Ruhm [brachte], dass er seines gleichen in Holland und Teutschland nicht hätte. Alle grossen Herrn in Europa bedienten sich seines Raths und schickten ihm grosse Geschenke.” See Max Hans Würzner, “Duitse studenten in de 17e eeuw te Leiden,” *Leids Jaarboekje* 67 (1975): 71. See also Lunsingh Scheurleer, Theodoor Hermann, Cornelia Willemijn Fock, and A.J. van Dissel, eds. *Het Rapenburg: Geschiedenis van een Leidse gracht* (Leiden, 1988), 3a: 282.
23. H.D. Schepelern, ed., *Olai Borrichii, Itinerariu 1660–1665: The Journal of the Danish Polyhistor Ole Bloch* (London, 1983), passim.
24. Borch in a letter dated 24 November 1661 to Th. Bartholinus, see Evert H. Baumann, *Francois de le Boë Sylvius* (Leiden, 1949), 235n1.
25. Lunsingh Scheurleer, Theodoor Hermann, Cornelia Willemijn Fock, and A.J. van Dissel, eds. *Het Rapenburg: Geschiedenis van een Leidse gracht* (Leiden, 1988), 3a: 337.
26. The name Schlezer, rather than Schletzer, is used here because the former is used more widely in the extensive English and German literature devoted to Margareta Lucretia’s father.
27. Unless mentioned otherwise, all of the information on Johann Friedrich Schlezer is taken from: Peter Bahl, *Der Hof des grossen Kurfürsten: Studien zur höheren Amtsträgerschaft Brandenburg-Preussens* (Cologne, 2001), 571–72
28. *Album studiosorum academiae lugduno batavae* (The Hague, 1875), 222.
29. *Album studiosorum academiae lugduno batavae* (The Hague, 1875), 264.
30. According to the Leiden marriage certificate, Margareta Lucretia was born in Kleve. A birth certificate has not been preserved and so her date of birth can only be approximated. Her parents drew up their marriage settlement on 31 December 1641 in Utrecht (Utrechts Archief, Notarial Archives, Notary F. Zwaerdecroon, inv. U028c001, deed 53, 31 December 1641) and would have wed soon thereafter, in January 1642. Her parents were still without issue in



1644, since, again in Utrecht, they appointed guardians for their unborn children (Utrechts Archief, Notarial Archives, Notary F. Zwaerdecroon, inv. U028a010, deed 106, 25 December 1644). As her mother died there in 1648 (Utrechts Archief, Begraafregister, deed 123, p. 180), Margareta Lucretia had to have been born between 1644 and 1648. She could thus also have been born before the nuptials of the elector, given that he resided primarily in Kleve as of 1640 and her father would have found himself there regularly. Margareta Lucretia, in any case, was still very young when she and Sylvius married in 1667, but her young age supports the identification of the famous double portrait of Sylvius and his second wife in Dresden that Frans van Mieris painted shortly after Margareta Lucretia's death in 1669. On this portrait, see Otto Naumann, *Frans van Mieris (1635–1681) the Elder* (Doornspijk, 1981), 2: 101, no. 89.

31. When it was discovered in 1658 that Schlezer also worked for Sweden, he fell in disgrace with the Great Elector and had no choice but to enter into the service of the Swedish court, after which little else was heard from him. In 1667 he was in Leiden to witness the marriage of his daughter. Sylvius's inventory drawn up in 1673 makes it clear that Schlezer was dead by that time, therefore he must have passed away sometime between 1667 and that year.
32. Otto Naumann, *Frans van Mieris (1635–1681) the Elder* (Doornspijk, 1981), 1: 25; Quentin Buvelot, ed., *Frans van Mieris 1635–1681* (Exh. cat. The Hague, Mauritshuis; Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art) (Zwolle, 2005), 18. See also the essay *Gerrit Dou and His Collectors in the Golden Age* in this catalogue.
33. "Dikwerf [verzogt], dat al wat hy maakte voor hem mogt wezen, of hy keur hebben om het zelve te naasten tot zoodanig een prys als ymant anders daar voor wilde geven." Arnold Houbraken, *De groote schouburgh der Nederlantsche konstschilders en schilderessen* (Amsterdam, 1718–21; revised edition, The Hague, 1753; reprinted in Amsterdam, 1980), 3: 2.
34. That this expresses a desire rather than an actual situation is stated even more strongly by Weyerman, who writes that Sylvius "dikmaals aan den jongen Konstschilder verzogt, om alles het geene hy schilderde te moogen hebben, of ten minsten het te moogen naasten voor de hoogste prijs die er iemant voor zou komen te bieden" (regularly requested the young painter to be allowed to have everything that he painted, or at least be able to take it over for the highest price that someone would offer for it). Jacob Campo Weyerman, *De levensbeschryvingen der Nederlantsche konstschilders en konstschilderessen* (The Hague, 1729), 342.
35. For instance, in Leiden in 1674 the heirs of Sylvius were taxed on a capital of 25,000 guilders, just like Gerrit Dou. For the sake of comparison: in that year Cornelis Paets was taxed on a capital of 82,000 guilders, and Isaac Gerard on 61,000 (Gerrit Jan Peltjes, *Leidse Lasten, twee belastingkohieren uit 1674* [Leiden, 1995]). At his death in 1694, the latter left behind a fortune of 457,500 guilders. K. Zandvliet, *De 250 rijksten van de Gouden Eeuw: kaptiaal*,



macht, familie en levensstijl (Amsterdam, 2006), 143, no. 73.

36. Regionaal Archief Leiden, Notarial Archives, Notary L. van Overmeer, inv. 969, deed 8, 14 December 1669: "Het conterfeytSEL van de overledenen [= Francois Gomarus en Susanna Goethals] van Mieris" (The likeness of the deceased [= Francois Gomarus and Susanna Goethals] by Van Mieris). *Portrait of Florentius Schuyl*, 1666, is the Mauritshuis, The Hague. See Otto Naumann, *Frans van Mieris (1635–1681) the Elder* (Doornspijk, 1981), 2: no. 63; Quentin Buvelot, ed., *Frans van Mieris 1635–1681* (Exh. cat. The Hague, Mauritshuis; Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art) (Zwolle, 2005), no. 37.
37. Pieter Biesboer, *Collections of Paintings in Haarlem: 1572–1745* (Los Angeles, 2001), 343, no. 12.
38. The inventory also mentions "een mansportraitje" (a portrait of a man) and a self-portrait by Van Mieris. Also listed were "een oudemans portraitje boven ovael" (a portrait of an old man arched at the top) by Dou, an amorous couple by Carel de Moor, and a portrait of a woman by Willem van Mieris. Not a single work by these artists occurs in other Haarlem estate inventories, with the exception of two pieces by Dou in the 1694 stock inventory of Cornelis Dusart, but this was most likely by a follower.
39. Susanna Claessens's sister was Barbara Maria Claessens, the wife of Jan van Pradellis, a cloth manufacturer in Leiden. They were the grandparents of Maria Justina Kraij, living in Haarlem, whose parents were Abraham Kraij, Lord of Idewalle and burgomaster of the Zeeuwse Sluijs, and Maria van Pradellis.
40. E. H. Baumann, *Francois de le Boë Sylvius* (Leiden, 1949), 15.
41. Regionaal Archief Leiden, Notarial Archives, Notary P.A. Scharpenbrant, inv. 1102, deed 19, 2 January 1672.
42. "Door de gunst van gemelden Heer zynen Mecenas [Sylvius]"; "een schoon Vrouwte staande in een Zyde Stoffewinkel, en nevens de zelve een Ruiter." Arnold Houbraken, *De groote schouburgh der Nederlantsche konstschilders en schilderessen* (Amsterdam, 1718–21; revised edition, The Hague, 1753; reprinted in Amsterdam, 1980), 3: 3; this is *The Cloth Shop*, 1660 (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna); Otto Naumann, *Frans van Mieris (1635–1681) the Elder* (Doornspijk, 1981), 1: 24; 2: 33–35, no. 31.
43. According to Sandrart, the Archduke even paid 2,000 guilders for the painting; see Otto Naumann, *Frans van Mieris (1635–1681) the Elder* (Doornspijk, 1981), 1: 24.
44. G.J. Hoogewerff, *De twee reizen van Cosimo de Medici Prins van Toscane door de Nederlanden (1667–1669)* (Amsterdam, 1919).
45. In a letter to Cosimo, Sylvius thanks the Grand Duke for having honored him with a visit to his house while sojourning in Leiden. G. J. Hoogewerff, *De twee reizen van Cosimo de' Medici Prins van Toscane door de Nederlanden (1667–1669)*, Amsterdam, 1919, 393–94.
46. Otto Naumann, *Frans van Mieris (1635–1681) the Elder* (Doornspijk, 1981), 2: 13–14, no. 9;



89–91, no. 75.

47. Horst Gerson, *Ausbreitung und Nachwirkung der holländischen Malerei des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Haarlem, 1942, reprinted in Amsterdam, 1983), 179–84.

48. *Woman Making Pancakes*, ca. 1650–55 (Uffizi Gallery, Florence); Ronni Baer, “The Paintings of Gerrit Dou (1613–1675),” (PhD diss. New York University, 1990), no. A 61.

49. On the five works that he bought, see note 24 in the biography of Frans van Mieris in this catalogue. See Quentin Buvelot, ed., *Frans van Mieris 1635–1681* (Exh. cat. The Hague, Mauritshuis; Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art) (Zwolle, 2005), 215n60.

50. “Een Kabinetstukje, waar in verbeeld word een jong Juffertje dat in een flaaute leit, nevens een Medecynmeester en een schreijende oude Vrouw.” Arnold Houbraken, *De groote schouburgh der Nederlantsche konstschilders en schilderessen* (Amsterdam, 1718–21; revised edition, The Hague, 1753; reprinted in Amsterdam, 1980), 3: 4.

51. Abraham Bredius, “17^e Eeuwsche reisherinneringen: *Journal des Voyages de Monsieur de Monconys etc.etc. Paris 1677*,” *Nederlandsche Kunstbode* (1881): 413.

52. Otto Naumann, *Frans van Mieris (1635–1681) the Elder* (Doornspijk, 1981), 2: 84–87, no. I 71.

53. At the marriage of his brother Jacob in Leiden in 1675, Cornelis Paets gave the Breestraat as his address.

54. “Een van zyn konstigste Penceelkonst die hier te Land is.” Quentin Buvelot, ed., *Frans van Mieris 1635–1681* (Exh. cat. The Hague, Mauritshuis; Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art) (Zwolle, 2005), 169–74, nos. 35–36.

55. See the discussion on “Vredenburg” below.

56. Piet Bakker, *De Vrije Fries: Verdwenen maar niet vergeten: Themanummer rond de opheffing van de Academie van Franeker in 1811* (Leeuwarden, 2011), 264–65.

57. In 1674, about ten year’s after Van Vredenburch’s death, his widow was taxed on a capital estimated between 5,000 and 6,000 guilders. Gerrit Jan Peltjes, *Leidse Lasten: Twee belastingkohieren uit 1674* (Leiden, 1995), 52.

58. In 1674 the cloth merchants Jan Adriaensz le Pla (Regionaal Archief Leiden, Notarial Archives 1404, deed 44, 1687) and Gerrit van Hoochmade (Regionaal Archief Leiden, Notarial Archives 1002, deed 6, 1683), and the heirs of the medical doctor Franciscus Gomarus (Regionaal Archief Leiden, Notarial Archives 969, deed 8, 1669) were taxed for 80,000, 45,000 and 25,000 guilders, respectively. See Gerrit Jan Peltjes, *Leidse Lasten: Twee belastingkohieren uit 1674* (Leiden, 1995), *passim*. Information on the wealth of a colleague of Gomarus, Johannes van der Spelt, who died in 1664, is not available. In addition to a portrait by Van Mieris, Van der Spelt owned a bond worth 200 guilders in the name of the painter (Regionaal Archief Leiden, Notarial Archives 984, deed 61, 1665). The doctor’s



brother was Adriaen van der Spelt, the still-life painter with whom Van Mieris collaborated on at least one occasion (Adriaen van der Spelt and Frans van Mieris, *Trompe l’Oeil with a Garland of Flowers and a Curtain*, signed A. van der Spelt, 1658 [The Art Institute of Chicago]; see also: Quentin Buvelot, ed., *Frans van Mieris 1635–1681* (Exh. cat. The Hague, Mauritshuis; Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art) [Zwolle, 2005], 117–19, no. 16). This painting was the property of the brewer Henric Bugge van Ring, in whose estate inventory (Regionaal Archief Leiden,, Notarial Archives 1005, deed 10, 1667), in addition to a country house, so much real estate is mentioned that his fortune would have equaled if not surpassed that of Le Pla.

59. Regionaal Archief Leiden, Notarial Archives, Notary L. Leffen, inv. 1264, deed 55, 4 May 1681.
60. *Album studiosorum academieae lugduno batavae* (The Hague, 1875), 473.
61. For the Van Vredenburch and Van Couwenhoven families, their mutual relationships, and position in Rotterdam’s regent patriciate, see E.A. Engelbrecht, *De Vroedschap van Rotterdam 1572–1795* (Rotterdam, 1973), passim. Judging from the will of Gerard van Vredenburg of 1667, the wealth was primarily from his wife’s family. In the reciprocal will, in the event that she died first, she left her family 110,000 guilders in real estate, and Van Vredenburg “a mere” 20,000 guilders. The amounts would devolve to both families upon the death of the survivor (Gemeente Archief Rotterdam, Notarial Archives, Notary J. Delphius, inv. 363, deed 356/1305, 11 December 1667).
62. *Een ConterfeytSEL van Dhr A van Couwenhoven za: van Miris* (“A likeness of the late Mr A. van Couwenhoven by Van Mieris”) (Gemeente Archief Rotterdam, Notarial Archives, notary Johannes Bordels, inv. 1300, [unpag.] 27 July 1683). Allard van Couwenhoven was married to the daughter of the brewer Jacob Jacobsz van Couwenhoven (1592–1661), who left a fortune worth 220,000 guilders in 1661. K. Zandvliet, *De 250 rijksten van de Gouden Eeuw: kaptiaal, macht, familie en levensstijl* (Amsterdam, 2006), 353, no. 216. A share was bequeathed to his granddaughter Maria van Couwenhoven, the wife of Gerard van Vredenburg.
63. Otto Naumann, *Frans van Mieris (1635–1681) the Elder* (Doornspijk, 1981), 1: 189. See: Albertus Welcker, “Johannes Ruyscher alias Jonge Hercules,” *Oud Holland* 50 (1933): 29. The pictures in this extensive bequest are listed in a separate category in Gemeente Archief Rotterdam, Notarial Archives, notary Johannes Bordels, inv. 1300, (unpag.), 27 July 1683.
64. All of the paintings, with the exception of the portraits, were auctioned in Rotterdam on 20 September 1683. The portraits, including the one by Van Mieris, devolved to Cornelis Paets as the guardian of his two children, Willem and Elisabeth. Gemeente Archief Rotterdam, Notarial Archives, Notary Johannes Bordels, inv. 1300, Settlement of the Estate, 27 July 1683, Settlement of the Estate.