

Johannes Vermeer and Rhoon castle



H.G.Slager, 2022

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Front cover image: Rhoon castle in 1980

Back cover image: stained glass window in Rhoon castle
(Photos Stichting kasteel van Rhoon)

SUMMARY

In this paper a hitherto unrecorded location where Johannes Vermeer (1632-1675) may have created some of his paintings is presented, based on visual evidence and events from his catholic circle in Delft. Not mentioned before in connection to Vermeer, the findings indicate he may have painted in Rhoon castle, situated a few kilometers south of Rotterdam. It will be argued the heraldic motif in two of his paintings is likely linked to the name Wendelnesse, a 14th century castle lady. A further inference is that a Delft Jesuit named Isaac van de Mije may have been Vermeer's teacher. As so often in Vermeer related studies nothing is ironclad, but the reconstructed scenario makes perfect sense and fills in some unknowns in Vermeer's career.

INTRODUCTION

Case study In Vermeer's oeuvre of circa 35 paintings, no less than eight feature a stained glass window in which the leading forms a complex geometric pattern of faceted squares, hexagonals and circles surrounding a quatre-lobed centre form. Two of these eight paintings, *The glass of wine*¹ and *Girl with a wine glass and two men*² include a coloured coat of arms (COA) in the glass, which as the primary eye-catcher received all the attention in the past. However, also the leading pattern itself has been noted as being worthy of investigation³. The image in the paper (note 3) is reproduced below for convenience (fig.1). It appears from literature historians never paid much attention to the leading pattern, perhaps because it was seen as just another prop in the staging of a genre painting. But Vermeer painted his subjects and props extremely realistically so why not the complex patterned windows as well? Just the various viewing angles with perfect representation of the leading in accordance to the angle, already suggest he painted them *as seen*. From this premise, the idea rose to try and find the same windows and/or the COA as such discoveries could provide extra information on the artist. Details about location, associated persons and so on could result in extra pieces for the still incomplete puzzle that is Vermeer's biography.

The classic notion of Vermeer's COA From 1942 onwards the COA in Vermeer's paintings has been thought to belong to the Delft gunpowder maker Moses Nederveen and his wife Jannetje Vogel, as concluded by Elizabeth Neurdenburg⁴. A few years ago H.J. Zuidervaart theorized his paintings were commissioned for the marriage occasion of two 3rd generation descendants of the Nederveen-Van der Heuls and painted in the house at their gunpowder factory on the Buitenwatersloot in Delft⁵. His article contains comprehensive background information on the "life and times" of the two paintings, so rather than repeat it here the reader is encouraged to read his article. This paper however will contradict this classic notion and present another one.

¹ Gemäldegalerie Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, no.921C.

² Herzog Anton Ulrich Museum Braunschweig, no.316.

³ H.G. Slager (2017) *Johannes Vermeer and his neighbours* (Addendum 13.4). Published at www.essentialvermeer.com

⁴ E.Neurdenburg (1942), Oud Holland *Johannes Vermeer. Eenige opmerkingen naar aanleiding van de nieuwste studies over den Delftschen schilder Johannes Vermeer.*

⁵ H.J.Zuidervaart (2018), *Jaarboek Delfia Batavorum Een nieuwe theorie over twee schilderijen van Johannes Vermeer*. An English version (2019) is published at www.essentialvermeer.com *A new theory on the origin of two paintings by Johannes Vermeer (1632-1675) of Delft.*

THE SEARCH FOR VERMEER'S WINDOWS

Searches for the same leading pattern in 17th century paintings portraying windows as well as true stained glass (in situ, museum collections etc.) have continued on-and-off for several years but rather frustratingly remained unsuccessful. Partial design elements were found but never the whole configuration, so at least one conclusion is that the configuration is actually a rare one. Paintings by two contemporaries of Vermeer, Gerard Dou and Pieter Cornelisz van Slingelant, remain the only other examples portraying the leading pattern, be it with small deviations⁶ (fig.12).



Figure 1 Eight paintings by Vermeer with identical leading pattern, reproduced in adapted form from *Johannes Vermeer and his neighbours* (2017). Painting no.1-8 from left to right:

	Signed	Date	Earliest provenance
1.Girl with wineglass and two men	IVMeer	1659-1660	Dissius sale 1696
2.The glass of wine	-	1658-1661	Jan van Loon sale 1736
3.Woman with a water jug	-	1662-1665	19 th century
4.Girl with pearl necklace	IVMeer	1662-1665	Dissius sale 1696
5.The music lesson/virginal	IVMeer	1662-1664	Dissius sale 1696
6.Lady writing letter with maid	IVMeer	1670-1671	Baker Van Buyten 1676
7.Girl interrupted at music lesson	-	1658-1661	19 th century
8.Woman with a lute	(perhaps)	1662-1665	19 th century

(Dating and signatures from essentialvermeer.com)

THE FIND

Then finally by a lucky stroke, a place thus far never associated with Vermeer was found to hold period specimens with the same leading pattern, namely kasteel Rhoon (Rhoon castle) in the village by the same name⁷. This centuries old castle was -after several destructions caused by flooding- rebuilt around 1598 to its current form, and today still holds six different stained glass frames with the COA of castle lords' wives, all having lived prior to 1598 (fig.2). It is not known when exactly the windows

⁶ Ibid note 3.

⁷ Variations a.o. Ro(o)den, Roede(n), Rhode(n), Roon, Royen. Websites with information on the castle history <https://www.hetkasteelvanrhoon.nl/> and <https://www.stichting-kasteelvanrhoon.nl/>

were made but it must be around 1600 when Boudewijn van Rhoon had initiated (or finished) renovations. The castle lords have a long line of descendants⁸ and go by the name *Heren van Rhoon* (lords of Rhoon) but their ancestral name is Duiveland⁹. As they had the rights to the annexing hamlet of Pendrecht as well, their title often includes that name as well (*Heren van Rhoon en Pendrecht*). Habitually every successive castle lord was named 'Pieter' in the long period of 1342 to 1683; for ease they are referred to with a roman numeral I-IX.



Figure 2 Two of the six Rhoon castle windows with a COA. The one on the right may be repaired as the red rectangle bottom left (heraldic right) uneasily cuts off a motif. The red canopy is with intricate folds of the fabric and classicistic motifs of grotesques, draperies and so on (see back cover). Photo Kasteel Rhoon.

The surprise of finally finding the same leading pattern was surpassed as in a *déjà vu* moment, when one particular castle window showed the same 15-block motif Vermeer had painted ! (fig.4). Surely there are several differences (to be addressed below), but what are the chances of finding both the leading pattern and a COA together¹⁰? It is almost impossible to accept this as mere coincidence and can only mean Vermeer had seen this (or a similar) window in the castle to reproduce it on canvas.

The 15-block motif All six castle windows have original inscriptions underneath their COA that make attribution easy; the 15-block motif (arms) belongs to a 14th century lady named Alverade van Wendelsnesse¹¹ (nn-after 1373). Apart from a few genealogical details little is known about her. In the late 16th century Boudewijn van Roon (1519-1578) together with other relatives had been documenting their ancestry going back to the crusader Biggo van Duiveland (nn-1210)¹². This partially surviving- and rather loosely connected set of genealogical-historical documents includes the design of an

⁸ F.Houweling (2010) *Het kasteel van Rhoon*.

⁹ Variations Duyveland(t), Duveland(t) etc.

¹⁰ As a thought experiment: if the specific leading pattern occurred 1:100 and the random chance on a particular COA motif is in the order of 1:10,000 the probability of finding both together is one in a million. Even in the absurd case that every window in the Low countries would have had this pattern the chance would still only be 1:10,000.

¹¹ Variations Wendelsnesse, Windelnes(se), Wielnes(se).

¹² Nederlandsche Leeuw (1902). J.B. De van der Schueren. *Familieaantekeningen van de geslachten Roon, Grave of Grez en Sainte Guericx*. Boudewijn van Roon was Ridder en Raad of Keizer Karel V (knight and council member Charles V).

ancestral tree (a painting or a drawing) that was to be made. Whether it was ever made is unknown. The documents contain texts on- and drawings of the COA of at least 30 different family names connected to the Duiveland-Rhoon lineage, one of them Wendelnesse (fig.3).

Windelnesse: van zilver met een faas van zwart, vergezeld
van 15 blokken van groen, geplaatst 5 en 4
boven, 3, 2 en 1 onder de faas.

Figure 3 Fragment of the transcribed 16th century Rhoon documents describing the COA of Wendelnesse (note 12). Translation: *From silver with a fess in black, accompanied by 15 blocks of green, positioned 5 and 4 above, 3, 2 and 1 below the fess.*

As can be seen (see the back cover for a large photo), the window in the castle does not follow the Wendelnesse prescription to the letter, as the black fess is red and the silver background is white. The 15-blocks are green as prescribed.

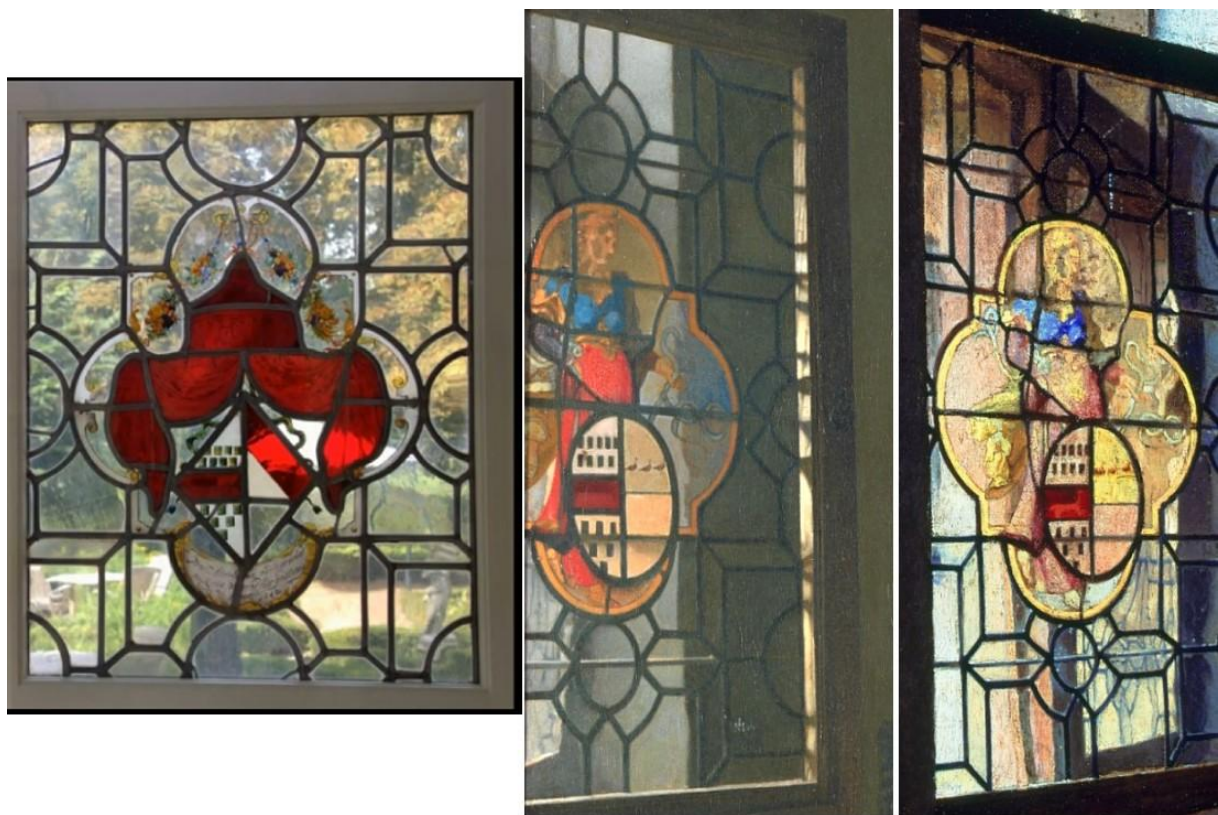


Figure 4 The Rhoon castle window with COA of Alverade van Wendelnesse sided with Vermeer's windows. The inscription in the bottom lobe says 'Vrou Alverade van Windelnesse vrouwe van Rooden, Pendrecht en Windelnesse A(o) 1342'. This probably is her wedding date as her husband Pieter-I van Rhoon died in 1647 leaving her with two children. In Vermeer's paintings the heraldic left has three birds, the castle window has a slanted red rectangle above a white triangle. Vermeer also incorporated a lady figure in the quatrelobe shape not seen in de castle windows.

Besides Wendelnesse the 15-block motif of 5,4 above and 3,2,1 below the fess was used by a handful of old family names: Nederveen¹³, Barendrecht (with a lion in the fess), Oem (with a lion in the fess), Pendrecht (Pijndrecht) and Voogt. The latter two, coming from an older heraldry book¹⁴ should be

¹³ In the present town of 's-Grevelduin-Capelle originally the northern part was named Nederveen and the southern part Wendelnesse.

¹⁴ J.B.Rietstap (1890) Wolters, Groningen *De Wapens van den tegenwoordigen en vroegeren Nederlandschen adel*.

taken with caution as they may originate from the connections they have to the Rhoon lords: the hamlet Pendrecht was under their rule and Voogt (van Rijneveld) was a castle lady¹⁵.

In heraldry references Wendelnesse is listed with *just* the 15-block motif, so the question remains what the right side (heraldic left) with the slanted red rectangle in the stained glass represents. It could be several things: (i) Alverade's father (possibly named Gilles) was lord of both the Wendelnesse- and Munsterkerk *ambacht* (domain) so it could be a combined arms. (ii) More classically it is her mother's lineage of Barendrecht but her genealogy is not firm and Barendrecht is not known for a red rectangle. (iii) It could be a specifically designed COA as ladies of standing could carry their own, also in the case of a husband's demise. (iv) It could be a repair¹⁶ from the distant past. (v) Or it was simply an unknown at the time of making, as it was more than 200 years after Alverade had lived. The COA of the Rhoon-Duiveland's had always been five interlocking (*gegeerd & ingehoekt*) horizontal triangles in gold&red so the window certainly does not represent their allied arms. Whatever the case, the 15-block is no doubt original, even though one block can be seen missing in the top row (four instead of five).

In 1866 a local historian in Rhoon meticulously reproduced all COA's in the windows as paintings, now framed and displayed on the wall (fig.5). They are an important record how the COA's looked some 150 years ago. That is, exactly the same as we see them today. Even the missing block in the top row of five was reproduced. The reason for the missing block is unknown; in the rhombus shape there is not even enough space for five (even when the leading once had been thinner) so lack of space perhaps is the simplest explanation. The other five rhombus shapes in the castle windows are all the same size, so it is not a case of later adaptation of this particular window.

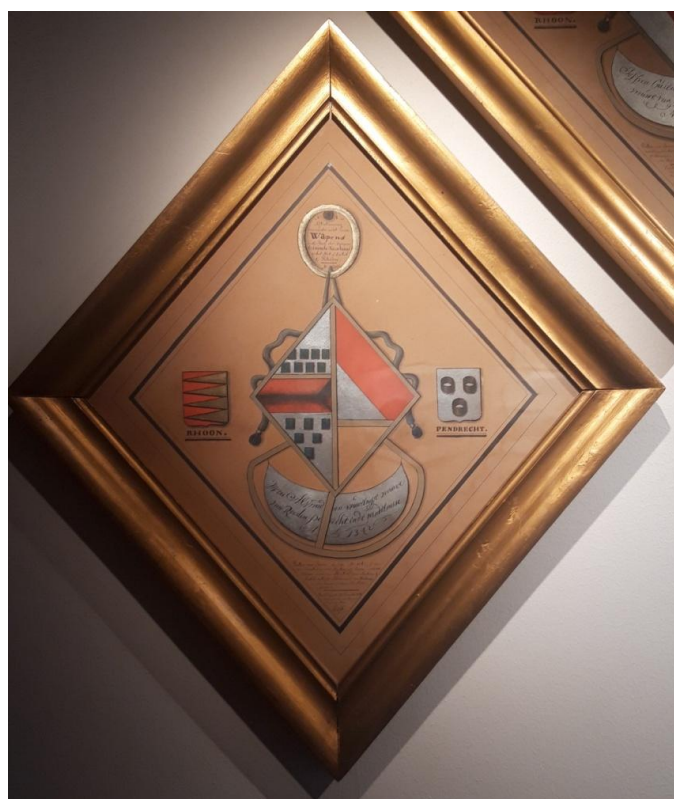


Figure 5 A painting on paper (one of six different ones, dated 1866) of the window of Alverade van Wendelnesse. On the far left the COA of Rhoon, on the far right the COA of Pendrecht. The castle today holds six windows but the oval on top states it is one of eight windows that (at least in 1866) decorated the room formerly used as *Criminele Vierschaar* (local judicial court). Two actual windows and two 1866 reproductions are therefore considered lost. Photo E. van Alphen, Stichting kasteel van Rhoon.

¹⁵ Pieter-VIII van Rhoon (castle lord 1635-1679) in 1625 married Elizabeth de Voog(h)t van Reineveld (var. Rijnevelt, Reynevelt). Rietstap (note 14) does however lists a Voogt (i.e. omitting Rijnevelt) as "from (the village of) Nederveen".

¹⁶ In modernity the windows have been restored (re-leaded, glued) by carpentry firm De Waard BV in Rhoon. The restorer has assured no changes were made to the glass, motifs or leading pattern.

Vermeer's reproduction We can only guess as to why Vermeer would be interested to paint a window with the arms of Wendelnesse. There are no known (distant) family ties that might explain an interest. He painted at least one different COA in *Woman writing a letter with her maid*¹⁷ where the motif in the oval is not recognizable in any of the surviving castle windows. If it had been in the castle, it didn't survive. As Vermeer painted his COA in an oval but the survivors in the castle are a rhombus he just may have liked an oval better. Or an oval did in fact exist in an older repurposed window; stained glass was very expensive, told family history so wouldn't be just thrown away. Vermeer did paint repairs in the leading suggesting he saw an older damaged window. A smaller difference is the circle in the middle of the vertical sides; Vermeer painted them with an interruption in accordance to the 'insertion' of an hexagonal into a circle. Why Vermeer's painted a lady figure in the quatrellobe shape is also unknown; perhaps it was real, perhaps artist's freedom. The castle at the time had several sized windows evidenced by drawings of Roelant Roghman (fig.6, fig.7) which at least supports the idea of more than one type.

To explain any of the differences between Vermeer's paintings and the castle windows will remain pure guesswork. But the *rarity* of the specific geometric pattern (which will have been just a tiny fraction of all patterns ever made) *and* having the same 15-block COA suggests Vermeer had painted in Rhoon castle by probability alone. Yet, mere chance could still be in play but the chapter **Why & When ?** will both embed- and strengthen the case.



Figure 6 Drawing of Rhoon castle by Roelant Roghman (1627-1692), signed & dated 1647 (lower right, not visible here). Collection Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, RP-T-1898-A-3717. The façade has been remodelled into an Empire style after 1830.

¹⁷ Collection National Gallery of Ireland. No. NGI.4535.



Figure 7 Bird's eye view of Rhoon castle by Roelant Roghman (1627-1692) ca.1647. Stadsarchief Rotterdam no.1968-1581.

THE WHY & WHEN

The Papenhoek in Delft As we know, Vermeer as an adult lived in the *Papenhoek* (papist corner) close to the Jesuit mission that included the *schuilkerk* (hidden church). Three Jesuit fathers were active in his time: Roeland de Pottere (1584-1675), Isaac van de Mije (1602-1656) and Johannes Vermeij (1612-1668). Van de Mije is besides writing poems, teaching philosophy and Greek known to have studied the art of painting from the early age of ten onwards and continued painting throughout life. He entered the Jesuit order in Mechelen in 1623; on his application form he wrote he had been studying painting and drawing for eight years at several places, then studied humanoria in Herentals (near Antwerp) for 2,5 years and painted in Delft for another year. In either 1636 or 1637 he was ordained as priest. Work(s) by him, be it drawings or paintings were referred to in a testament in 1653 as his '*Const*' (art)¹⁸. A favourite subject of his was about a Christian death, exemplified by working on a self portrait lying sick in bed, until he died. Being a Jesuit we may safely assume he painted religious subjects as well. Unfortunately no works by him have survived or have been attributed, except possibly a recently discovered drawing of a catholic woman/saint with signature I.V.Mije¹⁹. After having worked in several cities Van de Mije was assigned to Delft in 1650 to join the mission and oversaw the reconstruction of the hidden church to seat 700 souls²⁰. He was born in Delft and buried in Voorburg (likely shipped to there from Delft). Vermeer was married to the catholic

¹⁸ (1) P.Begheyn, S.J. (2008). Oud Holland, vol.121/no.1, p40-55 *Johannes Vermeer en de Jezuïten te Delft*. (2) D. Van den Akker S.J and P. Begheyn S.J (2016) *Johannes Vermeer en de Jezuïten in Delft*. (3) Anonymous author(s) (1912) *Menologium van de Societeit van Jezus voor de Nederlandsche provincie*, p276. Van de Mije's parents were Willem (Guilelmus) van de Mije & Alexandrina Laurens.

¹⁹ Personal comment Gregor J.M. Weber, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam. Article in preparation.

²⁰ Ibid note 18 (3).

Catharina Bolnes in 1653 by one of these Jesuit fathers and it is often written this was De Pottere but it might have been one of the other fathers just the same. But whoever performed the wedding, in the tight catholic community in Delft it is very likely Vermeer got to be acquainted to all fathers.

The Delft Jesuits and Rhoon So what have the Delft Jesuits to do with Rhoon ? The answer is straightforward as in the time of Pieter-VIII van Rhoon (castle lord 1635-1679) it was the very same Isaac van de Mije who was appointed in 1645 as *huiskapelaan* (house chaplain) to work there non-stop until 1650 which apart from religious duties likely included making paintings. Despite the religious ban (1580), the Rhoon lords had remained catholic in the 16th and 17th centuries and had already built a catholic church at literally a stone's throw from the castle, but it was confiscated quickly early in the ban by protestants. The catholic service/mass was then held in the castle itself but local protestants kept complaining about the illegal practice. Pieter-VII van Rhoon (castle lord 1596-1635) had a *huiskapel* (house chapel) for private sermons constructed on the first floor. Today the *kerkzaal* (church hall)- and chapel room still exist but with little architectural details remaining. From the late 16th century until 1683 the castle housed many Jesuits for shorter or longer periods of time and functioned a small- but significant catholic refuge²¹.

Vermeer's teacher Vermeer still has a gap in his biography with regards to official training requirements (four-six years) so that he could be accepted into the St.Luke gild in december 1653 (at the age of 21). As his registration fee was six guilders of which he could only pay a quarter, it implies he had not studied under a Delft master longer than two years (if that had been the case, the fee would have been halved)²². There have been many suggestions but it is still unknown or proven who had been his teacher(s)²³ and also his whereabouts in early adolescence are a void. Only in 1653 he is first mentioned in a few Delft records, but not yet addressed as 'painter' and not until 1660 he is recorded with an address in Delft (Oude Langendijk, i.e. the *Papenhoek*). If we are to fill in the blanks, Van de Mije, a one generation older painter could have invited the young Vermeer to stay at Rhoon castle to paint, and even in the role as teacher. Perhaps Vermeer's father, besides inn keeper also a registered art dealer, arranged for an apprenticeship. The idea of Van de Mije as Vermeer's teacher is not new; the late Norbertine Jac Werenfried Stokman had suggested it earlier but based only on the visual clues Vermeer's early works were religious subjects and that perhaps his painting *Allegory of Faith* had been commissioned by the Jesuits. We can now add the windows in Vermeer's eight paintings and the Van de Mije-Rhoon anecdote as additional support to the idea.

Valckestein castle, Verduijn and others in the Papenhoek A nearby place worth mentioning is Valckestein castle that no longer exists (demolished in the early 19th century). It stood in the hamlet of Portugaal, a mere ten minute walk from Rhoon. It was purchased in 1555 by the Rhoon lords but sold in 1582 by Gerrit van Rhoon (c1521-after 1600) to Willem van Lamsweerde who resold it six years

²¹ Many residing Jesuits are recorded in the (latin) Jesuit archives but are outside the scope of this article. Two sons of Pieter VII (Cornelius and Gulielmus) entered the Jesuit order in 1627. A. Van Lommel, S.J. (1882) *Bijdragen voor de geschiedenis van het bisdom Haarlem*, vol.10, p55-81: Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis der parochie Rhoon.

²² Jaap van der Veen (1996) *De Delftse kunstmarkt in de tijd van Vermeer*. In D.Haks & M.C. van der Sman (eds.) *De Hollandse samenleving in de tijd van Vermeer*.

²³ J.M. Montias (1989) *Vermeer and his milieu* Chapter 6. Montias addresses several candidate teachers, each for a different reason: Gerard Ter Borch, Cornelis Daemen Rietwijck, Evert van Aelst, Leonard Bramer, Carel Fabritius and Abraham Bloemaert in Utrecht (Bloemaert was an uncle of Jan Geensz Thins).

later to Joost (Joas) Grijp. The Grijps were a well to do family from Dordrecht and after the purchase took on the name ‘Grijp van Valckestein’. Like the Duiveland-Rhoon lords, they had remained catholic during the ban and little doubt they would have kept close ties as fellow catholics. A 17th century descendant named Deliana Maria Grijp van Valckenstein (nn-after1682) inherited the castle with her two brothers (Johan Franciscus 1639-1704 and Thielman nn-1679) and in 1649 she married Jonker (squire) Willem Fransz Verduijn (1625-c1679). Besides owning Valckestein castle (via his wife), Verduijn owned a little house on the Burgwal in Delft²⁴, right at the back of the hidden church in the *Papenhoek* (fig. 13) and thus a close ‘neighbour’ to Vermeer and his in-laws, although it is unlikely he actually lived there for any period of time²⁵. Verduijn was one of several sponsors of the Delft Jesuits who could not legally buy property themselves. Some time before 1683 his house came into the possession of Herman Oem (nn-1705) another known character in the *Papenhoek*. Oem was son-in-law of Machelt van Beest (c1611-1687) a major Delft-based sponsor with several houses who has been argued as Vermeer’s proprietor/landlord by the author²⁶. Vermeer may well have known Verduijn and Oem, both about his age, as after all the *Papenhoek* was a small circle of rich local- and outside sponsors who often came from regions south of Delft. Antwerp and Mechelen were key hubs for the Jesuits in the *Hollandse Zending*, places like Rotterdam, Rhoon, Dordrecht and Breda were ‘en route’ to Delft and Jesuits and sponsors did travel around. As an example, even in the disaster year 1672 Vermeer’s mother-in-law Maria Thins had the Delft notary Frans Boogert draw up an instruction for an Antwerpian to settle some debt with a fellow townsman²⁷.

The Thins, Buytewech and Duiveland-Rhoon connection Close to Vermeer personally some details regarding his in-laws, the Thins, might be relevant as well. Jan Geenz Thins (1580-1647) *baljuw en dijkgraaf* (bailiff and dikereve) of Nieuwkoop would obviously have been well acquainted to his ‘boss’ and cousin Johan de Bruyn van Buytewech, lord of Nieuwkoop, Noorden en Achtienhoven (1590-1657)²⁸. Interestingly Buytewech’s wife Cornelia (1602-1657) was from the Duiveland-Rhoon lineage and it stands to reason that Jan Geenz Thins and his cousin Maria Thins would have known her (for more details on the complex relationship of the Thins ancestry, Buytewech and others see J.M.Montias²⁹). Jan Geenz Thins owned the house right next³⁰ to the hidden church in the *Papenhoek* that Maria Thins at some point may actually have used for herself, if not used by the Jesuits (e.g. for *kloppes*, lay nuns). Earlier in time Cornelia’s sister, Johanna Duiveland van Rhoon (1595-1638) had married Dirc van der Nath (1585-1624) and gave birth to three sons, one named Leonard who in 1648 married Liduina Catharina Sasbout, the widow of Arent Sandeling (nn-1648). Several members of the Sandeling family were intricately involved with the Delft Jesuits (eg.

²⁴ Ibid note 3 (house BW-E5).

²⁵ The Verduijns/Van der Duijns belonged to the old Dutch nobility. Willem Verduijn’s primary residence was a mansion named Huis ten Donck in the village of Ridderkerk; apparently he did not live in Valckestein castle. He is recorded in Kreuznach (Germany) in 1668. His daughter Maria Verduijn (nn-1737) lived in Valckestein from 1704 until her death.

²⁶ Ibid note 3 (house OLD-W1, named Trapmolen). Machtelt van Beest’s stepfather was the painter Michiel van Mierevelt (1566-1641).

²⁷ Delft archives, ONAD no.2008, Notary F.Boogert, 13-09-1672 (scan 389/pencil fol. 381). Maria Thins, living on the Oude Langendijk, empowers Pauwel Rombauts in Antwerp to settle a debt of 200 guilders with Jacques de Wilde in Antwerp. It is unclear what the debt is about. This newly found document has not been published before.

²⁸ P.J.Verkruijsse (2004) *Dien langen Duivel van Nieukoop, twee pamfletten uit 1651 over baljuw Jan van Sevenhoven* (chapter 4). Accessible at https://www.dbnl.org/tekst/_lan006lang01_01/. In the Amsterdam notary archives (5075, Inv.607, deed 467083, 01-05-1621) Johan Thins from Gouda, ‘Neve’(cousin) of Johan Buytewech *Heer van Nucoop* is authorized by the latter to settle a mortgage loan in Gouda.

²⁹ (1) J.M.Montias (1989, English version) *Vermeer and his milieu*, chart no.4 in the back of the book (family tree): *Maria Thins’s connections with the Blijenburch, Cool, Buytenwech, Duyst van Voorhoudt and Wassenaar families*. Textual facts on the Buytewech and Thins family on p114-115. Also see note 40.

³⁰ Ibid note 3 (house OLD-E3).

providing hiding places). Arent himself had bought two houses for the Jesuits next to the house of the forementioned Willem Verduijn³¹ (fig.13). It is however not established how exactly the sisters Cornelia- and Johanna Duiveland van Rhoon were related to their relatives residing in Rhoon castle, their branch probably originated far back in time³². Below a COA in a painting (assumedly) portraying the sisters and their husbands will be addressed.

The Delft notaries Frans Boogert and Johan van Roon Frans Jansz Boogert/Bogaert (c1618-1675) had been the Thins/Vermeer family preferred notary for some twenty years (first recorded involvement 1666). In 1643 he had married Susanna Johansdr van Rhoon (1619-1658) who was a daughter of the Delft notary Jonker (squire) Johan Adriaensz van R(h)oon (nn-1638) and Adriana Matthijsdr Spoors (nn-1665). A reproduced drawing of Johan's mourning plaque in the Oude Kerk in Delft shows the COA of Rhoon –and of ancestral names, clearly demonstrating he was from the Duiveland-Rhoon lineage³³. A sister of Adriana, Susanna van Roon (1621-1669) was married to Johannes van Brouhoven/Broekhoven (nn-1701) both living in Delft; Brouhoven in 1670 appears as witness in an act drawn up by Frans Boogert concerning Vermeer's rights on his deceased mother's house, the Mechelen inn³⁴. Perhaps Vermeer knew him personally, perhaps via the Roon ladies or else it was Boogert who asked his own brother-in-law as convenient witness.

Lastly, the great similarities between Pieter de Hooch (1629-1684) and Vermeer's works (style) have been amply discussed in literature. Therefore it is also interesting to know there were close ties between Frans Boogert and De Hooch, demonstrated by several mutual presences at baptisms of their children in the period 1655-1672³⁵. The earliest link between them dates to 6 december 1655 when De Hooch witnesses the baptism in Delft of Francois, a child of Frans Boogert and Adriana van Roon. De Hooch no doubt would have become familiarized with the family history of Duiveland-Rhoon and so another thing in common with Vermeer.

Without documentary evidence it is not possible to be more specific but any of the mentioned names above with a connection to the *Papenhoek* or to Duiveland-Rhoon could easily have been (additionally) instrumental to Vermeer's connection with Rhoon castle.

³¹ Ibid note 3 (house BW-E3/4).

³² Montias database, Frick collection, inv. no.605/Rauwart, Claes. The parents of Cornelia & Johanna were Joost Gerritsz van Duiveland (born Leiden) and Brechtjen Rauwaert.

³³ Rooden at cbgfamiliewapens.nl (drawing includes ancestral COA's of Grez of Grave, St. Guericx, Wena. These names are recorded in the reference in note 12).

³⁴ Ibid note 23 (Doc 332. Delft archives, Not.F.Boogert, 2008, 13-07-1670). Montias did not mention the witness Brouhoven. The act is also signed by Adriaen Boogert, son of Frans.

³⁵ Prinsenhof Delft, A.Jansen (ed) et al (2019) *Pieter de Hooch-Uit de schaduw van Vermeer*. Catalogue of the exhibition 2019-2020 .

DISCUSSION

Finding the same geometric pattern of Vermeer's windows in situ was by itself already a feat, though not evidence for anything. But finding it *and* with the 15-block heraldic motif is extremely unlikely to be mere coincidence. Two experts in stained glass had not seen the whole leading pattern in their long career, just elements of it³⁶. The unlikelihood of coincidence in combination with the biography of the Jesuit painter Isaac van de Mije with firm ties to Rhoon is therefore sufficient to propose the theory Vermeer had painted in Rhoon castle and Van de Mije might have been his long-sought teacher, or at least one of them.

It is however not likely Vermeer would have completed his paintings in Rhoon as the finished product would have taken several months and he had a family in Delft to take care of. But as Rhoon was just a day's travel from Delft he may have visited on a few occasions. Jesuits in the *Hollandse Zending* were re-stationed frequently to new cities and often travelled for meetings, messages, deliveries and also to hide from prosecution. So it is quite imaginable Van der Mije too would have visited Rhoon again after his five year employment ending in 1650. In a journal of sorts kept by an anonymous assistant of the Delft Jesuit Roeland de Pottere, the writer records a harsh mid-winter trip from Rhoon to Delft regarding delivery- or collection of some unspecified church ornaments, illustrative for such day trips³⁷.

Regarding the classic Nederveen-Vogel-Van der Heul theor(y)(ies), neither candidate house unfortunately exists anymore nor is there -apart from simple sketches in cadastral maps- a visual record of how they looked in the 17th century. No archival records have been found mentioning Vermeer and the gunpowder makers simultaneously, nor are there indirect clues in the archives to at least hypothesize on contact between them. At least the author never found anything himself, nor is aware of others finding a relevant clue. Zuidervaat's recent theory fundamentally is based on the wedding dates of Nederveen-Van der Heuls descendants that happen to coincide with the dates *Girl with wineglass and two men* and *The glass of wine* were approximately painted. From the artistic point of view one may wonder whether the (not so) covert symbolism in the scenes, be it seduction, succumbence or prudence would be fitting to commemorate a wedding ? Normally, such a commemorative painting was a formal and rather stiff record.

The key question True for any theory on Vermeer's COA, should we take what we see in the paintings today at face value ? If one does, then one can be satisfied with the classic Nederveen notion but also has to accept it has no additional proof to support it. In contrast, the present reconstruction combines visual clues with knowns in Vermeer's catholic circle but has an unsolved issue with the 3-bird motif in the COA. Full analytical data on the originality- and authenticity of Vermeer's COA is not available but some considerations can be put forward nevertheless; they follow below (I-III).

I. Heraldry-only view It has been logical to arrive at Nederveen-Vogel in a "heraldry-only" view when no other candidates came forward, otherwise Neurdenburg would have mentioned them in 1942³⁸. However Jannetje Vogel's lineage, her whereabouts and heraldry have never been traced and her

³⁶ Aletta Rambaut and Zsuzsanna van Ruyven-Zeman were kind enough to share their expertise. Survival of *any* leading pattern, especially the clear/unstained portion is rare to begin with though. But we may safely assume the castle Rhoon pattern would have been just one of many possible designs, perhaps even a bespoke one.

³⁷ Transcription of the original diary by P.Begheyn, LIAS 35 (2008), rewritten by D. Den Akker on www.heiligen.net
<https://www.heiligen.net/heiligen/04/13/04-13-1675-roeland-pottere.php>

³⁸ Ibid note 4. To be fully accurate it wasn't Neurdenburg herself who concluded it but the directors of the RKD predecessor. (see note in her article). It is uncertain whether they had looked beyond Delft; they might not have had reason to do so. Eg. at the time Nederveen's house on the corner Pepersteeg/Oude Delft was quickly presented as Vermeer's house, which we now know is incorrect.

alliance with Nederveen on their tombstone was the 15-blocks and ‘A bird with outstretched wings’ (sic)³⁹. This central COA was surrounded with the quarters of 1.Nederveen 2.(empty) 3.De Vogel. 4.(empty). The empty fields are remarkable; perhaps the maternal heraldry wasn’t known or perhaps their arms had been newly created, a not uncommon practice at the time. Even Vermeer himself appears to have created his own COA, but it is lost⁴⁰. The description of quarter-3 ‘(arms of) *De Vogel*’ is meaningless but if it would have been different from the flying single bird it likely would have been mentioned. So should we equate three walking birds with a bird with outstretched wings ? There is some artistic freedom in heraldry, but still.

II. Unknowns in heraldry Not everything regarding heraldic motifs is clear, especially when going further back in time. For instance the heraldic left side (red rectangle) of the Wendelnesse COA in the castle has never been identified. The castle windows were specifically made to show the arms of Rhoon ladies in the 14th -16th century and not all have been verified yet. So theoretically speaking it cannot be ruled out the 15-block Wendelnesse motif once (i.e. 14th century) was combined with a 3-bird motif. There were after all many families not named Vogel that used a 3-bird COA. In this respect we could mention Alverade had, besides a son Boudewijn, a daughter named Beatrijs van Rijswijk (aka van Roon) who married Enghebrecht van Rijswijk⁴¹. Beatrijs was deemed important enough to include in the family tree blueprint to be painted ‘next to another Rhoon lord’, but both were unnamed at the time⁴². As Beatrijs husband’s father was a Van de Poel(e), who *may* have carried a 3-bird COA, Beatrijs’s COA *could* have been 15-blocks & 3-birds, but it remains speculation.

As indicated above, the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam holds a group portrait by Willem Pieterz Buytewech (1591-1624) assumedly showing the two Duiveland-van Rhoon sisters Johanna and Cornelia with their husbands Dirc van der Nath and Johan van Buytewech⁴³ (fig.8). A flag-like COA in the painting has the (assumed) Duiveland interlocking triangles in quarter 1&4 but quarter 2&3 have three red birds that do not relate to the husbands. Or in other words this combination would represent a Duiveland-Rhoon lineage sec, but its origin is unknown and demonstrates there are still many unknowns in heraldry.



Figure 8 (Assumed) COA of Duiveland van Rhoon in a painting c1616-1620 by Willem Buytewech. Collection Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, no. SK-A-3038.

³⁹ E.A. Beresteijn (1938) *Grafmonumenten en grafzerken in de Oude Kerk in Delft*, no. 355

⁴⁰ Vermeer’s inventory of 1676 “Een getekend wapen van de voorn. sr. Vermeer met een ebbe lijst”

⁴¹ Nederlandsche Leeuw (1902), column 19-20. A transcribed document dating 6 november 1373 regarding *erfleen* of the Rhoden domain given by Otto van Arkel to Boudewijn(-III) van Roden. Alverade van Windelnisse is mentioned as his mother and Beatrijs van Rijswijk as his sister. She married Enghebrecht van Rijswijk and his father appears to have been Gijsebrecht van de Poel (source: open genealogy websites). At www.cbgefamiliewapens.nl there are two wax seals with three birds in a row of Van de Poel.

⁴² Ibid note 12.

⁴³ Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, coll.nr. SK-A-3038. The painting is named “*Voornamē vrijage*”. Attribution of the COA and personas from the RKD. Dirc van der Nath (1585-1624) married 1615 Johanna van Duiveland (1595-1638), vrouwe van Ter Nesse. Johan (de Bruyn) van Buytewech, heer van Nieuwkoop Noorden en Achtthhoven (1590-1657) married 1620 Cornelia van Duiveland van Roon (c1602-c1657). Details published in De Nederlandse Leeuw (1926) no.44, column 144-146. Another genealogist (same volume, column 180-181) doubted the COA and identification of the personas in the painting. Regardless, the personas as such are relevant to this article, specifically to the Thins family.

III. Authenticity of the painted COA To start with a suspicion, Vermeer's COA's as we see them today may not be fully original. It is known *The glass of wine* had been overpainted prior to 1901, obscuring the entire window. Its removal and restoration revealed the window as we see it today. *Girl with wineglass and two men* may also have been overpainted prior to 1836, although the reason for thinking so has been debatable. This suspicion was based on the sitter who is missing in descriptions older than 1836. But in 1989 a restoration did actually confirm overpainting that was removed, but not pertaining to the window⁴⁴. What remains uncertain is the completeness, in the sense of what is/was actually classified as later overpainting and what was removed/restored.



Figure 9 Radiographs of *Girl with a wineglass and two men* (left) and *The glass of wine* (right). The uniform light & dark quadrants on the heraldic left and the 15-block motif in the Braunschweig painting (left) do not show in the Berlin painting (right).

Radiographs from the Herzog Anton Ulrich Museum Braunschweig (source: RKD) and Gemäldegalerie Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (source: Christoph Schmidt, reproduced with permission)

⁴⁴ A. Wheelock ed. (1995) *Johannes Vermeer* Exhibiton catalogue Mauritshuis The Hague & National Gallery of Art Washington, Dutch version p118-119. An area between the robes of the man and the portrait on the wall had been painted over; also small old retouches were removed, for instance in the girl's face (information kindly provided by Gregor J.M. Weber, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam).

Perhaps we still have a case of (remaining) overpainting, but old- and contemporary as suggested by radiographs. In figure 9 the scan of *Girl with a wineglass and two men* shows that the right side (heraldic left) of the oval has markedly different x-ray absorptions between bottom and top; one is dark and one is white (i.e. strong blocking of rays by heavy metals). The paints are applied evenly and the 15-blocks are clearly visible indicating the lead white was painted around the blocks *or* the blocks were reserved in the white. In contrast, in the radiograph of *The glass of wine* the two quarters have a variegated black & white on the right (heraldic left) and the 15-blocks are near gone. These are remarkable differences between the two COA's; did Vermeer just randomly choose paints ? Or could we be looking at (partial) overpainting in- or just after Vermeer's time ? It would after all make sense to anonymize a COA for commercial reasons.

The red fess in *Girl with wineglass and two men* shows up dark; the top heraldic left quadrant too is dark, so might it once have been red as well ? With a little effort one may be able to make out a - slightly darker- horizontal bar at the base of the top heraldic left quadrant (fig.9, top left) but reproduced photos have limits in interpretation and it may just be the canvas weave suggesting it. A simulation with coloured-in red paint (fig. 10) does not look awkward and obviously compares to the Wendelnesse window.



Figure 10 Right side: artificial colouring-in of the top right quadrant in Vermeer's *Girl with wineglass and two men* to demonstrate an idea.

A second observation is that the radiograph of *The glass of wine* suggests the lady's left arm with blue ribbons connecting to the COA shield⁴⁵ originally was angled upwards instead of downwards (fig.11)⁴⁶. In the painting her hand holds the blue ribbon but in the radiograph the ribbon is seen entangling the lower forearm. Was this changed by Vermeer or by a later painter ?

A third observation is that Vermeer is known to have used lead-stannate (tin) for light-stable yellows. The paint is a strong X-ray blocker and appears white in radiographs. All yellow paint (both with- and without red touches) indeed shows up as a dense white in the radiograph but remarkably *not* in the 3-bird COA quadrant, meaning it is not the same paint formula (fig.11).

⁴⁵ The ribbons have also been interpreted as snakes (lady seen as the allegory Prudentia) or as bridles (lady seen as the allegory Temperantia). The generic motif of a lady holding a ribbon attached to a COA shield can be seen in the Lakenhal museum, Leiden (inv. 7703, stained glass with COA of Vreelandt, dated 1632) and the Burrell collection, Glasgow (inv. 45/580, stained glass with COA of Maria Akersloot, dated 1653).

⁴⁶ The radiograph of the Braunschweig *Girl with a wine glass and two men* is too low in contrast to conclude the same.

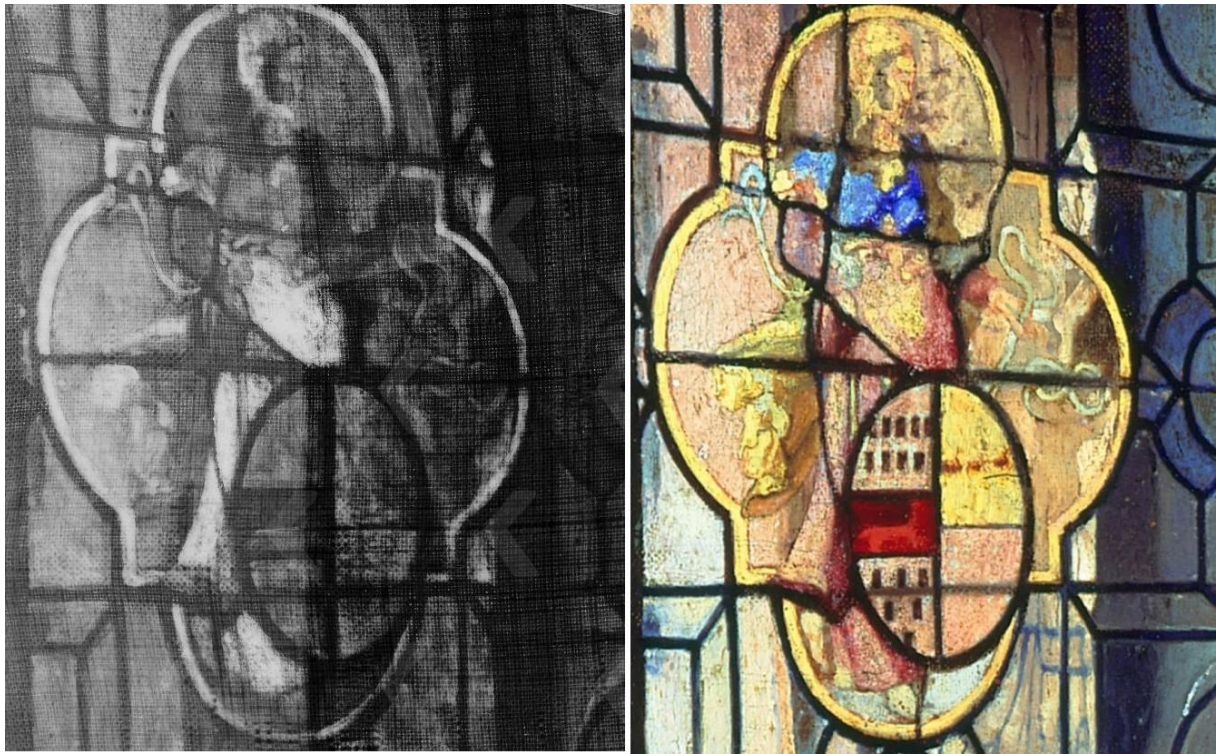


Figure 11 Radiograph of *The glass of wine*, Gemäldegalerie Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (photo Christoph Schmidt, version RKD). The lady's left arm in the radiograph is positioned differently compared to the painting. In the radiograph the yellow quadrant with the 3-bird motif is not densely white like the rest of the yellow.

These lines of thought (I,II, III) on Vermeer's windows tell us we should be critical in accepting them at face value. At least in the author's mind the differences between the two radiographs of the oval COA in Vermeer's paintings and the radiograph of the yellow 3-bird quadrant by itself are incongruent, even suspicious and warrant a scientific explanation.

Some thoughts on provenance The earliest provenance of Vermeer's eight paintings with the leading pattern is given in figure 1. *Girl with a wine glass and two men* can be traced back with certainty to 1696 (Dissius sale, Amsterdam) and *The Glass of wine* to 1736 (Jan van Loon sale, Delft). Also *The music lesson/virginal* and *Girl with pearl necklace* are first traced with certainty to the Dissius auction. Prior to these dates ownership of some has been an assumption, namely Pieter Claesz van Ruyven in Delft. Given the idea Vermeer had painted in Rhoon castle, it cannot be excluded some of Vermeer's works actually remained with Pieter-VIII (castle lord 1635-1679) to be sold by him or by his son Pieter-IX (castle lord 1679-1683) in their financially troublesome years. In 1683 Pieter-IX went bankrupt and was forced to sell the castle.

The thought of Vermeer's painting(s) hanging for a while in Rhoon castle may equally apply to the painting *Saint Praxedis*. This much debated work signed MEER 1655 has a mysterious poorly legible second inscription, that would read MEER N.R..o.o⁴⁷. The theory arose it could read (Ver)Meer Naar

⁴⁷ Auctioned Christie's London, 08-07-2014, lot 39. Now in the National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo. A photo of the near illegible inscription is in *Jan Vermeer van Delft St. Praxedis. An exhibition of a painting from the collection of Barbara Piasecka Johnson. The Wawel Royal castle Cracow* (1991).

Riposo, the nickname of Felice Ficherelli (1605-1660) the creator of the original Saint Praxedis⁴⁸. But obviously in the light of this paper the letters R..o.o sound familiar: rather than *Riposo* could it have been Rho(o)den, R(o)oden, R(h)oeden or a latinized version like Rhoona, Rhoonae and Roodiorum that occur in Jesuit texts addressing Rhoon ? Perhaps an original Ficherelli once hung in Rhoon castle so Vermeer would have had the opportunity to copy it, perhaps as a joint project with Van de Mije. For art critics who have arrived at the conclusion this painting cannot be by Vermeer and the signatures are false (or from a namesake), the thought is of course superfluous.

Gerard Dou and Pieter Slingelant How the Leiden painter Gerard Dou and his student Pieter Cornelisz van Slingelant tie in with Vermeer is another unknown (i.e. on the archival level). Did Dou copy Vermeer ? Or did he too visit Rhoon castle ? There is no explanation yet but it remains intriguing they painted the same rare leading pattern (fig.12).

A few facts might be relevant to the simultaneous occurrence, notably for Dou as his two paintings are dated 1660 and 1662, close to the estimated date(s) of Vermeer's versions (Slingelant's painting is dated 1672). (i) Dou and Vermeer were visited, just a few days apart, by the art critic Balthasar de Monconys in 1663⁴⁹. (ii) Dou had painted the portrait of the wealthy Leiden based Johan Wittert van der Aa in 1646⁵⁰, who about a decade later would own the church house in the *Papenhoek*⁵¹. (iii) He had first studied law in Leiden followed by *Vrije Kunsten* (free arts) in 1649⁵² and so perhaps he was practically involved in the art world. Johan's daughter Anna Maria married Dirck/Theodorus van Nes, a cousin of Hendrik van der Eem⁵³. We know the latter as guardian over Vermeer's children handling financial affairs for many years after Vermeer's sudden demise. It is unknown though by who- or exactly when he was asked as guardian (no surviving testament, no orphan chamber record), perhaps Vermeer had made early arrangements but else it may have been Maria Thins. The Van Nes were lords/ladies of De Loo, a large *hofstede* (estate) in Voorburg near The Hague and from 1662 onwards Hendrik van der Eem and Dirck van Nes each owned a third part⁵⁴.

So it is evident Johan Wittert van der Aa would have known Gerard Dou and Hendrik van der Eem well. What we don't know for a fact is whether Vermeer was friends- or at least acquainted (via via) with any of them. Possibly archival research on Dou, Wittert van der Aa or Van der Eem could provide us with new clues surrounding the occurrence of the leading pattern in both Vermeer's and Dou's paintings.

⁴⁸ Two original versions exist: (1) Auctioned Dorotheum Vienna, 17-10-2017, lot 104, unsigned. First recorded in 1681 by F.Baldinucci. (2) An autographed version, formerly Carlo del Bravo collection, now private collection in Ferrara.

⁴⁹ De Monconys, educated by Jesuits, may also have visited the Rotterdam- and Delft missions as he was travelling with a catholic father named Leon. From: A. Blankert et al (1992) *Vermeer*, 2nd edition, p48-49.

⁵⁰ Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, no. SK-A-686, portrait of Johan Wittert van der Aa (1604-1670), dated 1646. Dou also painted a portrait of the young Johan with his wife Ida Popta (1604-1664, married 1628), no.SK-A-90, not firmly dated. The Wittert family (various branches) were rich catholics. Johan Wittert van der Aa lived in Leiden (as did Dou).

⁵¹ Ibid note 3 (houses OLD-E4+5, bought 1652-1658).

⁵² E.B.F.F Wittert van Hoogland (1914 -unclear) *Kwartierstaten betreffende het geslacht Wittert*, familie uitgave, p23. And E.B.F.F Wittert van Hoogland (1941) *Genealogie van het geslacht Wittert*, p352-356.

⁵³ Ibid note 52. Anna Maria Wittert van der Aa (c1630-1670 Delft) married 1655 in Delft to Dirck/Theodorus Jansz van Nes (nn-c1670-1671). Hendrik van der Eem (c1633-1687) was son of Quirina/Cunera Dircksdr van Nes (Esch)(nn-1635) married 1632 in Delft to Cornelis van der Eem (nn-nn) from Utrecht. Cunera was aunt to Dirck.

⁵⁴ K.Van de Leer/C.van de Velde (2003) *Historisch Voorburg*- jaargang 9, no.2. Boerderijen in Voorburg, p32-71.

CONCLUSIONS

At present no archival documents directly connecting Vermeer to Rhoon castle have surfaced, but the several connections between names in the *Papenhoek* and the lineage of Duiveland-Rhoon set the scene that Rhoon wasn't far from Delft in any sense of the word.

Whilst Vermeer's COA for the general appreciator of his art probably is not that important, it is when trying to reconstruct his biography from small- and scant clues. Therefore the suspicions originating from the radiographs would require in-depth analysis of the paints to be certain what is original, or what lies underneath. Nevertheless, the find of the leading pattern and the 15-block motif in Rhoon castle and the events in Vermeer's catholic circle are still sufficient to justify the theory the young Vermeer was trained by the Jesuit Isaac van de Mije at some point(s) between c1645-c1656. His first lessons as a juvenile may already have taken place at Rhoon castle when Van de Mije was house chaplain. His religious- and mythological subjects developed in- and just after this period leading up to his acceptance into the Delft St. Luke gild in 1653. After Van de Mije had been stationed in Delft in 1650, Vermeer visited Rhoon castle, perhaps more than once, perhaps together with Van de Mije (in that case not later than 1656) resulting in eight –now genre- paintings portraying castle windows.



Figure 12 (Left) The window in a painting by Gerard Dou (1613-1675) dated 1662, private collection Prinz Eugen von Savoyen, Vienna/Turin. Source RKD. A near identical version dated 1660 is in the Royal Collection Trust, UK. (Right) Pieter Cornelisz Slingelandt (1640-1691) dated 1672 Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Dresden. 18th and 19th reproductions of Slingelandt's painting (lithograph, copper engraving) with sharper definition of the leading are in the collection of the British Museum (acc.no. 1861,1109.159 and 1852,1009.366). Dou painted the quatrelobe shape with wavy outlines whereas Vermeer and Slingelandt used fluent lines.

Postscript

In a late stage of writing, the author came into contact with Gregor J.M. Weber of the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, to learn that a comprehensive new publication on Vermeer's catholic circle is in progress (to be published 2022). Several topics in this article will be addressed in more detail and as part of the much larger theme of Catholicism and Vermeer

Figure 13 A section of the Papenhoek in Delft combined with names in this paper. Top is the Oude Langedijk, bottom is the Burgwal. The church actually extended to the middle but is omitted here. For a complete scheme of the Papenhoek see Slager (2017) *Johannes Vermeer and his neighbours*. For arguments regarding Vermeer's residence see Slager (2018) *Vermeer's house revisited*. See also house Oude Langedijk no.25 by the Delft house research collective <https://www.achterdegevelsvandelft.nl/>

