





# Short notice

## An Intimate Friendship in Voorburg: Anna Maria Gool and Josina Clara van Citters

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In 1875 Jonkheer Jacob de Witte van Citters (1817-1876), a lawyer in the service of the Supreme Court of the Netherlands in The Hague, bequeathed his collection of family portraits, which included three portraits by Godfried Schalcken (1643-1706), to the State.<sup>1</sup> The first is of Josina Parduyn (1642-1718) (fig. 1), the wife of Aernout van Citters (1633-1696), who among other things was a Supreme Court justice. The second portrait is of their daughter Josina Clara van Citters (1671-1753) (fig. 2). Interestingly, the third portrait is not of a member of the family: the transfer documents concerning the bequest state that it is a portrait of 'mejuffrouw van Gool', with no forename, who is referred to as Josina Clara's companion (fig. 3). It is remarkable that a separate portrait was made of her, and that she and Josina Clara appear to be portrayed in a similar way. Who was this lady's companion? Is this identification correct and what do we know about the two women and their assumed relationship?

The portrait of Josina Parduyn is signed and dated (1705). The two unsigned and undated paintings of the young women are slightly smaller. The way they are portrayed is identical:

< Detail of fig. 2

Fig. 1  
GODFRIED SCHALCKEN,  
*Portrait of Josina  
Parduyn*, 1705.  
Oil on canvas on panel,  
44 x 35 cm.

Amsterdam,  
Rijksmuseum,  
inv. no. SK-A-2061;  
Jonkheer J. de Witte  
van Citters Bequest,  
The Hague.





Fig. 2  
GODFRIED  
SCHALCKEN,  
*Portrait of Josina  
Clara van Citters*,  
c. 1699-1706.  
Oil on canvas,  
30 x 25 cm.  
Amsterdam,  
Rijksmuseum,  
inv. no. SK-A-899;  
Jonkheer J. de Witte  
van Citters Bequest,  
The Hague.

in an oval surround, the body half turned, looking straight at the viewer, simply yet elegantly dressed with no jewellery.<sup>2</sup> It is likely that these paintings were also made in or around 1705 as Schalcken made similar oval portraits during his last Hague period.<sup>3</sup> But the painter would have been no stranger to the Van Citters family long before that. He was living in London between 1692 and 1696 and painted portraits of Stadholder King William III and members of the royal court.<sup>4</sup> The Van Citters also moved in the highest circles in London. Constantijn Huygens Jr, William III's secretary, met

members of the family quite regularly. On 5 May 1690 he wrote: '... then Mrs Citters came with two daughters, the eldest being not unattractive.' And on 30 December 1692 he noted: '... the three Citters girls arrived and Ms Brienne with her sister, and began to play cards. The youngest Citters girl was pretty and white, but did not have a pleasant voice.'<sup>5</sup>

Josina Clara was born in 1671, the sixth child of Aernout van Citters and Josina Parduy. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the Van Citters family lived in Middelburg and was one of the most prominent



patrician families in Zeeland. In 1667 Aernout became a councillor at the Court of Flanders, a councillor at the Court of Holland in 1674 and in 1680 a member of the Supreme Court. Shortly after that he was appointed ambassador in London and later in Madrid. Josina's life would have undoubtedly been badly scarred by the deaths of two brothers and two sisters, who drowned in 1694.<sup>6</sup> After the death of Aernout van Citters in Madrid in 1696 we find Josina Clara in Middelburg, where she was involved with the settlement of the estate. Shortly afterwards, in 1699, she returned to The Hague.<sup>7</sup>

From various documents, which will be discussed later, it appears that 'mejuffrouw van Gool' is Anna Maria Gool (1668-1743), a daughter of Cornelia van Bosvelt and Mattheus Gool (1637-1702), who from 1670 until his death was a councillor at the Court of Holland in The Hague.<sup>8</sup> Little is known about her youth. In view of the fact that her father worked at the Court of Holland, we may assume that the small family – father, mother, Anna Maria and her younger brother Jacob – lived in The Hague. Her grandfather, Jacobus Golius, was a renowned Leiden professor of Arabic literature

*Fig. 3*  
GODFRIED  
SCHALCKEN,  
*Portrait of Anna  
Maria Gool*,  
c. 1699-1706.  
Oil on canvas,  
30 x 25 cm.  
Amsterdam,  
Rijksmuseum,  
inv. no. SK-A-900;  
Jonkheer J. de Witte  
van Citters Bequest,  
The Hague.



and a collector of Oriental manuscripts. All we know of Anna Maria's time in The Hague is that she, like her father – her mother had died in 1699 – was a member of the congregation of the Grote Kerk there in 1700.<sup>9</sup> By then, however, she was already thirty-two years old. On 8 March 1709 she became the owner of the manor of Vlienburg in Voorburg.<sup>10</sup> She bought it for 9,000 guilders from the heirs of Barbara Sophia de Mortaigne and paid 3,000 guilders of the price in cash (fig. 4).<sup>11</sup>

Anna Maria and Josina Clara had probably got to know one another during their childhood in The Hague, at the usual social events hosted by senior officials who worked together, in this case at the Court of Holland. There are no documents from which it may be inferred that Anna Maria occupied a position subordinate to Josina Clara's. The portraits reflect equal status. This suggestion is further

reinforced by the content of Josina Parduyn's estate, in which there is reference to a loan of 1,000 guilders which she made to her daughter and 'juffrouw Gool' in early 1718,<sup>12</sup> and also from the fact that when Josina Clara and Anna Maria made their wills in 1721 they appointed one another as sole and universal legatees.<sup>13</sup>

Little is known about their lives in their joint household. Nor do we know whether the women started living together immediately after the purchase of the manor in 1709. But if we take the dating of both portraits to 1705 as the starting point, which may lead us to believe that there was a close relationship between them, this is not improbable.

The cohabitation also presupposes that they attended church together. We know that Anna Maria went to church in The Hague before she arrived in Voorburg, but her move is not accompanied by a customary



Fig. 4  
NICOLAES and  
JACOB CRUQUIUS,  
detail from the  
map of the Delfland  
District Water  
Control Board  
(Vlienburg manor  
is indicated by the  
red arrow), 1712-35  
(vol. 9).  
Delft, *tu Delft*  
Library, Trésor.

1747: 19: 4  
9: 2

*Juffr. Josina Clara van Citters*  
*Loco Juffr. Anna Maria Gool,*  
*Eygelbely,*

N<sup>o</sup> 290. Een Duytlenlijc  
 Stallinge Coeck  
 in Orange Buyt  
 Feerland  
 Item Coepen Laen  
 Item aen de Vliet

2	5	14	17	8	11	13
3	"	50	16	3	12	
1	"		5	5	36	64
6	5	50			47	19 4

Gild aen den 20. Dec. 1747.

Fig. 5  
 Tax on the Vlienburg manor, in 1747 paid by Josina Clara van Citters, loco (substituted) Anna Maria Gool. The Hague City Archives, inv. nos. 6005-01, 445.

letter in which the church council may or may not recommend the departing member to the church council of the member's new place of residence. She did, though, pay for a chair in the church in Voorburg, which suggests that her certificate had been lost in the church records. The lack of her registration as a member of the congregation reinforces this assumption.<sup>14</sup> No trace at all can be found of Josina Clara in the Reformed Community of Voorburg. Would she have travelled back and forth to The Hague to attend church there? Separate church visits would have been rather time-consuming, but not impossible. We do not know what the residents of Voorburg thought about their cohabitation, but we can only speculate that the two women did not want to be confronted with curious or disapproving looks when they attended church, even though the local people would have been used to them living together for years.

In 1741 the two women were called as witnesses because of a murder committed near the house called De Werve in Laan van Nieuw-Oost-indië. As night fell, Anna Maria had heard screams and had informed Josina Clara that someone had been

assaulted, which proved to have been the case.<sup>15</sup>

Two years later, Josina Clara changed her will. This may have been in response to Anna Maria's deteriorating health, because Josina Clara appointed her thirty-one-year-old niece Josina Christina van Citters, the wife of the Middelburg regent Omar van Visvliet, as her sole and universal heir should Anna Maria predecease her.<sup>16</sup> That same year Anna Maria died at the age of seventy-five. The question remains: why was Anna Maria referred to as Josina's 'companion' in the deed of transfer? Evidently the Van Citters family sought to remove suspicion from their cohabitation by casting Anna in that role. In the eighteenth century there were not infrequent mentions of what is sometimes referred to as a 'romantic friendship' between two women, which may have been the case here.<sup>17</sup> In this context the historian Myriam Everard cites Aagje Deken, who in 1769 characterized the love between "soulmates" – who call each other "bosom friend" – as a love between equals, where each is the other's "dearest other half", her "other self". When women find their other half, they are overwhelmed by feelings

of singularity and love and do not want to be separated for a moment ... It is to be expected that this love will lead to actual union after death.<sup>18</sup> Such a friendship could only be forged if there was an affinity at a social and intellectual level, which was not granted to everyone. The women not only had to be well-off, as Anna Maria and Josina Clara were, but had to withstand the moral pressure that existed in the circles of the nobility and the upper classes to extend the family sphere of influence with a good marriage. Outward beauty and sexual attraction by no means always had to be elements in that friendship. In Dutch literature the best-known example of such a friendship is that of Aagje Deken and Betje Wolff between 1777 and 1804, as we learn from their correspondence.

After Anna Maria's death in 1743, Josina Clara continued to live in Vlienburg, supported by her maid Maria Maaswijk. Her name appears for the first time in tax assessment registers as the owner of house number 290 (fig. 5). In 1746 Josina Clara revoked her will of 1743 and appointed her brother, the lawyer Wilhem van Citters, burgomaster of Middelburg, as the executor of her

estate.<sup>19</sup> In the summer of 1753 she sent him a note in which she expressed a number of wishes related to the end of her life, which she evidently felt was drawing near. Among other things she noted: 'My very friendly request is that you have me buried by my highly esteemed and dear friend Miss Anna M. Gool, in the same way as I had her buried, with the only difference being that instead of four horses only two, and such in my grave in the church of Voorburg. It is further my friendly request that burgomaster Jacob van Citters please take the portrait of my friend Miss Gool and place it in his house alongside my portrait.'<sup>20</sup>

Josina Clara herself died in early December 1753. The burial book of the Reformed Community records that Anna Maria Gool was buried three deep on 23 August 1743 and that Josina Clara van Citters was buried two deep on 21 December 1753 in grave number 15 in the Oude Kerk of Voorburg.<sup>21</sup> Death united the two in the grave and, at Josina Clara's express request, as portraits on the wall of the Middelburg burgomaster's house. Since then, their portraits have never been separated: in 1903 they were given a place together in the Rijksmuseum's collection.

## NOTES

- 1 The will was filed in The Hague on 12 October 1876, after Jacob de Witte van Citters's death in Montreux on 7 October 1876. He bequeathed portraits of pensionaries of Zeeland and burgomasters of Middelburg and their wives to the Zeeuws Genootschap van Wetenschappen in Middelburg. All other paintings, mainly family portraits, were bequeathed to the State. In 1885 some of them were transferred to the Nederlandsch Museum van Geschiedenis en Kunst in The Hague, the forerunner of the Rijksmuseum. At first, others remained in the possession of his sister, Carolina Hester. After she and her husband Arnoldus Andries des Tombe had died in 1901 and 1902 respectively, those paintings came into the possession of the Rijksmuseum in 1903. Documents regarding the will were lodged in Haarlem, North Holland Archives, accession no. 476, the Rijksmuseum and legal predecessors in Amsterdam, inv. no. 1929.
- 2 There was a second painting of Josina Clara in this collection, made in 1693 by Simon Dubois when the Van Citters family was living in London (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. SK-A-2065).
- 3 Thierry Beherman, *Godfried Schalcken*, Paris 1988. See also Anja K. Sevcik (ed.), *Schalcken. Kunstenaar van het verleiden*, Dordrecht 2016.
- 4 Wayne Franits, *Godefridus Schalcken: A Dutch Painter in Late Seventeenth-Century London*, Amsterdam 2018.
- 5 'daer quam noch Mevrouw Citters met twee dochters, de oudste niet leelijck zijnde'; 'daer quamen 3 joff. Citters en joff Brienne met haer suster, en begonnen met de caert te spelen. De jongste joff.

- Citters was fraeye en wit, maer had geen fraeye stem.' *Journal van Constantijn Huygens, den zoon, van 21 october 1688 tot 2 september 1696*, 2 vols., Utrecht 1876. Ms Brienne was the wife (or sister) of Simon de Brienne, William III's chamberlain. The youngest Miss Citters may refer to Josina Clara, then 21 years old, but it could also have been her sister Johanna, then 20 years old.
- 6 They travelled on board the frigate *De Dolphyn* which had to protect a merchant fleet from London to Goeree. En route they encountered the infamous Dunkirk privateer captain Jean Bart. The skirmishes and manoeuvres needed to escape from the privateers had taken so much time that the frigate was no longer able to reach Goeree and headed for Brouwershaven. This was a famously risky undertaking because of the many sandbanks and *De Dolphyn* ran aground and capsized causing the deaths of the four children. Utrecht Archives, Archive of the Des Tombe family, accession no. 26, inv. no. 717.
  - 7 Utrecht Archives, Archives of the Des Tombe family, accession no. 26, inv. no. 737.
  - 8 He was one of the judges who sentenced Cornelis de Witt on 20 August 1672.
  - 9 The Hague City Archives, Archief van de Kerkenraad van de Hervormde Gemeente te 's-Gravenhage, archive no. 0203-01.
  - 10 Also spelt as Vlienburch and Vlieënburgh. The manor has the Broeksloot on its north side and the River Vliet on its south side (now part of the Rhine-Schie Canal). In the deed of conveyance, the manor is incorrectly named Vlietenburg, a manor which is still located in Voorburg in the Oosteinde. The Hague City Archives, Rechterlijk archief Voorburg, accession no. 5440-01, inv. no. 12.
  - 11 The children and heirs of the deceased Barbara Sophia de Mortaigne, wife of Major General Georg Gebhart van Linstau, were Johan Palmquist, Extraordinary Envoy of the King of Sweden to the States-General of the United Netherlands, and Anna Christina van Linstau (spouses), Kasper Cornelis van Linstau, Captain in the Regiment of the Prince of East Friesland, Godfried Gavenits and Sophia Dorothea van Linstau (spouses), and Hendrik van Linstau, Captain of a company of dragoons in the service of the King of Sweden.
  - 12 Utrecht Archives, Archives of the Des Tombe family, accession no. 26, inv. no. 738.
  - 13 Josina Clara's share of her mother's estate amounted to 26,136 guilders along with household objects and jewellery. Delft City Archives, accession no. 161.2708, fols. 631-34, dated 17 September 1721.
  - 14 The Hague City Archives, Archief van de Hervormde Gemeente Voorburg, accession no. 6140-01, inv. no. 655.
  - 15 The Hague, National Archives of the Netherlands, Hof van Holland, archive no. 3.03.01.01, accession no. 2.2.2.1, inv. no. 5445.A.7.
  - 16 The Hague City Archives, Oud Notarieel Archief Voorburg, inv. no. 3, scan 320-21. Omar van Visvliet was a councillor and judge-advocate of the Admiralty of the Province of Zeeland.
  - 17 Lillian Faderman, *Surpassing the Love of Men: Romantic Friendship & Love between Women from the Renaissance to the Present*, London 1981.
  - 18 "zielsvriendinnen" – die elkaar ook wel "hartsvriendin" noemen – als een liefde tussen gelijken, waarbij de een voor de ander haar "dierbre [dierbare] wederhelft", haar "ander-ik" is. Wanneer vrouwen hun wederhelft vinden, worden zij overweldigd door gevoelens van eigenheid en liefde en willen geen moment meer van elkaar gescheiden zijn ... Deze liefde zal, naar verwacht mag worden, na de dood tot daadwerkelijke eenwording leiden.' Myriam H.M. Everard, *Ziel en zinnen. Over liefde en lust tussen vrouwen in de tweede helft van de achttiende eeuw*, Groningen 1994, pp. 35-36. For the original quote see A[gatha] D[eken], 'De Zielsvriendin', in Maria Bosch et al., *Stichtelijke gedichten van Maria Bosch en Agatha Deken*, Amsterdam 1775, p. 124, online available via Google Books.
  - 19 Utrecht Archives, Archive of the Des Tombe family, inv. no. 776.
  - 20 'Mijn zeer vrindelijk versoek is, dat uwed: mij geliefte te laten begraven bij mijne hooggeeerde en dierbaare vrindinne mejuffrouw Anna M. Gool, soo en in dier voege als ik haar wel ed: hebbe doen begraven, met het onderscheyt alleen in plaats van vier paarden maar twee begeere, en zulks in mijn graft inde kerk van Voorburg. Vorders is mijn vrindelijk versoek dat dhr. burgemeester Jacob van Citters gelieve na sig te neemen het portret van gemelde mijne vrindinne mejuffrouw Gool en hetselve ten sijnen huise te willen plaatsen, nevens mijn portrair'. *Ibid.*, inv. no. 777.
  - 21 The Hague City Archives, Archief van de Hervormde Gemeente Voorburg, accession no. 6410-01, inv. no. 629, Burial book.