NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART ONLINE EDITIONS
*Dutch Paintings of the Seventeenth Century*

# *Heda, Gerret Willemsz*

Also known as
Heda, Gerrit Willemsz
Dutch, active 1640s and 1650s

**BIOGRAPHY**

There is little information concerning the life of Gerret Heda. The earliest document to mention the painter is an entry in the register of the Saint Luke's Guild of Haarlem dated July 7, 1642. In it, Willem Claesz Heda (Dutch, 1594 - 1680) affirms that his second son, Gerret, is one of his pupils, along with Maerten Boelema (c. 1620–after 1664) and Hendrik Heerschoop (1620/21–after 1672). In 1642 Gerret also joined Haarlem's civic guard, which suggests he was at least eighteen years old at that time. That would place his birth in or shortly before 1624. His death date is not known, but it has been postulated that he died in 1649 since a tomb for "a son of Willem Claesz Heda" was opened in that year, though there is no conclusive evidence that the son was Gerrit.[1] What is more certain is that his death must have occurred before 1661, when his parents made a will in which he is not named among the children. Although Gerret is included among a list of artists active in the Haarlem Saint Luke's Guild in the 1650s, no precise membership date appears next to his name, so some have questioned whether he was in fact active in those years.[2] In 1702 Gerret is listed as deceased in a compilation of past members of the Haarlem Saint Luke's Guild.[3]

In style and ability Gerret Heda compares closely to his father, and it is difficult to distinguish between the two artists, which makes determining the date of his death all the more complicated. Gerret made copies of some of his father's breakfast scenes while he was a member of the workshop, and he and his father must have collaborated on paintings. Segal has attempted to distinguish between the signatures of the paintings made by Willem Claesz Heda and his workshop (HEDA) and those painted independently by Gerret (·HeDA·).[4] Many variations of the signatures exist, however, so no firm conclusion can be made on this basis.

[1] Nicolaas Rudolph Alexander Vroom, *A Modest Message*, 2 vols. (Schiedam, 1980), 1:66, advanced the theory that Gerret Heda died in 1649 on the basis of a


© National Gallery of Art, Washington

document noting that in 1649 a tomb was opened in the cathedral of Saint Bavo in Haarlem for the burial of a son of Willem Claesz Heda. (See Hessel Miedema, *De archiefbescheiden van het St. Lukasgilde te Haarlem: 1497–1798*, 2 vols., Alphen aan den Rijn, 1980, 2:1035.) The name of the son, however, is not mentioned in the document, and there is no assurance that the tomb was meant for Gerret. As Sam Segal posits in *A Prosperous Past: The Sumptuous Still Life in the Netherlands, 1600–1700*, trans. P. M. van Tongeren, ed. William B. Jordan (Delft, 1988), 136, it is possible that another son was buried in that tomb, perhaps the one who signed paintings “jonge Heda” in the 1640s.

[2] Adriaan van der Willigen and Fred G. Meijer, *A Dictionary of Dutch and Flemish Still-Life Painters Working in Oils, 1525–1725* (Leiden, 2003), 102–103, and Irene van Thiel-Stroman, “Gerret Heda,” in *Painting in Haarlem 1500–1850: The Collection of the Frans Hals Museum*, ed. Pieter Biesboer and Neeltje Köhler (Ghent, 2006), 190, 194 nn. 139–140, accept the premise that Gerret died in 1649.

[3] See Hessel Miedema, *De archiefbescheiden van het St. Lukasgilde te Haarlem: 1497–1798*, 2 vols. (Alphen aan den Rijn, 1980), 2:1035.

[4] Sam Segal in *A Prosperous Past: The Sumptuous Still Life in the Netherlands, 1600–1700*, trans. P. M. van Tongeren, ed. William B. Jordan (Delft, 1988), 133–136.

Arthur K. Wheelock Jr.

April 24, 2014

---

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

1956 Bergström, Ingvar. *Dutch Still-Life Painting in the Seventeenth Century*. Translated by Christina Hedström and Gerald Taylor. London, 1956: 136-140.

1980 Vroom, Nicolaas R.A. *A Modest Message as Intimated by the Painters of the "Monochrome Banketje."* 2 vols. Schiedam, 1980: 1:166-176; 2:56-65.


© National Gallery of Art, Washington

1988 Segal, Sam. *A Prosperous Past: The Sumptuous Still Life in the Netherlands, 1600–1700*. Edited by William B. Jordan. Translated by P.M. van Tongeren. Exh. cat. Stedelijk Museum Het Prinsenhof, Delft; Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, MA; Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth. The Hague, 1988: 133-136.

1995 Wheelock, Arthur K., Jr. *Dutch Paintings of the Seventeenth Century*. The Collections of the National Gallery of Art Systematic Catalogue. Washington, D.C., 1995: 95-96.

2003 Willigen, Adriaan van der, and Fred G. Meijer. *A dictionary of Dutch and Flemish still-life painters working in oils, 1525-1725*. Leiden, 2003: 102–103.

2006 Thiel-Stroman, Irene van. "Gerret Heda." In *Painting in Haarlem 1500-1850: the collection of the Frans Hals Museum*. Edited by Pieter Biesboer and Neeltje Köhler. Ghent, 2006: 190, 194, notes 39-40.

**To cite:** Arthur K. Wheelock Jr., “Gerret Willemsz Heda,” *Dutch Paintings of the Seventeenth Century*, NGA Online Editions, http://purl.org/nga/collection/constituent/5932 (accessed December 20, 2016).



© National Gallery of Art, Washington