

FRANS HALS' MILITARY COMPANY GROUP PORTRAITS,  
1616-1639

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Frans Hals was born in Antwerp in 1581/85; sometime before 1591 his family moved north to Haarlem, where he learned his skills as an artist; he died in 1666. The second edition (1618) of Carel van Mander's (1548-1606) famous "Schilderboek" reveals that Frans Hals, portrait painter from Haarlem, was his pupil.<sup>1</sup> Van Mander, along with Hendrick Goltzius (1558-1617) and Cornelis van Haarlem (1562-1638) are believed to have established an art academy in Haarlem c. 1587 where drawing from the nude model, a first for Holland, was practised.<sup>2</sup> Between 1616 and 1639 Hals painted five three-quarter length, life-size groups of Officers of the Militia of St. George and St. Hadrian in Haarlem and one full-length, life-size group portrait of a Military Company in Amsterdam. Hals has been described as an unsophisticated artist with a keen talent for observing the individual, a talent which earned him commissions to glorify the Dutch bourgeoisie.<sup>3</sup>

The military group portraits were a Dutch phenomenon without precedent in art history. Group portraits began in the early sixteenth century when the militia was still active, as part of the old Guild system for the protection of towns and cities against invading forces. References to the St. George group go back to 1402 while St. Hadrian, a firearms unit, was established in 1519.<sup>4</sup> To some degree it was a matter of pride in their strength through unity, during the war with Spain, that kept the Groups alive. During the Spanish occupation of Haarlem from 1573 to 1580 the officers had been imprisoned, but they were quick to reorganize after 1580. By the time Hals began his group portraits in 1616, the Twelve Year Truce (1609-1621) was in effect and the Militia Groups, while retaining the names of the medieval guardian saints and the trophies of past glory, had become fraternal or sports clubs for the purpose of social, business and competitive functions such as bow, cross-bow and gun contests. Light duties could include night and fire watches or the settlement of local disturbances. Only twice during the period 1616-1639 were they called on to serve their country, and even then they saw no actual military action. The officers of the Military Groups served a three year term, at the end of which they were given a banquet by the City Fathers of Haarlem in gratitude for their services. By 1621, as a result of the excessive consumption of food and beverages, the banquet was limited to three or four days. On the festive occasion the officers commissioned a group portrait to be painted and hung as a decoration in the New (St. George - first building destroyed by fire) or the Old (St. Hadrian) Halls, called Doelen, as a kind of self-aggrandizement to their importance as descendants of military men. The group in the 1616 portrait had served their term from 1612 to 1615.<sup>5</sup> Most officers in Haarlem were wealthy brewers, had cloth businesses or were merchants capable of providing their own finery, weapons and a servant, as well as paying individually for the privilege of having their portrait on the

Doelen wall. They paid according to how much of the body was represented: head, three-quarter view, etc. Hals, according to a record, was to receive sixty-six guilders per man for the *Amsterdam Company* painting of 1633, an equitable amount for the times.<sup>6</sup> It is doubtful how much of this he was actually paid, because he refused to go to Amsterdam to finish the work.

The group portraits generally portray the eleven officers - a colonel, his provost, three captains, three lieutenants and three ensigns; on occasion a servant is included. This group was sub-divided into three Companies, designated orange for the House of Orange, and blue or white for the two national colours, each headed by a captain, lieutenant and ensign. The Companies were in turn formed into four Corporalships, composed of four corporals and four sergeants, while three to four hundred volunteers composed the main body of the Militia.<sup>7</sup> Selection of high ranking officers was made by the Municipality of Haarlem whereas ensigns, corporals and sergeants were chosen by the Civic Guard. Provosts, who were later called fiscals, and ensigns could be re-elected immediately, while other officers were permitted to return after skipping one term. This is evident from the example of Michiel de Wael, a captain in the *St. George* portrait of 1627, who re-appears as a fiscal in the 1639 portrait, while Johan Claesz. Loo, a colonel in the *St. Hadrian* group of 1633, is seen later as colonel in the *St. George* 1639 painting. This makes it clear that the two groups were tightly knit and had close social, business and family associations which made them capable of eliminating anyone they considered unworthy. The fact that Hals belonged to the *St. George* militia from 1612 to 1615<sup>8</sup>, painted the Companies repeatedly and included his own portrait in the 1639 group portrait, points to his acceptance and indeed the esteem they had for him as an artist. He may have joined the militia for the express purpose of gaining painting commissions. His family, therefore, could not have been the social misfits they are so often labelled.

The fine 1616 *St. George Military Company* (Fig.1) was painted only five years after his first attributed portrait of 1611. Hals took many ideas from Cornelis van Haarlem's 1599 group portrait of the *St. George Civic Guard Company* (Fig. 2). As Slive<sup>9</sup> points out, if the seated officer in the left foreground is removed and placed within the central group behind the table, we have virtually the same composition, although it is now based on two strong, dynamic diagonals (Diag. 1) rather than Cornelis' pyramidal, classicist composition. Slive also reveals that Hals, for the first time in Dutch portrait groups, has provided suitable likenesses and portrays "the character of the group by indicating the relationship of the individuals to it."<sup>10</sup> Heads turn, mouths open as if in conversation (the Captain and the Colonel), gestures are meaningful as with the Captain cutting the meat, and the arm akimbo, apparently a Hals invention, gives a new sense of relaxed enjoyment to the group in total contrast to the formal, repetitive pairing of Cornelis' representation. Both compositions feature drapery, a classical baldacchino in Cornelis and a broad, baroque drapery in Hals to emphasize the exalted position of the

Colonel. Both Colonels raise glasses in a toast but the interaction in Hals' group is remarkable, while Cornelis' appears static.

A rigid protocol is followed for seated officers in Hals' 1616 group, as it was in Cornelis van Haarlem's: the provost to the Colonel's right, three Captains seated to his left, three lieutenants at the foot of the table, while the ensigns and servants stand. Ensigns carry the flags, the most colourful being the multi-hued Spanish trophies, whereas the red and white flags and sashes are the colours of St. George as well as of the city of Haarlem. Paintings from 1627 onward follow the orange, blue and white rule of the three Companies.

H.P. Baard claims that Hals "was the first to conquer space"<sup>11</sup> in this type of group portrait (1616). The space in Hals' composition is airy and believable, allowing room for the individuals to spread out and for the inclusion of the numerous decorative touches so important in baroque art, such as the brocade cushion, the splendid sword and baldric worn by the ensign on the extreme right, the halberd and spear as wall decor, as well as the wonderful still-life of food and elegant table furnishings. The banquet is laid out on a tone-on-tone white damask tablecloth. The 'banket op tafel'<sup>12</sup> design depicts a banqueting scene that could be an Old Testament story, or perhaps a mythological scene (cf. the figure on the right of the cloth with a raised laurel crown). The wines, flute, regular wine and beer glasses, gold or silver-handled knives, large joint of meat and exotic foodstuffs, such as olives, gives an insight into the prosperous life-style of the bourgeoisie in Haarlem. Earlier beer-mug peering and hand shaking, such as in Cornelis van Haarlem's *St. George Civic Guard Company* (1583), to suggest empty mugs or deals signed between business men, are eliminated in Hals' group. This lends an elegance and sense of decorum totally lacking in anything before 1599. There was an international revival of classicism during the first decade of the seventeenth century. Many artists, such as Hendrick Goltzius, had travelled to Italy before the turn of the century and brought back new ideas to The Netherlands. However, the obvious enjoyment in the Hals portrait of 1616 suggests baroque vitality rather than classical restraint.

Hals' 1616 portrait features a central, semi-circular nucleus of five figures with smaller groups to the left and to the right, a pleasing balance. Despite the conventional black doublet, breeches, and white ruff collars made of horizontal layers of material pleated vertically, a mode of dress adopted by the regent class from the Spanish court style, the painting is colourfully varied and given dynamism by the huge, obliquely held Spanish flag, by the brilliant sashes, crushed and textured materials and the central landscape view through a window, which must be imaginary. There is one small, old-fashioned millstone ruff on the central figure behind the table which is closer to the rigid Spanish ruff. The other men wear a softer, face-framing ruff held up behind by the doublet collar, that signals a break with Spanish costume and a gradual move towards French fashion.<sup>13</sup> The windows should in reality be tall and narrow, have leaded, stained glass panes and be covered by shutters on the exterior. The windows in the *St. Hadrian* group of 1627 are

more realistically rendered with stained glass heraldic emblems set in leaded panes. It has been suggested that Hals left landscape details to other artists, such as Pieter de Molijn, in the *Isaak Abrahamsz. Massa* portrait of 1626 which is in the Art Gallery of Ontario.<sup>14</sup>

Compositionally, I believe that the *St. Hadrian Military Company* of 1627 (Fig. 3, Diag. 2) is more successful than the *St. George Military* group of the same year (Fig. 4, Diag. 3). The *St. Hadrian* painting is based on strong, intersecting diagonals and has a triangular balance of two distinct groups, although Slive<sup>15</sup> calls it forced because of the regularity of the two figures back to back. A central figure behind the table is the connecting link between the two groups. The entire space appears light-filled and airy, and Hals' silvery tonality is particularly evident here, owing much to the mid-tone base coat he applied. In contrast, there is a rather crowded, dull space in the *St. George* painting. Here again there are two groups composed around a sweeping oblique line, with groups on either side connected by a central figure. The right side is curiously block-like - one could say overpowering, as if a figure had been added at the last minute. It is varied by the elaborate broad hats which are so much a part of Dutch baroque costume, and by the foreground gestures and eye contact between the viewer and Michiel de Wael or Captain Nicolaes Le Febure, the midget. Hals may have been experimenting, for the *St. Hadrian* of 1633 (Fig. 5, Diag. 4) and the *Amsterdam* group of 1633-37 (Fig. 6) have heavy blocks of seated and standing figures on the left but are better organized. The *St. Hadrian* group of 1627, in contrast, has an even division of men at each end of the table and the large hats are interspersed throughout the composition, creating an undulating outline. The arm akimbo gesture appears in both 1627 portraits, as it did in the 1616 group. It is now virtually a Hals trademark, which unfortunately made forgeries easy.

Changing fashions are evident as you move from portrait to portrait over a period of twenty-three years. These are particularly outstanding amongst the young ensigns, who by military rule must be single, and obviously are enjoying the fruits of their fathers' labour by spending money on the latest fashions and high living. Hals is a marvellous recorder; from our point of view today it is fascinating to study developing innovations in hats, collars, footwear, stockings, doublets, breeches, military jerkins, hairstyles and facial hair. The youthful ensign on the far right of the 1616 group portrait wears the latest plumed, blocked, small-brimmed, black stove-pipe hat, while the ensign to his left doffs an identical hat in brown. There is a braid decoration set at an oblique angle on both crowns. Elegant wide breeches and matching short doublet are topped with a delicate, French-inspired, whisk collar edged in lace and fastened with tassel ties to match the turned back-cuffs at the wrist. The doublet is not a true doublet<sup>16</sup> because the underlying garment is of a different colour and appears to be grey satin, a reflective material. This garment, like the jacket, is fastened by a long row of tiny covered buttons, and by 1627 buttons decorate the outer seams of narrower breeches also. The satin undergarment has a lozenge design or a slashed pattern. The other two ensigns wear true

doublets with very short belted jackets; the one holding the Spanish flag has a clean-shaven, fresh young face, like the ensign on the far right, and favours an ear-length curly hairstyle that will shortly be in vogue with all young men, reaching shoulder-length by the 1633-39 period, another French influence. Moustaches, beards, goatees and short hair styles predominate amongst the older officers. The ensign on the far right of the 1616 group wears a baldric to carry his sword, and at this point in history the sword was more of an expensive, decorative fashion than a weapon used in combat. Swords, like gloves, had become status symbols for the bourgeoisie, since they were previously worn only by nobles at court. Baldrics become wider, more elaborate and often feature a fringe in the coming years<sup>17</sup>. The ensigns' gloves are also expensive leather imports, perhaps from England, Italy or France, since goods flowed into the great port of Amsterdam from all over Europe and other parts of the world. This was the age of the merchants. The ensigns consistently wear gloves and therefore they must be a required item of dress. By 1627 gloves are longer and slashed at the wrist and in 1633 Colonel Claesz. Loo of the *St. Hadrian* group wears a glove on his right hand. The glove has an odd, empty appearance as if he had lost part of his hand - he was old enough to have seen active service. The final 1639 portrait shows several officers and a sergeant wearing longer military gauntlet gloves, which suggests that gloves were now easily available and therefore cheaper.

By the time the *St. George* group was painted in 1627, hats were large-brimmed and cocked with huge side plumes of imported ostrich feathers. Double jackets were longer, unbelted and had open side seams with braid and button trim. Collars were the new falling ruff<sup>18</sup>, layers of finely pleated sheer material with lace edgings which rested on the shoulders, again with matching cuffs. The emphasis on fine detail and a simplified silhouette with equal attention to horizontals and verticals is usually referred to as the Classical Period (1620-30) of Dutch costume.<sup>19</sup> The *St. Hadrian* group painted in the same year shows that the falling ruff is the favoured collar. The 1627 *St. George* painting shows that the conservative, older men still prefer the standing pleated ruffs while the midget, Captain Nicolaes Le Febure, wears a small, outdated, millstone ruff. Hals, and in fact all artists, were aware of the rules of decorum handed down from the Renaissance. By placing Le Febure standing in the foreground, Hals minimized his deformity since his head is at the same level as the seated officers. Le Febure should have been seated closer to the Colonel by strict protocol.<sup>20</sup> Captain Michiel de Wael, the centrally positioned officer in the foreground, wears the falling ruff with a gold chamois, Spanish-influenced, military jerkin over an undergarment with bloused, slashed upper sleeves, as do Adriaen Matham and Pieter Ramp in the 1627 *St. Hadrian* group. Michiel de Wael's jerkin (*St. George*, 1627) has elaborate, embroidered, braid trim to outline edges and seams, and he is decorated with numerous blue ribbons, in addition to his blue sash, as if he had just won some contest. De Wael was a brewer at the 'Sun' and 'Red Hart' breweries in Haarlem<sup>21</sup> and his gesture, like that of the ensign in the rear of the *St. Hadrian* painting of the same year, signifies that his glass is empty and he would like another drink. The

servant in the 1627 *St. Hadrian* group is busy refilling glasses. The emphasis on drinking rather than banqueting is very apparent in the two 1627 paintings. Hals' last three group portraits are less informal and more military in feeling, which makes one speculate that some remarks were passed about drinking.

Slive<sup>22</sup> discusses the inclusion of glasses in paintings from the early sixteenth century on. The holding of glasses in various positions begins with the toasting position visible in *The Family Portrait*, c. 1530 by Maerten van Heemskerck. Other drinking scenes can fall into the category of moralizing, using Bible parables such as the Prodigal Son to convey the idea of waste and immoral life-style connected to wine, women and song. The church was still striving to raise the morals of the masses. Strict Calvinists frowned on drinking, smoking and other lustier pursuits. The allegory of the Five Senses, symbolizing sight or taste by beer-mug peering, was also a popular theme in paintings. Bacchus, the Roman wine god, appeared in Dutch Mannerist works, and often the profession of a man such as a wine-maker or brewer would be symbolically referred to by the inclusion of a glass in a portrait. It seems reasonable that this is the reference intended with Captain Michiel de Wael, pictured in the foreground of the *St. George* group of 1627, since he was a brewer. The suggestion has been made that the inclusion of seafood in both the 1627 paintings may refer to the fishing rights of one of the officers. The 1639 *St. George* (Fig. 7, Diag. 5) group shows Michiel de Wael's promotion to fiscal, and also makes evident the toll in dissipation that twelve years of heavy drinking has taken: his ruddy face, red nose and general aging. Perhaps Hals is more of a moralizer than his early jolly paintings would lead one to believe, or perhaps he is simply an honest observer.

The dog in the *St. Hadrian* group of 1627 also raises a few questions. Dogs were often pictured in the sixteenth and seventeenth century paintings of inns and brothels in Holland and were symbolic of loose conduct on the part of men and women, as well as signifying gluttony.<sup>23</sup> Dogs were sometimes included in Prodigal Son themes, going hand in hand with the glass gesture. They were also used for the sense of smell in allegories of the Five Senses. Carel van Mander, the northern Vasari, wrote that a dog signifies fidelity and is a stern and fearless guardian for his master, capable of punishing his sins. The dog on the left side of the painting between the head ensign, Adriaen Matham and Colonel Willem Vooght, probably belongs to the Colonel and on this occasion could suggest the fidelity of the Colonel to his officers and his country. It would be very surprising if Hals was moralizing, since these men were intelligent enough to recognize an insult. The Colonel's exalted position may have allowed him the liberty of including his favourite dog. The dog has the long slim muzzle and the markings of a hound, possibly used for hunting game. Slive writes that Hals' work is often borderline, making it difficult to assess whether it is a portrait, genre or allegorical - it is "a startling expression of life charged with all its vital energy."<sup>24</sup>

Of particular interest in the 1616 *St. George* group, and in fact all the group portraits, is the effort on the part of Hals to define the texture of fabrics. This is something the Venetians were particularly good at, as were many Flemish artists, such as Jan van Eyck. The great crushed crisp silk drapery in the 1616 *St. George* painting is typically baroque, catching the light from the left which Hals plays off against the many deep shadows. Much the same can be said of the brilliant folds and rosettes of the silk sashes, which become more elaborate with each portrait. Hals delights in depicting chamois, leather, satin, the glint of metal weapons and armour, and intricate lace patterns, or the limp quality of a silk flag that has been furled and unfurled too often. Ruffs and lace-edged whisks are believably rendered to elicit the texture of starched layers of a plain or pleated fabric, such as fine linen or organdy. The patterns of lace trim on collars, wrist or boot hose, as evidenced by the ensign and central foreground figure in the *Amsterdam* group portrait, are as varied as Hals' portrait heads.

It was the number of tones, splendid colour harmonies and the lively quality of the figures that Vincent van Gogh expounded on in his writings after a trip to Amsterdam in 1885. He singled out the ensign on the left in the *Amsterdam* group and declared him to be divine. In particular, Van Gogh was astounded at Hals' ability to reproduce the texture of different materials using tones of the same pearl-grey.<sup>25</sup> He claimed that Hals had twenty-seven blacks. Hals' light, possibly derived from Hendrick Terbrugghen (1588-1629), is often described as having a silvery tonality. As I mentioned, this is particularly true of the *St. Hadrian*, 1627 and the *Amsterdam* group of 1633-37 - here is "Hals' unrivalled ability to represent an animated group in a room filled with bright, silvery daylight."<sup>26</sup> Every face and form is perfectly revealed by the sharp quality of light filling the picture space. Glasses, golden threads in rich brocades, silks and metal objects catch and reflect light. This light remains constant whether the setting is outside or inside. The dark background of the 1633 *St. Hadrian* does not do the painting justice but Slive<sup>27</sup> is hopeful that a future cleaning to remove old varnish may restore it. However, it does set off the vibrant figures and enormous sashes with expensive French gold lace, a trim favoured in international circles and by the Dutch regent class in Amsterdam and Haarlem. Eugène Fromentin, writing in the late nineteenth century when interest in Hals' work was revived for the first time since the seventeenth century, called Hals a true colourist capable of using all the tones known, which is in his opinion, "the almost unique quality of this fine painter."<sup>28</sup>

Another facet of Hals' painting is his seemingly effortless, swift brush-work. Brush-work on faces, such as Captain Nicolaes Verbeek, *St. George*, 1627, is subtle without abrupt transitions when compared to hair, lace trims, sashes, gloves and collars. The technique here is often broken, with loose, summarily rendered colour patches, but when viewed from a distance all the tones blend to produce an overall finished quality. You would have to say that Hals is a master of form to be able to accomplish this with such consummate skill. Lace is no more, in some instances, than a few light to heavy brush strokes using a variety of brush sizes,

while a glove, such as the right one of the central ensign, *St. George*, 1627, is rendered by directional strokes in a limited tonal range. Underpainting to gain the basic form seems to be the key. The technique for modeling is equally loose in Hals' *Portrait of Isaak Abrahamsz. Massa* of 1626, so this appears to be a consistent factor in his painting. His method is in direct conflict with traditional chiaroscuro and the delicate transitions of Renaissance modeling to create volume, although Hals' figures are well fleshed out despite this difference. The broken brush-strokes first occur in Venetian paintings of the sixteenth century and, when combined with the optical illusion created by distance, became factors of immense importance for artists. To the best of our knowledge, group portraits were hung high on the walls of the Doelen buildings and therefore were never studied at close range; cf. the engraving (Fig. 8) which shows the *St. Hadrian Officers and Subalterns* of 1633, in place. However, the full-length figures in the *Amsterdam* group of 1633-37, which was completed by Pieter Codde (1599-1678), was probably hung at a lower vantage point, and perhaps this caused Hals problems.

In Hals' paintings moustaches and hair are given a life of their own, ends flick up, strands separate and stand away from the head, lending vivacity to the individual. Brush strokes are parallel or angled and express movement. Heads and eyes look right or left more often than straight ahead. The turning of the irises to right and left was not Hals' invention, since Cornelis van Haarlem's 1583 and 1599 group portraits already show this well established custom, but Hals co-ordinates this with hand gestures, partial head and body turns, and eye contact with the viewer. H.P. Baard<sup>29</sup> refers to Hals' impressionistic brush touch, so much admired by Impressionists and Post-Impressionists of the nineteenth century, which possibly developed from his technique of *alla-prima* painting taken from the Italians. The flowing movement of the technique required painting wet-upon-wet. Slive<sup>30</sup> remarks that Hals was perfectly capable of changing his brushwork within a painting. The right side of the 1627 *St. George* group has thicker paint and a higher finish than the left, where brushwork is loose and the paint thinner. It is possible that one of his students worked on this portrait with him. In this painting one can see the impressionistic work on the glove contrasted with fairly precise, detailed work on the sword at the ensign's left hip. Fromentin<sup>31</sup> writes that the naturalists of the nineteenth century admired Hals for all the wrong reasons, i.e. for his quick, sketchy brushwork rather than for his having solved all problems through long years of trial and error. Fromentin was undoubtedly speaking from a traditionalist point of view.

A distinct contrast is evident both in the composition and in the setting with the *St. Hadrian Military Group* of 1633. Officers are pictured outside around a collapsible wooden table and are possibly close to a shooting range in the area of the Old Doelen, since guns are visible in the background. There is no suggestion of food or drink and the emphasis is on weapons, such as spontoons and halberds, which by then had no relevance in actual battle, for firearms had been in use in Europe since the fourteenth century. There must be a reason for a show of weapons, and Slive<sup>32</sup> explains that they establish a man's rank much as

the seating arrangement had done earlier, i.e. the Colonel has his commander's staff, commissioned officers have spontoons, etc. Groupings are still varied, with remnants of the semi-circular arrangement surrounding the Colonel on the left, but there is an overall horizontal emphasis rather than the diagonal arrangement of previous compositions. The *St. Hadrian* painting of 1633 also has a strong vertical balance, a classical tendency, in the standing figures, flags and weapons. The varied elevation of the heads produces a zig-zag pattern. The Colonel is an imposing figure in a purely frontal position, and a sergeant behind him hoists what appears to be a gun with attached bayonet, a fairly new weapon. It originated in Bayonne, France; the Spanish used it in the seventeenth century.

Fashion change in the *St. Hadrian* group of 1633 again appears in the collar which is sheer, flat-lying and edged with wide, scalloped lace. Ensign Jacob Steyn, holding the vertical flag on the left side, wears the new look, as does a seated sergeant to his right. It is interesting to note that Colonel Johan Claesz. Loo appears here and again in the 1639 *St. George* group portrait. Therefore there is no barrier to serving in more than one Military Company if your credentials are impeccable. One gets the feeling that you are dealing with a closed corporation, since family names recur - Olycan, Loo, Dicx, Verbeek, etc. Colonel Loo has a wonderful stern worn face and wears the outdated pleated ruff in both portraits, a detail which points to his conservatism. Broad-brimmed cocked hats with plumes are still the fashion, as well as chamois military jerkins now with matching hat and button-trimmed narrow breeches, as worn by Captain Johan Schatter standing in the central position. The group on the left appears posed, while the right group shows more interaction and the open book offers a business-like touch. There are fourteen men in the *St. Hadrian* 1633 portrait, since three sergeants or subalterns are included. They assume minor positions in the painting i.e. heads only, so presumably their portraits would be less costly, but this makes it clear that more families were accumulating wealth. The military groups were losing their distinct elite character.

The horizontal arrangement of figures is very pronounced in *The Corporalship of Captain Reynier Reael and Lieutenant Cornelis Michielsz. Blaeuw*, the *Amsterdam* group of 1633-37, which is popularly titled *The Meagre Company* because all the men are slim. This is a full-length life-size portrait of sixteen officers and men conforming to Amsterdam tradition. Hals began the painting in 1633 and completed most of the figures on the left before refusing to come to Amsterdam to finish the work. Pieter Codde, an Amsterdam artist of lesser talent, carried out the commission in 1637. Figures are staggered throughout three planes, which forces the eye to move back and forth. The grouping on the left side is almost identical with the *St. Hadrian* 1633 painting except that there are two seated figures in the central position. The standing men form a strong vertical balance and the obliquely-held weapons create dynamics. The most famous group painting of a Corporalship such as this was painted five years later by Rembrandt. It is commonly called *The Night Watch* but the correct title is *The Company of Captain Frans*

*Banning Cocq and Lieutenant Willem van Ruytenburch.* While Hals' *Corporalship* is a static group obviously posed for their portraits, Rembrandt's group suggests full action, a dramatic innovation for the time.

As far as fashion is concerned, Hals' *Amsterdam* painting is truly magnificent. This work clarifies the contrast between a big city and a smaller centre such as Haarlem. The ensign on the far left, whose name is not known, and the figure standing in the centre foreground are outstanding fashion plates. Both wear their hair in a long pageboy style featuring bangs, lace-edged collars which are at their widest following the shoulder contour and upper arm, full, slashed or pleated upper sleeves, and tiny button fastenings on the tight-fitting forearm. The ensign's doublet appears to be grey satin while his breeches, a darker grey, have the sleek texture of leather. His chamois boots, sock-boots and boot hose,<sup>33</sup> which can either be worn up or turned down (as they are here) to display the wide lace edging, are close competition for the leather boots and boot hose of the central figure. Other men favour low shoes with ties or rosettes or higher-heeled, open sandals which were popular with both men and women.<sup>34</sup> One man, in a central position, wears white wrinkled silk stockings that became a fashion trend a decade earlier, as did the large rosettes on shoes. The central figure's military doublet and breeches of gold chamois have the familiar button trim. Button closures were also used on the front of trousers at this time but are not visible in any of Hals' outfits, perhaps as a matter of good taste. Both men wear spurs as if they belong to a mounted unit. The ensign's enormous orange sash and the flag, referring to the House of Orange, catch the eye and draw attention to this figure - undoubtedly he paid more for this attention. He still wears the broad-brimmed cocked hat, but the plumes have disappeared. Lieutenant Blaeuw clings to the millstone ruff and has a short hair style, as do most of the older men. There are two pleated standing ruffs and many falling ruffs, so one progresses through forty years of collar styles in this one painting. Two men are outfitted in metal cuirasses in the group, a suggestion that the men take their activities very seriously, in contrast to the three earlier Haarlem group portraits. In an enormous port city there would be numerous disturbances that could require extra body protection. Cuirasses and helmets were worn as late as the seventeenth century, or perhaps, like the outdated weapons, they were donned only for special occasions such as this portrait. A man in the right foreground has three cylindrical objects hanging from his bandolier which are containers for gun powder. They can also be seen in the *Night Watch*. The poses of the men on the left, i.e. the figures attributed to Hals, appear more natural than the contrived pose of the officer on the far right in the group believed to have been completed by Codde. The grouping on the left is completely and wonderfully self-sufficient, forming a semicircle about the two seated chief officers; the rest of the group appears somewhat redundant, as did the men on the right of the *St. Hadrian* painting of 1633.

The final Doelen painting by Hals is the *St. George Military Group of Officers and Subalterns* of 1639. Some consider this his least effective

group portrait. The artist maintains the horizontal arrangement with some variety by using an elevation, probably a staircase, for the second row. Heads and bodies turn in different directions but generally the composition has a staid quality which may be a result of Hals' age - he was almost sixty - or perhaps he was just bored with rows of officers and men, despite the fact that his own portrait appears second from the left in the upper row. The light remains bright but warmer and the varied sashes, flags and plumes retain their brilliance. The background landscape in this last painting is lighter, with some atmospheric effects. Like the *Amsterdam* group, all the collar styles are repeated plus an austere, square-shaped type, undoubtedly the collar of the next decade. Hals modestly, or by order, gave his self-portrait the least prominence. Sergeant Nicolaes Jansz. van Loo, a son of the Colonel, stands behind his father and slightly to the right. Slive<sup>35</sup> remarks that by stressing identical poses, Hals cleverly strengthens the resemblance.

The *St. George Company* of 1639 was Frans Hals' last group portrait of officers and men. The fact that all these paintings were large and were placed in public buildings contributed to their preservation. After the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, interest in Military Group portraits died - the battle for independence had definitively been won and the bourgeoisie no longer needed the illustrious military references. The second generation of wealthy merchants, whose status was by now well established in the large centres, turned to service for their communities on governing boards of business and charitable organizations. However, as R.H. Fuchs states so well, "A portrait is not just a likeness of an individual to be preserved for posterity; it is also an image of pride, a projection of social position"<sup>36</sup> and, one might add in this case, a symbol of Dutch independence.

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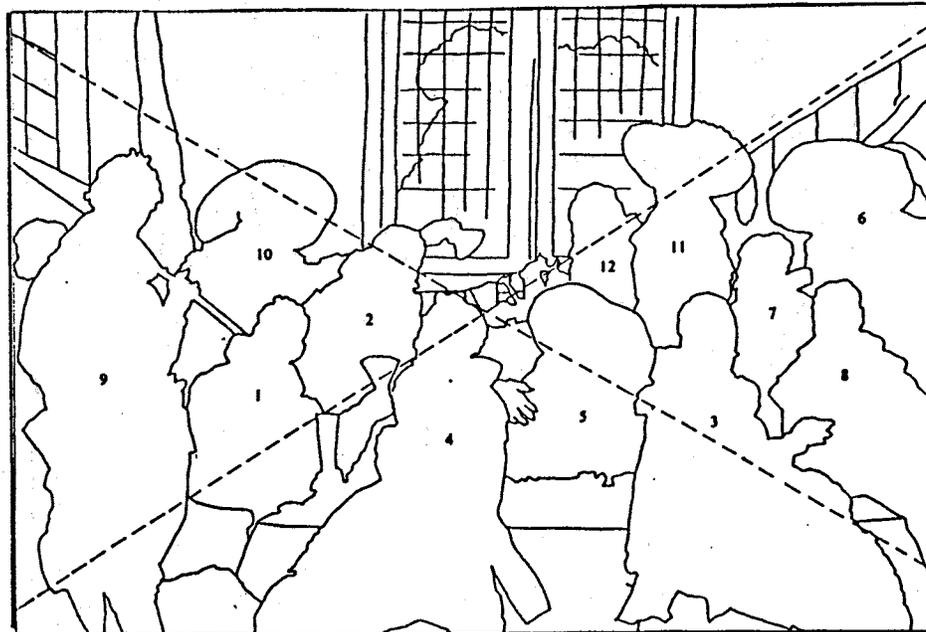
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#### NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Carel van Mander, *Dutch and Flemish Painting*: Translation from the *Schilderboek*, 2nd ed., rev. (New York: McFarlane, Warde, McFarlane, 1936), p. XL.
- <sup>2</sup> Jean Leymarie, *Dutch Painting* (Geneva: Albert Skira, 1956), p. 61.
- <sup>3</sup> H.P. Baard and S. Slive, *Exhibition Catalogue, Frans Hals 1862-1962* (Frans Hals Museum, 1962), pp. 15-16.
- <sup>4</sup> S. Slive, *Frans Hals*, vol. 1 (New York: Phaidon, 1970-74), p. 40.
- <sup>5</sup> Slive, vol. 1, p. 43.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* p. 136.
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* p. 42.
- <sup>8</sup> J. Rosenberg, S. Slive and E.H. ter Kuile, *Dutch Art and Architecture 1600-1800* (Markham, Ontario: Penguin Books, 1984), p. 50.
- <sup>9</sup> Slive, vol. 1, pp. 46-48.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* p. 43.
- <sup>11</sup> Baard and Slive, p. 18.
- <sup>12</sup> Slive, vol. 3, p. 6.
- <sup>13</sup> Valentin Denis and T.E. De Vries, *Picture History of World Art*, vol. 2 (New York: H.N. Abrams, Inc., 1965), p. 60.
- <sup>14</sup> Baard and Slive, p. 36.
- <sup>15</sup> Slive, vol. 1, p. 70.

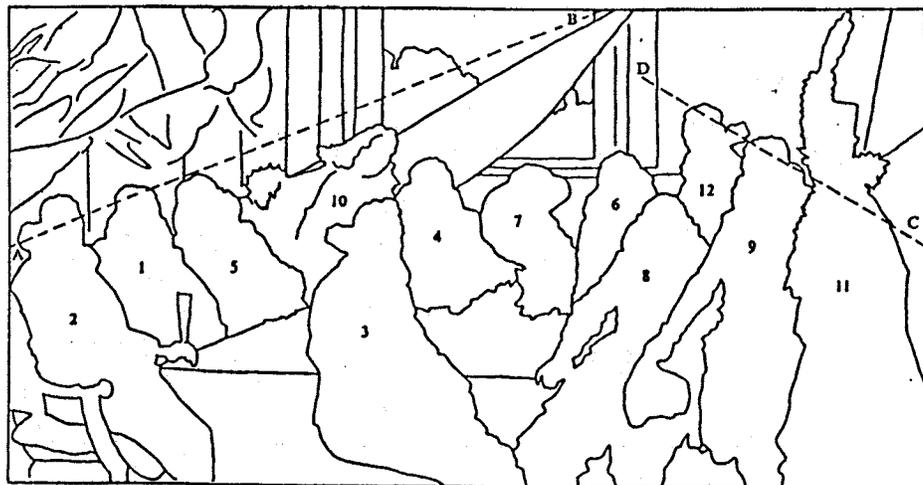
- 16 Millia Davenport, *The Book of Costume*, vol. 2 (New York: Crown, 1965), pp. 610-11.
- 17 Davenport, p. 612.
- 18 *Ibid.*
- 19 Frithjof van Thienen, *The Great Age of Holland, 1600-60* (London, Toronto: Harrap, 1951), p. 11.
- 20 Slive, vol. 1, p. 70.
- 21 Slive, vol. 3, p. 29.
- 22 Slive, vol. 1, pp. 109-10.
- 23 *Ibid.* p. 73.
- 24 *Ibid.* p. 111.
- 25 *Ibid.* p. 138.
- 26 Slive, vol. 3, p. 29.
- 27 Slive, vol. 1, p. 134.
- 28 Eugène Fromentin, *The Old Masters of Belgium and Holland*, tr. Mary C. Robbins (New York: Schocken Books, 1963), p. 230.
- 29 Baard and Slive, p. 19.
- 30 Slive, vol. 1, p. 69.
- 31 Fromentin, p. 230.
- 32 Slive, vol. 1, p. 136.
- 33 Davenport, pp. 612-15.
- 34 *Ibid.* p. 610.
- 35 Slive, vol. 1, p. 139.
- 36 R.H. Fuchs, *Dutch Painting* (New York and Toronto: Oxford Un. Press, 1978), p. 83.



Cat. 14

- |                                  |                                     |                               |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Willem Claesz Vooght, Colonel | 5. Gilles de Wildt, Captain         | 9. Adriaen Matham, Ensign     |
| 2. Johan Damius, Fiscal          | 6. Nicolaes van Napels, Lieutenant  | 10. Lot Schout, Ensign        |
| 3. Willem Warmont, Captain       | 7. Outgert Akersloot, Lieutenant    | 11. Pieter Ramp, Ensign       |
| 4. Johan Schatter, Captain       | 8. Matthijs Haeswindius, Lieutenant | 12. Willem Ruychaver, Servant |

Diagram 1 Banquet of the Officers of the St. George Militia Company, 1616



Cat. 5

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Hendrick van Berckenrode, Colonel         | 7. Cornelis Jacobsz Schout, Lieutenant  |
| 2. Johan van Napels, Provost                 | 8. Pieter Adriaensz Verbeek, Lieutenant |
| 3. Nicolaes Woutersz (van der Meer), Captain | 9. Gerrit Cornelisz Vlasman, Ensign     |
| 4. Vechter Jansz (van Telfelen), Captain     | 10. Jacob Cornelisz Schout, Ensign      |
| 5. Jacob Laurensz, Captain                   | 11. Boudewijn van Offenbergh, Ensign    |
| 6. Hugo Mattheusz Steyn, Lieutenant          | 12. Servant                             |

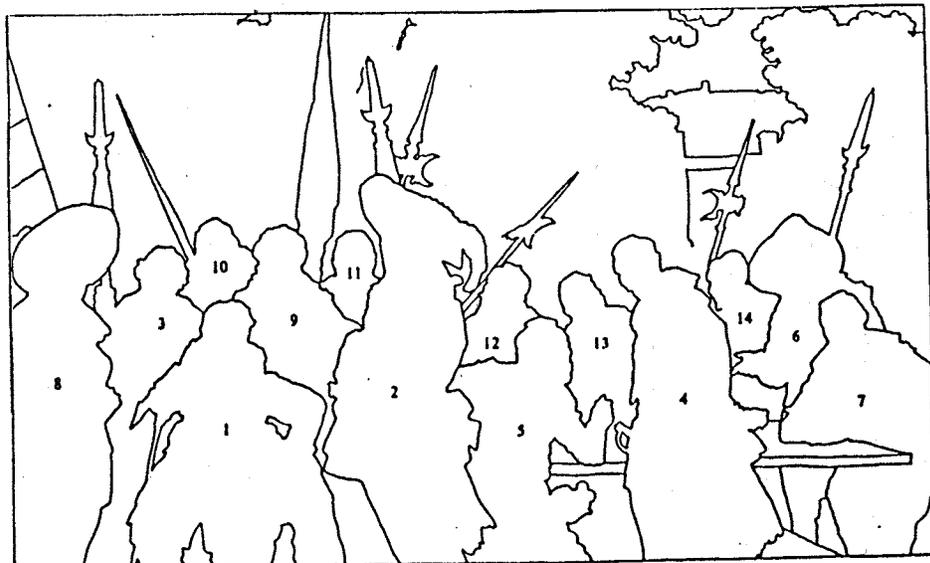
Diagram 2 Banquet of the Officers of St. Hadrian Militia Company, 1627



Cat. 15

- |                                 |                                     |                                     |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Aernout Druyvesteyn, Colonel | 5. Cornelis Boudewijnsz, Lieutenant | 8. Boudewijn van Offenbergh, Ensign |
| 2. Michiel de Wael, Captain     | 6. Frederik Coning, Lieutenant      | 9. Dirck Dixt, Ensign               |
| 3. Nicolaes Le Febure, Captain  | 7. Jacob Olycan, Lieutenant         | 10. Jacob Schout, Ensign            |
| 4. Nicolaes Verbeek, Captain    |                                     | 11. Arent Jacobsz Koets, Servant    |

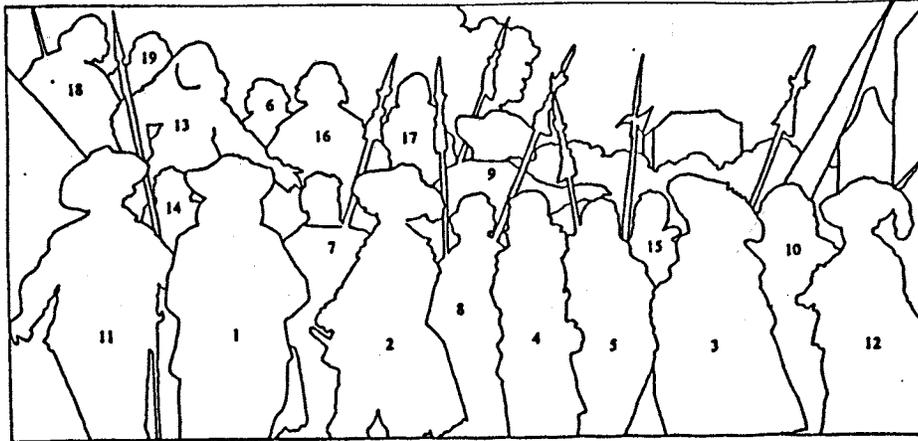
Diagram 3 Banquet of the Officers of the St. George Militia Company, 1627



Cat. 32

- |  |                                      |                                    |
|--|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Johan Claesz Loo, Colonel           | 6. Nicolaes Olycan, Lieutenant       | 11. Balthasar Baudaert, Sergeant   |
| 2. Johan Schatter, Captain             | 7. Hendrick Gerritsz Pot, Lieutenant | 12. Cornelis Jansz Ham, Sergeant   |
| 3. Cornelis Backer, Captain            | 8. Jacob (?) Holland, Ensign         | 13. Hendrik van den Boom, Sergeant |
| 4. Andries van der Horn, Captain       | 9. Jacob Steyn, Ensign               | 14. Barent Mol, Sergeant           |
| 5. Jacob Pietersz Buttinga, Lieutenant | 10. Dirck Verschuyt, Sergeant        |                                    |

Diagram 4 Group portrait of the Officers and Subalterns of the St. Hadrian Militia Company, 1633



Cat. 41

- |                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Johan Claesz Loo, Colonel         | 11. Lambert Wouters, Ensign                      |
| 2. Michiel de Wael, Fiscal           | 12. Pieter Schout, Ensign                        |
| 3. Quirijn Jansz Damast, Captain     | 13. Jacob Druyvesteyn, Ensign                    |
| 4. Florens van der Hoef, Captain     | 14. Gabriel Loreyn, Sergeant                     |
| 5. Nicolaes Grauwert, Captain        | 15. Lucas van Tetterode(?), Sergeant             |
| 6. Hendrick Gerritsz Pot, Lieutenant | 16. Nicolaes Jansz van Loo, Sergeant             |
| 7. François Wouters, Lieutenant      | 17. Abraham Cornelisz van der Schalcke, Sergeant |
| 8. Cornelis Coning, Lieutenant       | 18. Pieter de Jong(?), Sergeant                  |
| 9. Hendrick Coning, Lieutenant       | 19. Frans Hals, Painter                          |
| 10. Dirck Dix, Ensign                |  |

Diagram 5 Group portrait of the Officers and Subalterns of the St. George Militia Company, 1639

The diagrams for this paper are from the *Exhibition Catalogue, Frans Hals 1862-1962*, H.P. Baard and S. Slive, Frans Hals Museum, 1962.

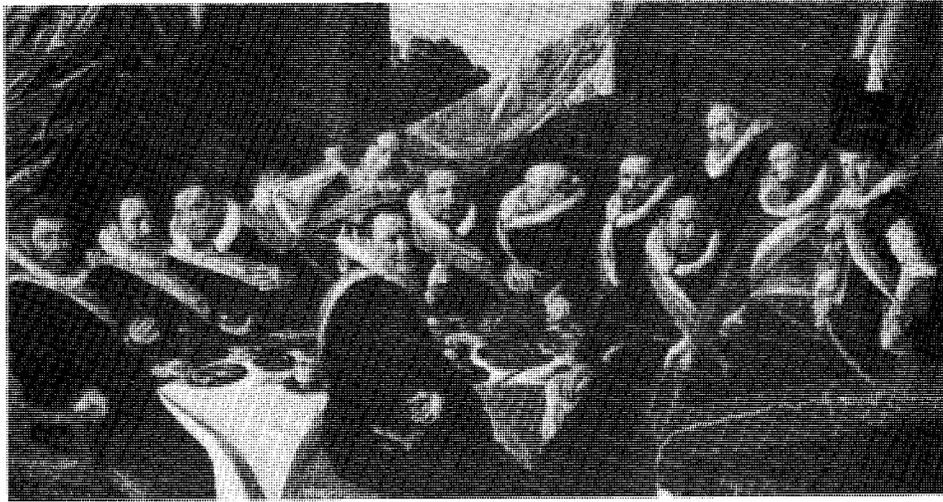


Figure 1 Banquet of the Officers of the St. George Militia Company, 1616



Figure 2 Cornelis Cornelisz. van Haarlem, Banquet of the Civic Guards, 1599

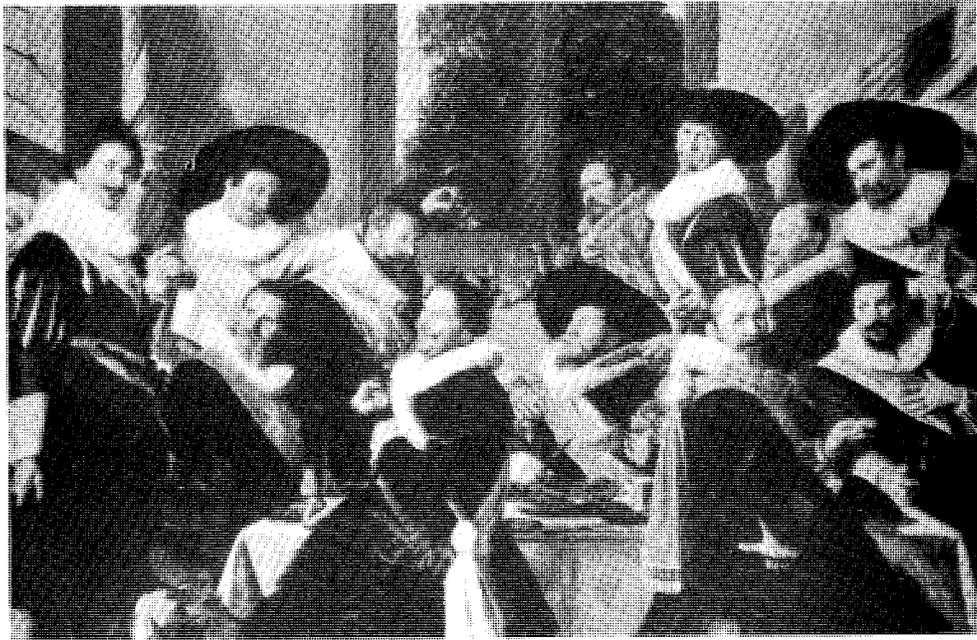


Figure 3 Banquet of the Officers of the St. Hadrian Militia Company, 1627



Figure 4 Banquet of the Officers of the St. George Militia Company, 1627



Figure 5 Officers and Subalterns of the St. Hadrian Militia Company  
1633



Figure 6 The Corporalship of Captain Reynier Reael and Lieutenant  
Cornelis Michielsz. Blaeuw, 1633-37



Figure 7 Officers and Subalterns of the St. George Militia Company, 1639

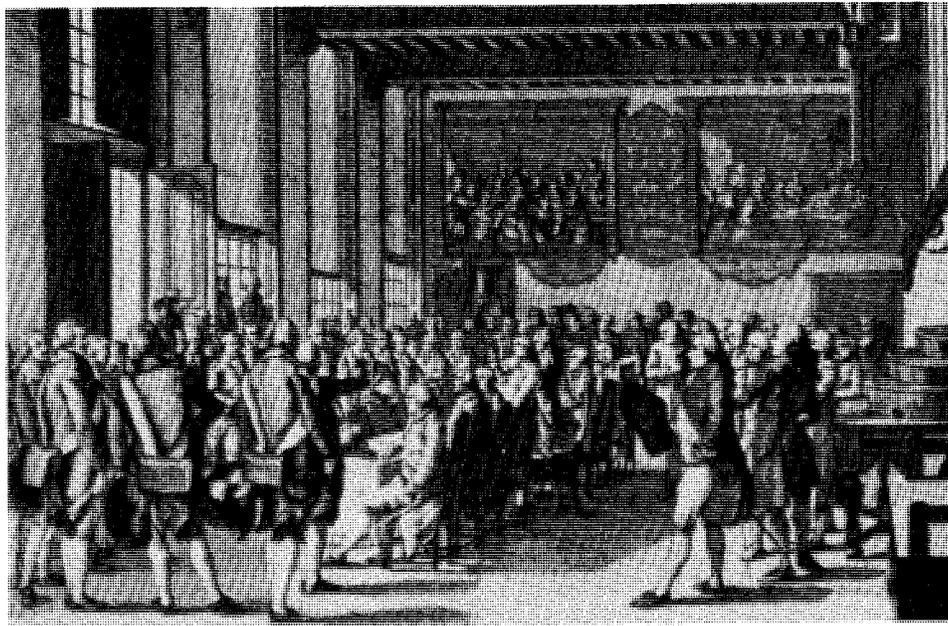


Figure 8 Engraving after Wijbrand Hendricks' View of Headquarters of the St. Hadrian Militia Company, Frnas Hals Museum

The originals of the paintings with the exception of Figure 6 (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam) are in the Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem. Figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 8 - *Frans Hals*, H.P. Beard, Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York, 1981. Figures 6 and 7 - *Exhibition Catalogue, Frans Hals 1862 - 1962* H.P. Beard and S. Slive, Frans Hals Museum, 1962.