



ROB KATTENBURG



A Damsout and a Smalschip (the smaller sister ship of the *wijdschip*), etching by Reinier Nooms (1623-1664). A Damsout and a smallship looked alike and differed only in size. The *wijdschip* was also related to these types of vessel, which were used to load goods and to unload large ships. They could be taken on board.



Portrait of Willem van de Velde the Elder
Line engraving after a painting by Sir Godfrey Kneller



The memorial stone in St James's, Piccadilly, London, UK



A States Yacht and a *Wadconvooyer*, etching by Reinier Nooms (1623-1664). In this etching Nooms shows the difference between a States yacht and a *wadconvooyer*. States yachts were luxury vessels; the *wadconvooyer* was a small armed boat, designed to protect inland boats against enemy warships and privateers. The boat is gaff-rigged and has a small mizzen mast.



Eighteenth-century tafelet given as a present to officials of the V.O.C. (the Dutch United East India Company). Leather with silver clasps, 14 x 8.6 cm. The tafelet opened on the first pages, printed on paper, containing an almanac, followed by ten pages of prepared vellum which could also be used after the almanac had been removed.



Dutch Old Master Marine Paintings, Drawings & Prints

WILLEM VAN DE VELDE THE ELDER

(Leiden 1611 – 1693 London)

The Watte Convojer (wadconvooyer) ‘Valck’ accompanies a small fleet of Wijdschepen (wijdschepen) to the port of West Terschelling. In the distance ‘Brandaris’, the oldest lighthouse on the Wadden Islands, built in 1594

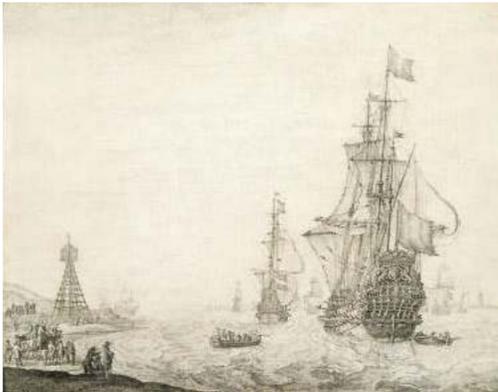
Pen paining (goose quill) and brown ink on an ivory-coloured prepared tafelet
20.6 x 30.3 cm
Signed l.r. ... V.Velde
Ca. 1645

Literature:

Hendrick Goltzius (1558-1617), Drawings, Prints and Paintings, by Huigen Leefflang and Ger Luytjen, Waanders Publishers, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo (Ohio) USA
Page 72, nos. 20 and 21, Page 74, nos. 23 and 24

Willem van de Velde the Elder, who, with his son the younger Willem, ranks as one of the finest of European marine artists, was born in Leiden in 1611. With a naval captain for a father and a brother who was master of a merchantman, he not surprisingly developed a taste for the sea at an early age. He is known to have accompanied his father on a military transport as a young boy, and there may have been other voyages as well. He married in Leiden in 1631, and in 1633 his wife gave birth to their second son, the painter Willem van de Velde the Younger.

Van de Velde’s earliest surviving drawing dates from 1638, but by then he had probably been working as an artist for some time. Several engravings of his drawings were published in 1640, among them a portrait of the *Aemilia*, the flagship of the famous Dutch admiral Maarten Harpertsz. Tromp. Father and son worked as a team for much of their lives, with the father’s drawings and ships’



portraits serving as a basis for the son’s paintings. Willem the Younger always interpreted his father’s drawings very freely, and we do not know of a single drawing that was literally copied into a painting. Van de Velde’s drawings and pen paintings of historic maritime events are based on eyewitness accounts or on his own first-hand experience, for he took to observing sea battles from his own galliot or from a vessel lent to him by the government.

Willem van de Velde the Elder loved to travel. He was away from home from 1660 to 1662, and there are indications that he visited England, where he may have prepared the ground for his emigration with his son in 1672. King Charles II was encouraging Dutch artists to settle in his realm, and he would certainly have had an interest in marine painters, for England was one of the great sea powers. The Van de Velde’s evidently found everything to their liking, as they remained in England until their deaths in 1693 and 1707.

The renowned draughtsman, printmaker and painter Hendrik Goltzius (Wurzburg 1526-1583) often made his magnificent drawings and prints on ivory-coloured prepared tafelets. Paper or vellum was treated with a coating that dried to a beautiful ivory colour. Van de Velde the Elder must have been familiar with Goltzius’s technique, and it may have been this that inspired him to make at least one pen painting on a tafelet.

Willem van de Velde the Elder’s pen-and-ink paintings are the forerunners of his later pen paintings (grisailles) on canvas or panel. The pen painting in brown ink was made with a goose quill. A goose quill has a hard shaft which can easily be cut to a sharp point.

Pen painting was an extremely difficult and time-consuming process and it is therefore not surprising that of the many hundreds of artists of the Dutch Golden Age only one or two practised this skill with success and elevated it to an art.

Willem van de Velde depicted a rare type of ship in this drawing – a ‘*Watte Convojer*’ (wadconvooyer). At first glance the boat is reminiscent of a States yacht, but the stern does not look as if it conceals a spacious saloon. It is also far more heavily armed than a States yacht. The rigging consists of a standing gaff-rig with just one additional small mizzen mast. There is a flying falcon depicted on the stern with the ship’s name, *Valck*, below it.

The Brederode off Vlieland
Pen painting on panel, 24.7 x 32.5 cm. Signed ‘W.v.Velde’
(former collection Rob Kattenburg Gallery)
(The same technique as our drawing; only the support is different)

A rare pen painting (goose quill) on an ivory-coloured prepared tafelet by Willem van de Velde the Elder, the greatest marine draughtsman of the Dutch Golden Age

In times of war or the threat of it, *wadconvooyer* charged cargo boats, in this case *wijdschepen*, to accompany them through the shallows. They were well-armed inshore vessels that were not designed to be sea-going; however they did useful work in the tidal inlets.

In the painting we can see six *wijdschepen* under full sail; the nearest flies a flag with the town arms (a tower) of its home port Alkmaar. Its shape made the *wijdschip* eminently suitable for the Zuiderzee and for other open waters such as the Waddenzee. A *wijdschip* was unearthed from the drained seabed of the Zuiderzee in 1980. It was almost eighteen metres long and fifteen metres wide. The ship must have sunk around 1620 and the preserved wreck and its contents are on display in the Dutch National Historical Ship Centre in Lelystad.

Our pen painting of a *wadconvooyer* is important in terms of maritime history. There is only one other illustration of this type of ship known today and therefore a valuable addition to our knowledge of the types of ships of the seventeenth century.

With thanks to Ab Hoving, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam

The lighthouse *Brandaris*

The *Brandaris* is the oldest lighthouse of the Wadden Islands, built in 1594. The tower has four storeys and is almost fifty-five metres high. The medieval structure is named after St Brendan, an Irish mystic and sea-farer, and also after the village of St Brandiriskercke. The light signals were made by lighting fires. It was destroyed by fire in 1666 at a time when the Second English War was at its height. The English overran the island and burnt the village of West Terschelling to the ground. After the fire the tower was restored. Electric light was installed in 1910 with the power of 3,600,000 candles. In the Second World War the light was turned out and it was feared that the tower would be blown up. But fortunately the *Brandaris* survived that threat too.



The only known pen painting on an ivory-coloured prepared tafelet by Willem van de Velde.