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1 Jan Davidsz. de Heem's name and effigies

Research in the Utrecht archives has shown that the painter who is the subject of this study was not born as Jan Davidsz. de Heem.[32] He was born as Johannes (or Jan, also spelled Joannes), son of David (also spelled Davidt) Jansz., who called himself 'van Antwerpen'. Consequently, 'Jan Davidtsz. van Antwerpen' is how he is referred to in the earliest document that mentions him, his guardian's request of February 1625 for travel money that would enable him to undertake a journey to Italy. The name change to de Heem appears to have occurred at the time of, or shortly after the artist's move with his mother and stepfather and further family to Leiden, later in 1625. At the time of his marriage, in November 1626, he is called Johannes de Heem and already in August of that year he was recorded as 'Mr. Johannes de Heem' in connection with a dispute with one Boudewijn Pietersz. Vergeijl.

Why the artist opted specifically for the name de Heem, and where this name came from, remains unclear. There appear to have been no relatives who were already using the name de Heem at that time. In later years, however, Jan's sister Margaretha (Grietgen) called herself de Heem as well.[33] In any case, it would seem that in 1625 'van Antwerpen' was still considered as a reference to a town of birth, rather than as an actual family name. Since he himself was not born in Antwerp, but in Utrecht, Jan Davidsz. could have called himself 'van Utrecht' upon his move to Leiden, but instead appears to have decided upon using a 'real' surname. 'Heem' can be translated liberally as 'home', the word is often understood in the sense of the place where one lives or came from – location, town, or fatherland. The prefix 'de' appears to have been chosen randomly.[34]

Concerning the artist's first name and patronymic, the following can be remarked. Since there is no known birth record or baptismal record, we do not know his official name for certain, but we can in all probability safely assume that he was baptised Johannes. Several of his early still lifes are signed with that full first name, with slight variations: up to 1630, there are eight signatures that read 'Johannes' and four that read 'Johannis' (one of them from 1627 and three from 1628).[35] In most literature, the painter has been called Jan and considering the fact that his grandfather was consistently referred to as Jan in archival records and that the artist himself was called Jan in the 1625 document mentioned above, as well as in several later documents, there is, in my view, nothing against continuing to refer to him as Jan.[36] One can argue about the spelling of the artist's patronymic, but in Dutch there is only one correct way, which is Davidsz. (with a full stop). It is an abbreviation of Davidszoon (son of David), and abbreviations, in Dutch, apart from a few exceptions listed specifically in the dictionary, must be followed by a full stop.[37] In a shorter form, the artist may be referred to as Jan Dz. de Heem, abbreviating the patronymic even more, but in this publication I choose for the fuller version. In the past, many other abbreviations have been used in the literature, depending on the styles and convictions of the respective authors.[38] Since this text is in English, when I speak of the artist without a first name, I write de Heem (with lower case d) rather than De Heem (capital D), which I would do if I were writing in Dutch, following Dutch spelling rules.

There is only one fully reliable portrait of Jan Davidsz. de Heem, Jan Lievens's portrait drawing in the British Museum (fig. NE 5, for a complete image, see fig. B 2, p. 25).[39] Several others, however, among them three self-portraits in early (still-life) paintings, can be recognised.

NE 1 Detail of cat. no. A 001

NE 2 Detail of cat. no. A 007

NE 3 Detail of cat. no. A 008

NE 4 Detail of fig. B 1

NE 5 Detail of fig. B 2

The basis for recognition of de Heem's face is indeed the small drawn portrait of the artist in black chalk by Jan Lievens in the British Museum in London (fig. NE 5). This little portrait was probably done in about 1636 and in any case during the first few years after de Heem's and Lievens's arrival in Antwerp.[40] This means that the artist is about 30 years old here. He has a rather oval face, be it with somewhat pronounced cheekbones, a straight, fairly broad nose and inquisitive, almond-shaped eyes. His chin is hidden under a small goatee, while a moustache, of which the ends curl upwards, hides part of the mouth. This image became more widely spread through a print that was made after it by Paulus Pontius, which in its turn appears to have been the model for de Heem's portrait in Arnold Houbraken's *Groote Schouburgh*.[41]

In one of de Heem's two earliest (dated) paintings, a young man, a boy actually, features prominently beside a still life (cat. no. A 001). He points his right index finger up, while smiling at the viewer (fig. NE 1). His facial characteristics, be it much younger, are very similar to those of the artist in Lievens's portrait drawing in the British Museum – the shape of the face, the nose, the almond eyes (although rendered larger here), the thin, arched eyebrows. If, instead of pointing with the finger, the hand would be holding a brush, this would be a characteristic pose for a self-portrait. Even if the figure in this painting is not intended purely as a self-portrait, it is barely conceivable that the artist did not in some way use his own image in the mirror to model the boy upon. In view of the age, he may well have employed a self-portrait that he had made earlier. De Heem turned 20 in April of 1626, the year in which this painting was dated, and the boy looks at least several years younger than that.

About two years later, de Heem painted a still life that still shows the influence of his presumed teacher, Balthasar van der Ast, but that at the same time includes unmistakable Leiden motifs (cat. no. A 007). To the right, a small oval portrait of a young man is propped up against the side of the semi-niche in which the still life is set (fig. NE 2). Because the portrait is seen from the side, the face of the sitter will appear somewhat thinner than it actually is. It does indeed look less round than in the portrait by Lievens, but other features such as eyes, nose and mouth are very similar. The short, firm chin, not yet hidden by a beard here, is similar to that of the boy in the earlier painting.

The same young man, Jan Davidsz. de Heem, features prominently in another painting that originated during the same year, 1628, but most probably somewhat later: the *Interior of a Room with a Young Man Seated at a Table* from the Daisy Linda Ward bequest in the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford (cat. no. A 008). The pose is by no means that of a self-portrait, but the identity of the young man can hardly be mistaken (fig. NE 3).[42] While in the still life mentioned above (cat. no. A 007) the inclusion of the little portrait may be regarded as some sort of an additional signature, the artist's reasons to use himself as a model in this painting are less evident. The various possible explanations of the painting's iconography offer no obvious suggestion other than perhaps that the artist shows himself to be subject to various choices in life.[43] He may be implying: you will have to make choices in life, as I do, too.

The painter appears again in an entirely different atmosphere and mood, some eight years later, in a painting by Adriaen Brouwer (fig. NE 4, for a complete image, see *Biography*, fig. B 1). In an article published in 2004, Karolien De Clippel has discussed this painting and convincingly identified all merrymakers in it as painters.[44] Next to de Heem, on the far right, from left to right, Jan Lievens, Joos van Craesbeeck, Brouwer himself, and Jan Cossiers are partaking in the fun. De Clippel has linked the painting with coinciding events in the professional careers of the protagonists' during 1635/36, a date for the painting that also appears to be plausible within Brouwer's chronology.[45] In any case, probably not much time elapsed between the making of Brouwer's *The Smokers* and Lievens's portrait drawing (5).

NE 6 Circle of Adriaen Brouwer, *So-called Self portrait of Jan Davidsz. de Heem*, with signature 'J D Heem', oil on panel, 24 x 19 cm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam inv. no. SK-A-2396.
NE 7 Lucas Vorsterman, *Gustus*, signed, etching, 26,7 x 19,6 cm. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. no. 51.501.1331, The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1951

It is interesting to note that Jacob Campo Weyerman reported that he had heard from Carel de Moor, who had seen de Heem in Antwerp, that the likeness of the effigy in Brouwer's painting was excellent.[46]

Substantially more problematic is a little painting in the collection of the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, which to this day is incorrectly considered as a self-portrait of Jan Davidsz. de Heem (fig. NE 6).[47] The handling is in no way consistent with that of de Heem, however, nor does it bear the characteristics of a self-portrait, while the calligraphy of the 'signature' differs from each and every known authentic de Heem signature. While the painting was clearly not done by de Heem himself, the question remains whether or not it represents the artist. The conclusion must be negative: the sitter's forehead is higher and his chin line different, moreover, judging from the other effigies (figs. NE 1-5), de Heem's hair was dark, according to Brouwers painting even black, while the hair of the figure in the Rijksmuseum painting is fair to red. The style of execution of this little painting is Antwerp rather than Dutch – earlier, I have connected it with the style of Brouwer and, possibly, Joos van Craesbeeck.[48] It is interesting to note, moreover, that a print by Lucas Vorsterman with the same image in reverse does not identify the sitter, but is labelled 'GUSTUS', Taste, above a short poem praising Bacchus and his wine, while admonishing against excessive consumption of the wine (fig. NE 7).[49] In the print the sitter is holding a rummer of wine, instead of smoking a pipe. Looking closely at the painting, it becomes clear that originally, the protagonist was indeed holding a rummer, instead of a pipe, while the taper in his hand was also a later change; in the print he is holding some fruit.[50] In the print, incidentally, the sitter's face is rounder and bears a little more – but not enough – likeness to de Heem's portraits by Brouwer and Lievens.

There is one more record of a (presumed) portrait of de Heem, by the Flemish portraitist Jan de Reyn (or Jan van de Reyn, 1610-1678), which appeared in a London auction in 1924, 'Portrait of John David de Heem, in black dress, holding a palette'.[51] Unfortunately, this portrait appears to be untraceable. In view of the portraitist's dates, it may well have shown de Heem – if he was indeed the sitter – at a later age than the effigies discussed above.

Although Jan Davidsz. de Heem relished in painting reflections, he appears to have opted only twice for inclusion of his own reflection, working at his easel, in his still lifes. In the earliest example, the still life from 1653 in the Wallace Collection in London (cat. no. A 175), there can be little doubt that we see the artist himself reflected in the over-turned mustard jar. Unfortunately, the reflection is very small and provides too little detail to say anything firm about the artist's countenance in those days. The same, even though it is somewhat larger, is true for the reflection in the vase carrying the flowers in a still life in Leipzig from, probably, 1675 (cat. no. A 255, fig. A2 4 on p. 270), in which the reflection of the artist's face is no more than a skin-coloured oval with a lighter dot for a nose.