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## 2 A biography of Jan Davidsz. de Heem (1606-1684)[52]

**The early years in Utrecht**

From the records of the orphanage board in Utrecht it appears that in February of 1625 a young painter from that city, Jan Davidtsz. van Antwerpen, was planning a journey to Italy.[53] Without a shadow of a doubt, this young painter can be identified as the artist we now know as Jan Davidsz. de Heem. From the archival note concerned we learn that he was going to turn nineteen that coming Easter time. This means that Jan Davidsz. was born in the third week of April 1606, possibly on the 20th of that month, or the 30th on the current Gregorian calendar.[54] He was the son of David Jansz. van Antwerpen and Hillegond Theunisdr., who had married in Utrecht in 1603. For both parents this was the second marriage, each had been widowed earlier. The paternal grandfather, Jan Martensz. van den Bosch, had probably come from Antwerp and was first recorded in Utrecht in 1594. His sons, among them the father of Jan Davidsz. de Heem, were probably born in Antwerp and assumed the name 'Van Antwerpen' in Utrecht. Apparently, the family was not yet using a 'proper' family name.[55] De Heem's grandfather was a pin maker, as were two of his uncles. The profession of his father, David Jansz. van Antwerpen, is mentioned in one document only, dating from 1610, of which the text is partly damaged. Bok (1990) deciphered 'spe[elm]an' (musician), the same profession that David's brother, Marcelis, was active in, according to the same document. At that time, the family was living in the centre of Utrecht, on Vismarkt square, which is at the foot of the Domkerk tower. David Jansz. van Antwerpen died in 1612, when his son Jan Davidsz. had only just turned six. These data unequivocally dismiss the traditional assumption that Jan Davidsz. de Heem received his training as a painter from his father.

In 1611, David Jansz. van Antwerpen had bought a large chapter house on the Domkerkhof, directly behind his house on the Vismarkt. This indicates that the father was at least moderately wealthy and that de Heem's background was middle class or somewhat higher.

Early 1613, the year after her husband's death, de Heem's mother remarried. The groom was Johan Jacob Kerver from Worms, who later called himself Coornhert.[56] He was a bookbinder and book dealer. In 1615, Kerver bought a house on Vismarkt, the north side of which adjoined the van Antwerpen family home. The house was given the name 'In den Hochdeusche Vergulde Bibel' (In the Gilt German Bible), and had been fully renovated by January 1618.[57] The house on Domkerkhof behind it, which de Heem's father had bought in 1611, was rented out to a protestant refugee, a German nobleman, Frederik van Schurman. His daughter was the *femme universelle* Anna Maria van Schurman, who was born in 1607. Thus, it seems likely that Jan de Heem and Anna Maria were acquainted as children. There is no indication that they have been in contact with each other later in life, however.

The request to the orphanage board in 1625 was made by the young painter's uncle, Marten Jansz. van Antwerpen, who had been appointed paternal guardian upon the death of Jan's father. The painter's other uncle, Marcelis Jansz., who was living in Gorinchem, had been appointed second paternal guardian. Besides his mother, a maternal guardian had been appointed, one Peter Nanninx, who lived outside Leiden.

As Bok (1990) has argued, it is likely that the guardian's request for funds for the young painter's travel plans was refused because of the financial difficulties his stepfather was experiencing. The board must have feared that the money would disappear as a result of Kerver's debts, before the young artist could have made use of it. Those debts proper may well have been the incentive for the family to move from Utrecht to Leiden later that same year. The choice for Leiden

was an obvious one. Jan's parents were married there and the family had relatives who lived in the town. Kerver had resided in Leiden shortly before his marriage to Hillegond Theunisdr. In 1623, Johan Kerver, now calling himself Coornhert, had sold the house on Domkerkhof, and in January of 1625 he had been forced, at the request of one of his creditors, to sell the house 'In den Hochdeusche Vergulde Bibel' as well.

Although in the document from 1625 mentioned above Jan Davidsz. is called *een schilder syns hantwercx* (a painter by profession), he is not recorded as such in any other Utrecht document from that early period. He must have received his training in the city, but there is no record of his apprenticeship.[58]

**Leiden**

On 27 June 1625, Hillegond Theunisdr., wife of Jan Jacobsz. Coornhert, was registered as a *poorterse* (citizen) of Leiden. Since the money for Jan Davidsz.'s planned journey to Italy had not come through, it is not surprising that he came along to Leiden with his mother and further family.

Jan Davidsz., who in Utrecht apparently still had called himself 'Van Antwerpen' as his father had done, appears to have chosen to start using the last name de Heem when he moved to Leiden in 1625. At that point, following tradition, he could have called himself 'Van Utrecht', but for reasons unknown he opted for 'De Heem'. The first known occasion on which this surname was used, is in an entry in the Leiden archives, concerning a dispute between 'Mr Johannes de Heem' and a certain Boudewijn Pietersz. Vergeijl (*c*.1576-1633) on 21st August 1626. The nature of the dispute was not recorded.[59]

In December of 1626, Johannes de Heem married Aletta (Aeltgen) Cornelisdr. van Weede, a girl from Utrecht. The wedding banns were published both in Utrecht and in Leiden, on 12th (= 22nd) November and 3rd December, respectively, even though both were living in Leiden at the time of their marriage.

A first child from this alliance was perhaps born dead: a nameless child of Johannes de Hem (sic) was buried in the Pieterskerk in Leiden on 24th December 1627. On 29th November 1628, David, son of Johannes de Heem, was baptised in the same church. This David must have died young, in any case before March 1643, since he is not mentioned in the documents from that year concerning the inventory that was drawn up after his mother's death.

On 8th April 1631, Cornelis, son of Johannes de Heem, was baptised in the Hooglandse Kerk. The painter Pieter Simonsz. Potter (1597-1652) acted as witness at his baptism. Subsequently, there are no archival records in Leiden concerning de Heem or his family, which suggests that he left town soon after Cornelis' baptism, as Wurfbain (1989) has convincingly argued.[60] There is no attestation of the departure of the artist and his family in the Leiden archives.

There are various other archival sources concerning de Heem's years in Leiden, most of which concern debts. Already in April of 1627, he is summoned to pay a debt of three guilders and two stuivers to the tobacco merchant Jacob Danens. From a notarial deed concerning the transfer of an annuity of 550 guilders to his wife's brother, who was also living in Leiden, it appears that at that time de Heem was living in Breestraat, one of the town's main streets.

In March of 1630, an unspecified dispute was recorded between de Heem and Joris Balantijn, a sugar baker, who had acted as a witness at the painter's wedding some three years earlier, while in February of the next year, the joiner Pieter Pietersz. van den Bosch claimed the sum of eleven guilders and eighteen stuivers from the artist, for wood and labour. We may assume that this debt concerned panels that van den Bosch had produced for him. Apparently, the matter was not settled

properly, since van den Bosch restated his claim on the 18th of August. On that same day, the tobacco merchant Jacob Danens, again, claimed money from de Heem concerning unspecified debts. Around the same time, de Heem also turns out to have achieved a rather substantial debt of one hundred and seventy-five guilders with a silk cloth merchant, Pieter Francken van Scharpenbrant. Upon van Scharpenbrant's request, goods had been confiscated from de Heem and concluding summary procedures on the 11th of September 1631, the council ordered him to pay the debts. It may well be that by that time de Heem had already left town and one may wonder whether his creditors ever got to touch their money.

An interesting note is found in the Haarlem archives. On 6 June 1660 one Olivier Jacobsz. empowers the painter Pieter de Molijn (1595-1661) to claim from Johannes de Heem, painter, the payment for a painting which he had given him to sell and for which a debt to him was outstanding since 12 December 1630. It is noted that later he received the money from Pieter de Molijn. This informs us that, unless this Olivier Jacobsz. was living in Leiden in 1630, de Heem had connections in Haarlem, and was occasionally dealing in paintings.

An extraordinary case was discussed in detail by Maarten Wurfbain in an article published in 1989. De Heem, and his wife Aeltgen van Weede in particular, had participated in a foul set-up by their housemate, the baker Cornelis Cornelisz. van Oostwaert, to trick a rich girl from Zoeterwoude into marrying him. De Heem's wife, together with a friend, Aeltgen van den Bosch, would sedate the girl in question, after which van Oostwaert would sleep with her, upon which she would have to marry him. Aeltgen van den Bosch remorsefully backed out before the event, however, and spilled the information. Consequently, the plan fell through and, moreover, was recorded extensively in various notarial deeds. As a result, van Oostwaert did not get his desired bride – nor her money. But soon after he appears to have found himself another bride and apparently enjoyed a fruitful marriage. One of his sons, Arent van Oostwaert, also became a baker and secured himself a place in Dutch art history as the subject of a well-known painting by Jan Steen, now in the Amsterdam Rijksmuseum.[61]

**Amsterdam?**

There are no records concerning de Heem's whereabouts from mid-1631 until March 1636, when he acted as a witness to a contract that Jan Lievens (1607-1674) had drawn up with a pupil in Antwerp. However, it is conceivable that he spent some time in Amsterdam between his Leiden and Antwerp years. Pieter Potter, with whom he must have been associated – Potter acted as a witness at Cornelis de Heem's baptism in 1631 and there is an unmistakable connection between Potter's barn interiors and the one by de Heem from that same year (cat. no. 31.01) – left for Amsterdam in late 1631 or early 1632 and Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-1669) started to work with Hendrick Uylenburgh in Amsterdam in 1631.[62] There are no documents confirming that de Heem was acquainted with Rembrandt and Jan Lievens in Leiden, but it is most likely that they knew each other. They were the same age: de Heem was Rembrandt's elder by three months; Lievens was a year and a half younger. Later on, as pertains from the document mentioned above, de Heem and Lievens were surely well acquainted in Antwerp. Also, Lievens drew de Heem's portrait there, and both artists appear in Adriaen Brouwer's scene of artists making merry in an inn, now in the Metropolitan Museum, New York (fig. B 1).[63] It is even conceivable that Lievens was instrumental in bringing de Heem to Antwerp.

B 1 A. Brouwer, '*The Smokers' A group of artists making merry in an inn*, oil on panel, 46,4 x 36,8 cm. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. no. 32.100.21.

While de Heem appears to have left Leiden before Potter, there was probably a buzz about opportunities in Amsterdam. While there are no known archival records concerning de Heem or members of his family there, during the years after he disappeared from Leiden, several of his still lifes show a degree of stylistic relationship with the work of Jan Jansz. den Uyl, who was working in Amsterdam, while the measurements of several panels from that period may also indicate an Amsterdam origin.[64] It is interesting to note that the Amsterdam collector Anthoni Gaillard, at the time of his death in 1639, owned three paintings by de Heem, among them possibly cat. no. A 014, painted in Leiden, but also 'Een groot stuck van Jan de Heem', and 'Een grote kan met romer van Jan de Heem', for which cat. no. A 044 from 1635 or perhaps A 040 might be a candidate. This makes it feasible that, if anywhere, de Heem spent some time in Amsterdam before settling in Antwerp. Another option for de Heem might have been to go to Haarlem, but the fact that he had a debt there since 1630 which remained open until 1660, as mentioned above, makes it less likely that he spent much time there between 1631 and 1636.

**Antwerp**

Wherever Jan Davidsz. de Heem may have resided between mid-1631 and 1636, as mentioned above, he is first recorded in Antwerp in March of 1636. During the administrative year 1635/36 (starting on 18th September), de Heem enrolled in the Antwerp guild of St. Luke and payed his master's fee of 23 guilders. About that time, his daughter Torentiana must have been born – she was eight years old in 1643. Thus far, her birth record has not been traced, however.[65] On August 28, 1637, 'Joannes de Heim' from Utrecht was officially registered as a citizen (*poorter*) of Antwerp. In general, and also for the second half of the 1630s, biographical data for Jan Davidsz. de Heem remain scarce. In comparison with the last few years at Leiden, however, the absence of records of debts is striking. It even appears that Adriaen Brouwer owed him some money, which de Heem claimed after that artist's death in February of 1638. His friendly relationship with Brouwer and, among others, Jan Lievens, is apparent from their joint appearance in a painting by Brouwer of five men making merry in a tavern, already mentioned above (fig. B 1). All merrymakers can be identified as painters.[66] Lievens drew de Heem's portrait, no doubt during the years they were both living in Antwerp, 1635-*c*.1640, probably around 1636, so it shows de Heem at about 30 years of age (fig. B 2).[67]

B 2 J. Lievens, Portrait of Jan Davidsz. de Heem, black chalk, 265 x 201 mm. London, British Museum, inv. no. 1895.0915.1199.

In August of 1638, de Heem had a contract drawn up concerning the tuition of Michiel Verstylen, aged 16, for one year, for which de Heem was to receive eighty guilders. Verstylen may well have come to de Heem for specific training, perhaps specialisation as a still-life painter. He had previously been registered as a pupil of the painter Alexander Caure (or Pourre) in 1633/34, which would indicate that he had probably finished his basic training by 1638.[68] Unfortunately no examples of his work have been identified; he may not have been successful as a painter, although he signed up for another six months of apprenticeship with de Heem in June of 1643. Shortly after notarising Michiel Verstylen's first contract, de Heem signed another contract, this time engaging Andries (spelled in the contract as Andreas) Benedetti (1615/18-1649 or later) as his pupil for two years. The difference of the annual fees - eighty guilders for Verstylen and fifty for Benedetti – appears to have been related to the facilities de Heem had to provide. Benedetti was previously registered as a pupil of one Vincent Cernevael during the administrative year 1636/37.[69] He became an independent master in 1640/41, so after some four or five years of training, which is not unusual.[70]

In the accounts of 1640/41, the Antwerp guild registered three pupils with de Heem: Alexander Coosemans, Thomas de Clerck and Lenaert Rougghe. For the latter two, it is the only time that they are registered with the guild and no work, at least no signed work, by their hands is known. They may well have given up their ambitions to become painters. For Coosemans, who was about fourteen years old at the time, it was the first step towards a fairly successful career as a still-life painter. In 1644/45 he was registered as an independent master, like Benedetti after some four or five years of training.

On 29th March 1643, Jan Davidsz. de Heem's wife, Aletta van Weede, died in their house on Papenstraat in Antwerp. In November, the assets were divided among the heirs – the painter and three children – under charge of the orphanage board, as was customary in such cases. The de Heem household had clearly benefited from the move to Antwerp and the painter's success there. After deduction of expenses and fees, the estate surmounted to 4035 guilders and 2 stuivers (in goods and in cash) to be divided, which, according to van Lerius (1880), left de Heem with 2017 guilders and 11 stuivers, while 672 guilders and 10 1/3 stuivers went to each of the three surviving children, Cornelis, Torentiana, and Thomas Maria. Their ages were given as thirteen, eight, and five on that occasion. Cornelis, however, had only turned twelve in April of that year, while Thomas Maria had indeed turned five in that month. This leaves us with less certainty about Torentiana's year of birth than has been suggested.[71] For the time being, it is best indicated as 1634/36. The record of her birth could have informed us of de Heem's whereabouts in about 1635.

From a request in 1655, it pertains that de Heem, after his wife's death, had organised a public sale of paintings.[72] There is no proper record of such a sale, however, but it may be that the sale was in fact organized by Jan Casspeel, one of the guardians of de Heem's children, who is recorded to have paid a fee of 6 guilders to make the request concerning a sale day ('coopdagh') and 75 guilders for the rights to the actual sale.[73]

For Aletta's burial, church rights were paid, which would suggest, as Van Lerius (1880) remarked, that she was buried a Roman Catholic, while she had been born a Protestant. Both de Heem and his wife came from protestant families; de Heem's grandfather had undoubtedly left Antwerp in the late sixteenth century for religious reasons. Jan Davidsz. de Heem does not appear to have been very concerned about religious issues, or political ones, for that matter. While born and raised a protestant, he seems to have adapted easily to life in Catholic circles in Antwerp – his son Thomas Maria already received a Roman Catholic baptism in 1638. As we will see, the artist also must have had no scruples about adopting the imagery of his paintings to the liking and religious and political preference of his clientele. During his Antwerp years, he produced several paintings with an unmistakable Roman Catholic iconography, while after his move to Utrecht in the late 1650s several of his paintings openly praise the (Protestant) house of Orange, the young Prince William III in particular. Abraham Mignon (1640-1679), with whom he shared his studio in Utrecht, was a devout protestant and dean of the Utrecht Walloon church. As far as can be concluded from the records, de Heem himself was never an active member of any church community, he does at least not appear to have been registered as such.

The guardians that were appointed for the children when Aletta van Weede's estate was passed before the orphanage board were Abraham van Lamoen and the dealer in *objets d'art* Jan Casspeel (or Cassepeel, † 1655).[74] Incidentally, this Abraham had an eponymous son Abraham van Lamoen who was registered as a master painter by the guild in 1647/48, and who painted still lifes in the style of de Heem.[75] With Casspeel, de Heem apparently had a close relationship. The reverse of a small bouquet by de Heem that I date to (*c*.) 1644 on stylistic grounds (cat. no. 44.03) is inscribed 'Casepeel' on the reverse of the copper plate, perhaps in de Heem's own hand.[76] Moreover, in June of 1643, three months after his wife's death, de Heem had a print by Pieter de Bailliu after Anthony van Dyck's *Christ on the Cross with St. Francis at his feet* (Dendermonde, Church of Our Lady) inscribed with a dedication to Casspeel: 'Hoc amoris sui pignus dedicat D. Joannes de Heem singulari amico suo D. Joanni Caspeel fabro ferrario famosq; artis pictoriae amatori Antverpiae Junij 1643'.[77] It is quite unusual to have such a dedication printed, but as we shall see, there is a second example of such a dedication by de Heem, also in collaboration with Bailliu. Whether we should take the Latin inscriptions on these prints as an indication that de Heem had some Latin seems doubtful. He may well have had them translated, but on the other hand we should not rule out entirely that he had followed classes in Latin, either in Utrecht or in Leiden.

As van Lerius subtly remarked 'facing the care of three young children, the master could difficultly remain a widower'.[78] Already on 23rd February 1644, within a year after Aletta's death, a wedding contract was drawn up between Johannes de Heem and Anna Ruckers. Anna was the nearly twenty-nine year-old daughter (she was baptised on the 15th of March, 1615) of Andreas Ruckers (1579-1651/53), senior member of a family of harpsichord makers, an excellent master in his trade and a prominent citizen of Antwerp. The wedding contract was presented at the Ruckers' house on Looiersstraat. On behalf of de Heem, the painter Jacob Jordaens acted as a witness. On behalf of the bride, the witnesses were her father, her brother Andreas the Younger, her aunt Maria de Vriese and her uncle Zacharias de Vriese.[79] The actual – Roman Catholic – marriage took place in the south

transept of the Cathedral of Our Lady (Onze-Lieve-Vrouwekathedraal) on 6th March 1644. Apparently the newly-wed couple moved house in the course of the following year, since on March 7, 1645, when Anna had a testament drawn up, they were living in the Gasthuisbeemden area.[80] The testament must have been made as a precaution, in case she should not survive the delivery of her first-born. This fear was clearly uncalled for. The child, Maria Anna, was baptised on 16th March and another five children would follow in the course of the next nine years: Isabella Catherina in April of 1647, Hildegonda in May of 1648, Johannes in July of 1650, Anna Maria in November of 1651, and Jacobus in October of 1654. Little is known of their lives. When Anna Ruckers made her testament in May of 1672, she speaks of 'her children' but the testament does not name or number them explicitly.[81] In an enigmatic quote, van den Branden (1883) says that on 16th May 1695, Cornelis de Heem declared that he had received his share from his father's and his mother's inheritance, as well as from that of his sister Torentiana and his brother Jan and that his step sisters Isabella, Hildegonda and Anna Maria had no remaining debts with him.[82] We must assume that this Jan was the Johannes who was baptised in 1650, and who was in fact Cornelis' stepbrother. If we read van den Branden's quote correctly, Jan and Cornelis' sister Torentiana, had died before May 1695 as adults, leaving an inheritance of which Cornelis had received his share.[83] This would also mean that Jan Davidsz. de Heem's and Anna Ruckers' son Jacobus, and their first daughter Maria Anna had died in childhood, not leaving an inheritance. Their three other daughters, like Cornelis at the time of his death, all lived on Eijermarkt in Antwerp at the end of their lives, conceivably in the same house. Isabella was buried in March 1722, Anna Maria in September 1724, and Hildegonde (Alegonde) in February 1728.[84]

During the first years of the 1650s, de Heem appears to have tightened connections with the Northern Netherlands. Apparently he had engaged the Amsterdam collector and dealer Marten Kretzer (1598-1670) as a patron, judging from the inscription of a print after Rubens' *Reconciliation of Esau and Jacob*. Like the print dedicated to Jan Casspeel nine years earlier, it was engraved by Pieter de Bailliu: 'Domino Martino Kretzer, artis pictoriæ admiratori ac patrono amico, hanc cultus et observantiæ suæ indicem tabulam Joannes de Heem dicat consecratque Antverpiæ, 24 Febr. 1652'.[85] In 1645, Kretzer had a contract drawn up with Pieter van den Bosch (1612/13-1663 or later), whom we know as a still-life painter. Van den Bosch agreed to work long hours for Kretzer and promised to paint every subject the collector would require of him.[86] When in 1650 the poet Lambert van den Bosch praised Kretzer's collection in a poem, he also referred to work by de Heem. The poet appears to excuse himself to the still-life painter van den Bosch for rating de Heem's work above his: 'And once I start about de Heem, van den Bosch will be annoyed and find it hard to swallow that I bereave him of his honour'.[87] This would appear to indicate that Kretzer owned at least one of de Heem's still lifes by 1650. Also, the fact that Jacob Marrel copied a still life by de Heem in Utrecht in 1649 (cat. no. A 099, copy a) indicates that the artist already had connections also in that city by that time.

In April of 1655, de Heem requested permission of the guild to organise a public sale of paintings in his house in Antwerp. Permission was denied, however, since according to the regulations, such a public sale was only allowed on the Friday market. It may be that de Heem wanted to organise this sale in order to clear his stock because he intended to leave town. Unfortunately, however, also for the following period factual biographical data are scarce. Fact is, that the painter was in Leiden in April of 1658 in order to receive an inheritance. From December that same year on, he annually payed his taxes as *buitenpoorter* of Antwerp, a citizen (living) outside of the town, until 1663 (with an exception or missing registration for 1662) and once more in 1667. By paying these taxes, he retained his civil rights in Antwerp, while he was not (permanently) living there. The fact that Cornelis de Heem was first registered as an independent master during the

administrative year 1660/61 may well be the result of his father's permanent absence from Antwerp.[88] Cornelis had been signing paintings independently since 1654, and probably earlier, but he must have been working under his father's aegis until the latter left Antwerp. Incidentally, he appears to have spent some time in Brussels in the years 1655 to 1657.[89]

**Utrecht**

In January of 1665, de Heem was first documented as living in Utrecht, but he must already have moved there a good number of years earlier.[90] Jan Davidsz. was godfather of his grandson David Cornelisz. de Heem, but at David's baptism in February of 1663, he was represented by one Jacob Laureyssens, and when David's sister Anna Catharina was baptised in November of 1665, Anna Ruckers was represented as godmother by one Elisabeth Post. In both cases the reason must have been that the grandparents were residing in Utrecht at the time. Another indication of an earlier arrival in Utrecht is a fact that Houbraken mentions, being that Abraham Mignon was Jacob Marrel's pupil for fourteen years, until the age of 24, when Marrel left him with Jan Davidsz. de Heem in Utrecht. Since Mignon was born in 1640, this would have been in 1664.[91] From the year 1668, there are two archival references to de Heem in Utrecht. One of them concerns a reference to a debt to Jan Davidsz.'s sister, Grietje (Margaretha), which was transferred to the painter 'David de Heem'.[92] This is obviously a misspelling, but it has been the source of Kramm's misconception that a painter David de Heem was living in Utrecht in 1668.[93]

Another indication that de Heem settled in Utrecht at an earlier date than previously assumed is the apprenticeship of Maria van Oosterwijck (1630-1693) with him.[94] Only recently it was discovered that Maria van Oosterwijck left Leiden, where she had lived for a few years, for Utrecht in May of 1660.[95] There was no other likely reason for her move to Utrecht than to continue her training as an artist under a renowned still life painter.[96] Since no other painter of fruit and flowers of note was working in Utrecht in 1660 and since Houbraken's mention that Maria van Oosterwijck was a pupil of de Heem is confirmed by her paintings, we must assume that it was de Heem's settlement in Utrecht that prompted her move there.

Also the fact that Pieter de Molijn was empowered in June of 1660 to claim money from de Heem for a painting he had taken to sell in 1630 may well indicate that he had returned north. It may be, of course, that de Molijn was travelling to Antwerp, but at his advanced age of 75 that seems less likely. More likely, word had reached de Heem's creditor that the painter was now living in Utrecht, and had become rather affluent. Apparently, de Heem paid his debt without further ado.

A most interesting document dated 1st March 1669 provides some insight in the relationship between Jan and his wife and his son Cornelis. The painter declares that over the years he had provided his son with paintings and money and paid several debts for him, the total amounting to 1057 guilders and 8 stuivers. An amount of a thousand guilders was due to Cornelis out of his mother's inheritance and as a result, the father notes that his son owed him 57 guilders and eight stuivers. A detailed description is given of Jan's expenses and the respective dates. Apparently, Cornelis was in Brussels in 1655 and in 1657 (and was perhaps residing there for longer stretches of time during those years; the amounts suggest a longer sojourn), since his father had paid debts for lodging there, as well as for food and drink. Also, he had sent Cornelis some paintings to sell at his own profit. This tells us that both de Heems, like many painters at the time, were also active as picture dealers. In the course of time, de Heem had sent his son a number of landscapes, among them works by Jacques d'Arthois, Lodewijk de Vadder and by the obscure artist Nicolaes van Eijck, a copy after Brouwer and battle scenes by Casteels (probably Pauwels Casteels). The only still life de

Heem mentioned is a Vanitas by (Jan Jansz.) den Uyl, which he himself had 'painted and changed' (*geschildert ende verandert*). He also specified that Cornelis and his family had lived with him in Utrecht from 13th June to 4th December of 1667, for which sojourn he charged his son for '*verteerde montcosten, als hij van sijns andere discipelen gehadt heeft, behalve vrouw, ende kinderen, eens hondert vijfftich gulden*' (expenses of food and drink, as he would charge his other pupils, excluding wife and children, at once one hundred and fifty guilders). From these lines one might conclude that Cornelis stayed with his father as a pupil, or that de Heem had several pupils living with him at that time. Mignon could perhaps still be considered a pupil in 1667, even though he was most probably producing individual work at the time. According to an eighteenth-century source, both de Heem and Mignon were members of (or entered?) the Utrecht guild in 1669.[97] Cornelis had been active as an individual master at least since his registration as such in Antwerp in 1660/61, so it seems unlikely that he stayed with his father as a pupil in 1667.

The remark 'den comparant van Antwerpen den xiii-en junij 1667 vertrocken sijnde' (the appearer having left Antwerp on 13th June 1667) must be a clerical error: as we have seen, Jan Davidsz. de Heem was already recorded as living in Utrecht in January of 1665.[98] The 13th June 1667 should probably be considered to be the date of Cornelis' departure from Antwerp and the clerk should have written 'den comparants soon' (the appearer's son)

This lengthy document gives us the impression that, by that time, the relationship between father and son had become rather business-like. Also, it shows us that de Heem must have kept minute records of his affairs, judging from the fact that he could quote amounts and dates accurately up to thirteen years after the event.

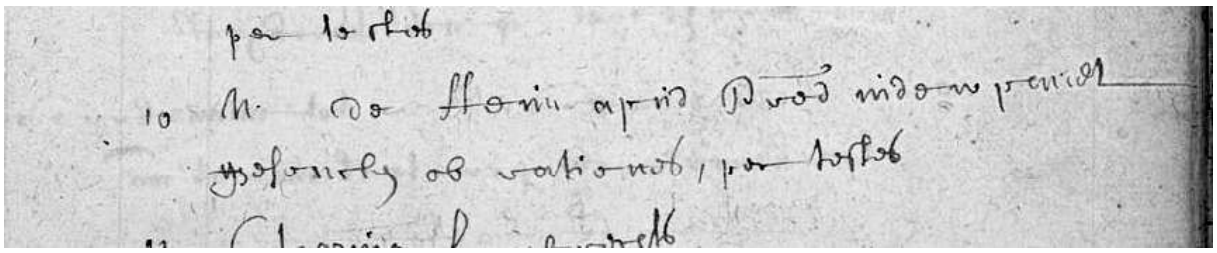
Houbraken claims that the Utrecht painter Hendrick Schoock (1630-1707) was advised by de Heem to continue painting still lifes after the latter had seen Schoock's first effort in that area, a flower piece.[99] However, Houbraken's account appears to be somewhat inaccurate: the only known dated still life by Schoock was painted in 1657 and appears to be a copy after a (missing) work by another de Heem pupil, Alexander Coosemans.[100] Schoock's many still lifes that show a distinct influence of de Heem – and even more of Abraham Mignon – must have been painted later, at least after the mid-1660s. Clearly, Houbraken's text on de Heem is quite inaccurate in more than one instance.[101]

In September of 1669, De Heem had a contract drawn up for the tuition of Elias van den Broeck (1651/52-1708) for two years, for which he was to receive 200 guilders annually.[102] In the contract, de Heem is called a 'widely famous artist' (*wytvermaerde constschilder*). Despite the rather substantial sum he paid, it was agreed upon that Van den Broeck would pay for his own materials. He would get to keep the profits of his works that would be sold, however. Elias van den Broeck had been apprenticed at fourteen, first to a silver smith, and shortly after to the still-life painter Cornelis Kick (1631-1681), with whom he had spent four years before signing up as a pupil of de Heem, so he must already have been an almost fully-trained artist at that point in time.[103]

The assumption that in July of that same year, 1669, de Heem received the Tuscan grand duke Cosimo III de' Medici in his studio is not based on very firm ground.[104] It was based upon the presence of a garland by de Heem (cat. no. A 241) in the Medici collection, still kept in Florence, a painting that Cosimo is supposed to have brought home from Holland himself.[105] De Heem would appear to be the only painter living in Utrecht at that time by whom the Duke is known to have owned a painting. However, the journal of Cosimo's trip does not indicate that the artist he paid a visit to was a still-life painter, let alone that it was de Heem, who was by no means the only important artist who was active in Utrecht in 1669. Moreover, while the painting was in the Medici

collection by 1681, there is no firm proof that the painting in question was actually acquired on the occasion of this Dutch visit. Moreover, it is unlikely that a painting such as this one was waiting in the artist's studio to be picked up by a passing customer.

There are very few records concerning de Heem's last fifteen years. In 1672 he is believed to have returned to Antwerp.[106] In that year Holland was invaded by the French army and became embroiled in the third English War, conditions which dealt a severe blow to the national economy. Anna Ruckers had a testament drawn up in Antwerp in May of 1672, but in it she declares to be living in Utrecht, so the move back to Antwerp must have occurred after that date. Elias van den Broeck appears to have followed de Heem to Antwerp and was first registered as a master in the Antwerp guild in the course of the administrative year 1673/74.[107] In November of 1672, however, the orphanage board in Amsterdam had registered a last payment to van den Broeck to enable him 'to continue his voyage to Italy'.[108] Jan Davidsz. de Heem does not recur in the books of the Antwerp guild until the payment of his death dues is registered during the administrative year 1683/84, but his date of death was not previously established.[109] Van den Branden noted that these dues were received before the 26th of April 1684, but he does not provide a source for this conclusion.[110] Upon further scrutiny of the Antwerp burial records, it would appear, however, that the artist died in the days before 10th February 1684. The list of payments of death dues to the guild is clearly in chronological order.[111] Looking at the burial registers of Antwerp, the majority of the registered dues can be connected with burial dates.[112] From these, we can deduce that Jan Davidsz. de Heem died between the death of the wife of Jan Baptist Wans, who was buried on 19th January 1684, and the death of Gonzales Coques, the first person listed after de Heem for whom a burial can be found, namely on 18th April 1684.



B 3 Registration of the burial of Jan Davidsz. de Heem. Antwerp, City Archives, inv. PR 277, registers for 1684-1685, fol. 44.

In the burial registers for Antwerp, for the 10th of February 1684, the following entry occurs: "N de Heim apud Pred[icatores]. inden pandt / ghesoncken ob rationes per testes". We may safely assume that this entry records the burial of the painter Jan Davidsz. de Heem, who, consequently, must have died in the preceding days, plausibly between 4 and 9 February 1684, aged 77. The burial took place in "het pandt van de Predikheren", the church of the Dominicans, St. Paul's Church on Veemarkt in Antwerp, "for reasons given by witnesses", so apparently de Heem had not made a testament which included directions for his burial, but had spoken about it to relatives, presumably Anna Ruckers. His son Cornelis would also be buried in St. Paul's church, in 1695, he had indicated this wish in a testament.[113] The clerck had a similar problem with Cornelis as his predecessor had had with Jan Davidsz., who was recorded as "N de Heim"; Cornelis was recorderd as "… de Heem". No dates of death or burial record have been found for Anna Ruckers. Since there is no record of a payment of her death dues in the ledgers of the Antwerp guild, she most likely survived her husband.