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## A Delft family portrait (1638) by Jan Daemen Cool

On 15 October 1934, Galeries Breckpot in Antwerp held a sale of some ‘important old paintings, portraits by M. van Mierevelt, A. de Vries and L. de Jongh, eighteenth-century Brussels tapestry, antiques, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century and Empire furniture.’<sup>1</sup> The objects in the auction had come from Caroline d’Oultremont (1853-1933), who had died the year before. She was the widow of Comte Ferdinand de Baillet-Latour (1850-1925). In 1895 he had had a splendid castle built on the site of Château De Donck near Brasschaat; all the lots in the sale had been on view there.<sup>2</sup>

Four paintings in the sale – three by Abraham de Vries (1590-1650/62) and one by Ludolf de Jongh (1616-1679) – were reputed to be portraits of members of the Rotterdam Roos and Walenburch families.<sup>3</sup> The ‘pièce de résistance’, however, was a “very fine family group” featuring a couple with five children, which the auctioneer attributed to the famous portrait painter Michiel van Mierevelt (1566-1641) of Delft. As is evident from the entry in the sale catalogue, however, others considered it to be a work by his grandson, Jacob Willemsz Delff II (1619-1661) (fig. 1).<sup>4</sup> It was specifically stated that all five paintings had come from the collection of Baron Outheusden in Brussels, otherwise Gustave Henri Paul van Outheusden, the father-in-law of one of Caroline d’Oultremont’s sisters.

The painting attributed to Van Mierevelt was sold at the auction for 36,270 Belgian francs (including sale costs) to L. Jacobs-Havenith, acting on behalf of the *Artibus Patriae* society, which proved willing to sell it to the Antwerp museum for the same price. It was regarded there as “a museum work” that “would be a considerable enrichment of our Dutch collection”.<sup>5</sup> Correspondence between the head curator, Arthur Hendrik Cornette, and the Minister of Public Education reveals that Museum Boymans in Rotterdam had also set its sights on the painting, and this was taken as confirmation of the quality of this family portrait. In mid-December 1934, the ministry gave the go ahead for the purchase and some months later, in March 1935, the transaction was completed and the painting was finally added to the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts in Antwerp.<sup>6</sup>

### An unknown Catholic family

The family portrait acquired in 1935 is indeed particularly engaging. An inscription (original as emerged during the restoration) slightly off-centre at the top of the panel tells us that it dates from 1638. According to other inscriptions, mostly identified as authentic and contemporary, it is of a thirty-six-year-old father and a twenty-eight-year-old mother with five children, who from left to right, based in part on their clothes and hairstyles, can be described as a daughter aged six, a son or daughter aged two and a half, a four-and-a-half-year-old daughter and twin girls just three months old.<sup>7</sup> For a long time the number 2½ was misread as 4½ and it was thought that there were two sets of twins in the painting.<sup>8</sup> However, the recent full-scale conservation treatment by conservator Gwen Borms revealed the true ages of the children; it also provided convincing indications that the painting had



<sup>1</sup> Jan Daemen Cool, *Portrait of Cornelis van der Heijde, his wife Ariaentgen de Buijser and their five children*, 1638, panel, 109.2 x 145.3 cm, Antwerp, Royal Museum of Fine Arts, inv. 986.

originally been around twenty centimetres wider. The plank of the panel on the far right, which would probably have been about twenty-nine centimetres wide – the average width of the other five – had been removed at some point. We do not know why; perhaps this plank was damaged or had been attacked by woodworm. In any event, it was replaced with a narrower plank only nine centimetres wide and the painting was filled in on the right over this new addition by a later hand. The reduction in the painting's width also explains why the figure of the mother is no longer fully in view. At its original size, the year it was made must have been top centre; with the change in the proportions of the painting it is now to the right of centre. As the photograph in the 1934 sale catalogue shows, the painting was already the size it is today (fig. 2), so the intervention must date from before that time.<sup>9</sup>

Apart from the damage to the right-hand side, the painting has withstood the centuries well and presents an endearing image of an apparently loving family, perhaps commemorating the recent birth of the twins. At a time when the vast majority of newborns died before they were five, and more than half of those who survived never reached adulthood, the phenomenon of a multiple birth was very special. Children were seen as a gift from God; giving birth to more than one at the same time almost as a miracle. It is on record that quadruplets born in Dordrecht in 1588 were even driven through the town on a float.<sup>10</sup> It is no wonder, therefore, that we know of a few dozen portraits of twins or multiple births dating from the late sixteenth and the seventeenth century.<sup>11</sup> Most of them show the children in their first months or years, sometimes alone, sometimes as part of a family group; in some cases they are portrayed in death. Interestingly, in all the portraits in which they appear the twins are dressed the same.<sup>12</sup> It is highly likely that the recent birth of the twins played a role in the commissioning of this family portrait.

Anonymous, *The dining room of Castle De Donck with the family portrait on an easel*, photograph in: sale catalogue Galeries Breckpot, Antwerp, 15-10-1934, p. 4.



CHÂTEAU DU DONCK  
LA SALLE A DINER

All the children in the painting wear a cross on a chain around their necks, which tells us that this family was Catholic. This fact considerably complicates the search for the identity of the sitters. Catholics were tolerated in the Republic and, in principle, allowed to profess their faith freely, but only in such a way that the majority of the population, who were members of the Reformed Church, took no offence.<sup>13</sup> In practice, it usually meant that Catholic services in Dutch cities could only be held in 'house churches' that could not be seen from the street. Children were certainly baptized in these Catholic house churches, but in many cases the earliest written records of them have not survived or are patchy. We are usually better informed about the dates of the proposed marriages of dissenters such as Catholics and Baptists because they had to give notice of their intent to educate before sheriffs, and as the dead were only allowed to be buried in public Dutch Reformed churches, we also find their names in the burial registers, which have often survived in a continuous series from the late sixteenth century.

When the painting came up for sale in Antwerp in 1934, there seemed to be no doubt whatsoever about the identity of the family. Breckpot's sale catalogue referred to a note stuck on the painting's frame to the effect that the painting was of Sasbout Cornelisz van der Dussen, a burgomaster of Delft, his wife Maria van der Houve, and their children Maria, Michiel, Otto, Cornelis and Anna. We do not know who was responsible for this at first glance so convincing sounding inscription (unfortunately lost), but it proves to be incorrect. The particular Sasbout Cornelisz van der Dussen who was married to Maria Michiels van der Houve was indeed once a burgomaster of Delft, but he died in 1580, so he and his family could not possibly have been portrayed in 1638. The names of the children mentioned in the note are not the same as those of that couple's children either. The ages of a grandson, also Sasbout Cornelisz van der Dussen (1591-1651), and his wife Johanna Willems Berckel (d. 1652) come closer to those mentioned in the painting, but aside from the fact that most of his children's names differ from those in the note, the man's year of birth categorically rules him out as a candidate.<sup>14</sup>

For the most part, the children's names in the note do correspond to those of Michiel Cornelisz van der Dussen (1600-1681), a younger brother of the later Sasbout Cornelisz, and his wife Willempgen or Willemina van Setten (1605-1683). It has been suggested that it may have been the Van der Dussen family in the 1638 portrait, but the ages of the parents and their children Cornelis (1626/7-1679) and Otto (1628/9-1704) do not match the information the painting offers us; we only know the dates of the deaths of the three daughters. Frauke Laarmann did identify a portrait of this family in 1999; it is a large painting by the Delft painter Hendrick Cornelisz van Vliet dating from 1640, in which Michiel van der Dussen and his wife and children are shown making music in a domestic interior (fig. 3).<sup>15</sup>



<sup>3</sup>  
Hendrick Cornelisz van Vliet,  
*Portrait of the family of Michiel  
Cornelisz van der Dussen*, 1640,  
canvas, 159 x 209.8 cm, Delft,  
Museum Prinsenhof, inv. PDS 231.

The trail signposted in 1934 by the note on the frame of the family portrait in Antwerp, pointing with such certainty towards the Van der Dussen family of Delft, would seem to have run into a dead end: there is no family in the male line of this family whose make-up and ages are consistent with the scene and the clues in the painting. However, the stated provenance of the family portrait – along with that of the four other portraits mentioned above – from the collection of the Baron van Outheusden can help us further.

Gustave Henri Paul, Baron van Outheusden (1822-1893), was a direct descendant of Antoni Gijsbertsz van Outheusden (1681-1740), Lord of Sevenhuijsen, who in 1703 married Digna Roos (1685-1739) in Rotterdam. There are likewise no families in the male or female lines of Antoni van Outheusden's ancestors whose composition bears any resemblance to the configuration of the family portrait of 1638.<sup>16</sup> However, among the ancestors of Antoni van Outheusden's wife, Digna Roos, we find someone who may have appeared in the painting as a child; she is Digna van der Heijde – Digna Roos' grandmother. We know that on 19 June 1660 she gave notice to the sheriffs in Delft of her intended marriage to Cornelis van der Dussen, a son of the Catholic Michiel van der Dussen and Willempgen van Zetten, with whom we have just become acquainted by way of Hendrick Cornelisz van Vliet's family portrait.<sup>17</sup> If, as we suspect, it is not Cornelis van der Dussen, but Digna van der Heijde who is one of the children in the 1638 family portrait in Antwerp, this raises the question as to what her family looked like at that time.

### **The physician Cornelis van der Heijde and his family**

Digna's father, the Delft physician Cornelis van der Heijde(n), came from a family of doctors and apothecaries in Leiden.<sup>18</sup> When he enrolled at Leiden University on 13 October 1623

as ‘Cornelius ab Heide Delfensis’, he gave his age as twenty-one, which means he was born in 1601 or 1602.<sup>19</sup> He could therefore very well be the thirty-six year-old father in the 1638 family portrait. Cornelis van der Heijde obtained his medical degree at the University of Padua in northern Italy, where he enrolled on 9 April 1629 and was awarded the title of ‘doctor medicinae’ on 15 February 1630.<sup>20</sup> Back in Delft, he married Ariaentgen Ariens de Buijser on 16 November 1631.<sup>21</sup> He and his wife moved into the house on the north side of the Binnenwatersloot – the present number 28 – which had been owned by his wife’s family since 1597.<sup>22</sup> Unfortunately we know nothing about Cornelis van der Heijde’s professional career as a doctor in Delft. It is clear, though, that he could not have worked for very long, as he was buried in the Oude Kerk on 8 November 1638.<sup>23</sup>

We know far more about Digna’s mother Ariaentgen (van) de(n) Buijser(t). She was a daughter of a Delft wheelwright, Arien Woutersz de Buijser and his wife Annitgen Claes van Wonder. In all probability they had no living children when they made a will on 12 February 1610.<sup>24</sup> Evidently Arien Wouterz de Buijser had sensed that he was close to death, as he died on 19 March 1610 and was buried in the Oude Kerk two days later.<sup>25</sup> This must have come as a severe blow to his wife because she was probably six months pregnant at that time. In any event, on 6 June 1610 it is recorded that she and the guardians appointed in the will of 12 February 1610 agreed to “maintain the child named Arijaentgen Ariensdr in food and drink, in clothes and other necessities ... in health and in sickness; to send my child to school to learn to read, write and sew or do other handiwork in accordance with the child’s aptitude”. All this for 120 guilders per year, to be paid from the proceeds of the child’s inheritance from her father, as determined in the will, “for ten years following this date”.<sup>26</sup> From this we can infer with some caution that Ariaentgen de Buijser was born on, or shortly before, 6 June 1610. This fits in well with the inscription on the family portrait in Antwerp stating that the mother was twenty-eight years old in 1638.

Thanks to the inventory of the home of Ariaentgen de Buijser’s deceased mother drawn up in 1632, we have a good idea of her assets.<sup>27</sup> In her house on Binnenwatersloot “a silver-plated chalice”, “a silver-plated cross” and paintings with such titles as “a painting of the three kings”, “two paintings of our Lord, and one of our Lady”, “a painting of Christ at the whipping post”, “a painting of the descent from the Cross” and “two crucifixes, one small and one large” were evidence of her Catholic faith.<sup>28</sup> Various portraits were found in the estate, including one of Ariaentgen de Buijser, probably when she was young, although unfortunately with no further information about the painter or the date. There were also portraits of Ariaentgen’s parents and “a likeness of Joris Cornelisz van Waeldorp (Ariaentgen’s stepfather) and his wife Annitgen Claes”.<sup>29</sup> Interestingly, the inventory states that in the division of the estate this “likeness of the parents” was “still with the painter”.<sup>30</sup> In the final allocation of these portraits to Ariaentgen Ariens this proves to be the Roman Catholic painter Willem Willemsz van der Vliet of Delft. Since Joris van Waeldorp had died in 1627 or 1628, this portrait of Ariaentgen’s mother and stepfather must have stayed with Van der Vliet for some years. Evidently it had never been paid for, because it was only after paying 49 guilders and 4 stivers to the artist and producing a receipt for the notary that Ariaentgen was able to call herself its owner.<sup>31</sup> From the repeated references to “a likeness”, we can infer that this was a double portrait of her mother and stepfather and not two pendant portraits. However, we know of no double portrait in Van der Vliet’s oeuvre, so unfortunately we cannot identify the painting.

Now we have established that Cornelis van der Heijde and his wife Ariaentgen de Buijser are in contention to be the parents in the family portrait in Antwerp on the basis of the years in which they were born (1601/1602 and 1610), we come to the question as to whether this couple had five living children in 1638, the year the painting was made. So far, we have only met one of them, Digna van der Heijde (d. 1672), who married Cornelis van der Dussen (1626/7-1679) in 1660.<sup>32</sup> But who are the others?

As there are no baptismal records for Catholic residents of Delft prior to 1671, we had to turn to other, more indirect sources of information. For example, we know that in 1679

a certain Anna van der Heijde, living in the Bagijnhof in Delft, declared that after the “reading and examination of the will” of her mother Adriana Adriaensdr de Buijser, the widow of Cornelis van der Heijde, she had accepted the will and waived her right to her legitimate portion of this will and to the ownership of specific items in favour of her deceased sister Digna’s two surviving children.<sup>33</sup> This means that Anna van der Heijde was Digna’s sister. Based on the information that a debenture was registered in her name in March 1635, we can assume that she was born in or before 1635 and we know that she died in the Bagijnhof in 1681.<sup>34</sup>

The will of Dirck van der Heijde, Cornelis van der Heijde’s older brother, also helps us. When this unmarried apothecary was lying ill in bed in his house in Wijnstraat in Delft on 23 February 1658, the notary Willem van Assendelft came to draw up his will. Dirck first bequeathed all his household effects, including linen, wool, clothes and gold and silver items to his sister-in-law Ariaentgen de Buijser, the widow of his deceased brother Cornelis. We can perhaps infer from this that after the death of her husband, Ariaentgen and her children had gone to live with her brother-in-law in Wijnstraat; there are also other indications of this—on which more later. In addition Dirck van der Heijde bequeathed half of his estate to his sister Catharina and the other half to “the three children of his deceased brother Cornelis van der Heijde ... named Anna ... Digna ... and Petronella van der Heijde”.<sup>35</sup> This Petronella or Pieternelle was buried from the Bagijnhof in the Oude Kerk in Delft in 1661.<sup>36</sup> This has now allowed us to identify a third daughter of Cornelis van der Heijde and Ariaentgen de Buijser. And with the interment of “a child of Dr van der Heijde of Binnewatersloot” on 8 March 1639 the number stands at four.<sup>37</sup> We think we can identify the fifth as the “Aechken van der Heijde” who was buried in the Oude Kerk on 26 October 1652.<sup>38</sup> This was also the church where her father was buried in 1638, followed by her little brother or sister in 1639. The sexton’s accounts for that year tell us that Aechken died young: she was listed among the children interred that year. She was laid to rest in a private grave: this indicates that the family was quite prosperous.<sup>39</sup> A further confirmation that this was one of Cornelis van der Heijde’s children is that this little girl’s Christian name was the same as that of Cornelis’ mother Aechgen Cornelis (d. 1621). The address recorded in the church register – “near Boterbrug” – from which she was taken to be interred, probably refers to the Van der Heijde family’s home in Wijnstraat, the fifth house to the north of Boterbrug (now number 20).<sup>40</sup>

All in all, we believe that there are enough indications to assume that the 1638 portrait in the Royal Museum of Fine Arts in Antwerp is of the family of the Delft doctor Cornelis Pietersz van der Heijde (1601/2-1638), his wife Ariaentgen Ariens de Buijser (probably 1610-1677) and their five children, who must all have been born between 1632 and 1638. We know the Christian names of four of these five children, in order of their deaths: Aechken (d. 1652), Petronella (d. 1661), Digna (d. 1672) and Anna (d. 1681). Of these four children whose names we know, Aechken, Petronella and Anna were named after their grandparents. Although the order of naming in the seventeenth century can differ from place to place and even from family to family, it is safe to assume that the child buried in 1639 would have been given the only remaining name of a grandparent, and so would have been called Arien or Ariaentgen.<sup>41</sup> Digna was named after one of her grandfather Pieter van der Heijde’s sisters.

## Questions

The work is painted very thinly (fig. 1), the direction of the grain of the panel is actually visible through the layer of paint in various places, possibly a result of saponification. This process of accelerated degradation, probably mainly as a result of the lead white used, has had a detrimental effect on the legibility of the individual portraits. The skin tone of the child to the right of the father, who would be two and a half years old, is slightly more greenish-blue than that of the other figures with rosier complexions, creating a rather grey

impression. This could have been caused by the saponification, where darkening occurs as a result of an increased process of transparency or some other form of degradation, which has affected this one child in a different way from the other four. Another possibility is that the child was actually ill when the work was painted. In this context, should we attach a special meaning to the bunch of cloves that this one child holds in its hand? All kinds of powers were attributed to the 'groffels-naghelen' in the seventeenth century; they were said to strengthen the functioning of the stomach, heart, liver and head (fig. 4).<sup>42</sup> Dr van der Heijde would certainly have been aware of this, but we can only surmise that this attribute is actually a silent reference to the child's possibly weak constitution. The cherries that this child and the girl on the left are holding were regarded as divine fruit and also as a symbol of youth and fertility.<sup>43</sup> At the same time, the cherry is an attribute that has featured so often in Dutch portraits of children since the sixteenth century that we are justified in asking whether its deeper significance was still fully understood in all cases. The same probably applies to the rosebuds, the little strings of red coral and the rock crystal rattles, which can also have symbolic meanings (love, devotion to Christ, purity of mind), but which were perhaps also more commonly associated with the genre of the child portrait.<sup>44</sup>

4  
Anselmus Boëtius de Boodt,  
*Clove and pepper*, ca. 1596-1610,  
22.3 x 16.8 cm, watercolour  
drawing in an album of flora,  
Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum,  
inv. RP-T-BR-2017-1-11-39.





Unlike the four other children, whose clothes and hair styles make it clear that they were all girls, the sex of the child with the cloves cannot be established with one hundred percent certainty. There appears to be a braid of hair hidden under this child's cap and the position on the left side of the father could indicate that it is a girl rather than a boy. On the other hand this child's hair, combed forward as it is, points to a little boy, and because the medical literature of that time explicitly states that cloves induced lust and could provide male offspring, we are inclined to see the child as a boy.<sup>45</sup> In that case the cloves could also allude to the hope and expectation that this child would one day follow his father and become a doctor.

The painting must have been completed at least six years after the birth of the oldest child standing to the right of her father, so at the earliest six years and nine months after her parent's marriage on 16 November 1631, in other words in the autumn of 1638. The date of the will of Cornelis van der Heijde and Ariaentgen de Buijser – 6 August 1638 – would have been just before or just after the birth of the twins.<sup>46</sup> According to the inscription, these twins were three months old when the portrait was painted: this also points to the autumn of 1638. However, Cornelis van der Heijde was buried on 8 November 1638. It is conceivable that the painting was unfinished at that time, or even that the painting was commissioned shortly after his death. Perhaps – but now we are entering the realms of speculation – the father's portrait was painted entirely or partially from memory or after an earlier example. This could explain why the man's head sits rather oddly on his body. Marieke de Winkel also pointed out that the shape of the man's hair in this painting suggests that he was wearing a hat in the example; this area was retouched in a previous restoration of the family portrait, but the original appearance has now been restored. This makes both the birth of the twins and Cornelis van der Heijde's death possible reasons for painting this family portrait.<sup>47</sup> In any case the painting provides a rare, fresh and lively image of a northern Dutch family in the first half of the seventeenth century.

### Jan Daemen Cool

It is difficult to establish who painted this engaging family portrait. As we have seen, it was attributed to Michiel van Mierevelt at the sale in 1934. And yet certain characteristic elements point to another artist. The greater degree of liveliness in this painting differs from Van Mierevelt's work.<sup>48</sup> For that matter we know of no large family portraits by the portraitist from Delft. The alternative attribution in the 1934 sale catalogue to Van Mierevelt's grandson Jacob Willem Delff II is likewise hard to believe, as he was just nineteen in 1638 and was not allowed to join the guild until 1641. The family portrait differs from Delff's work stylistically, but even more in terms of composition and the poses of the sitters. Delff usually portrayed his figures half-length, leaving the hands outside the picture plane. Of the other Delft portrait painters who were active around 1638, the most eligible at first glance are Willem van der Vliet (ca. 1584-1642) and his probable nephew Hendrick Cornelisz van Vliet (1611/12-1675). Both worked in Catholic circles in Delft: among other things Hendrick painted the 1640 portrait of Michiel van der Dussen and his family we discussed above, Willem painted portraits of a number of Catholic priests and other, clearly Catholic clients and, as we have seen, Ariaentgen de Buijser's mother and stepfather. Viewed in this light, it would seem most obvious to assume that Willem painted the portrait of the Van der Heijde family. Although Willem van der Vliet's portraits do bear some resemblance to the Antwerp family portrait, we know of no group portraits by him, nor does the handwriting of the inscriptions match Willem's or Hendrick Cornelisz'.<sup>49</sup> Evidently Ariaentgen de Buijser, for some reason, did not follow the example of her mother and stepfather and, with or without her husband Cornelis van der Heijde, sought out another portraitist for their young family.

So who actually painted the 1638 family portrait? Rudi Ekkart has suggested that it could have been Jan Daemen Cool (ca. 1589-1660). It is believed that this Rotterdam-born painter was trained in Delft, possibly by Michiel Jansz van Mierevelt. As we know that he was enrolled in the Delft Guild of St Luke in 1614, we can infer that this was where he also began his career as an artist in his own right. However, there are reasons to believe that he soon shifted his activities, possibly even as early as 1614, to his home town of Rotterdam.<sup>50</sup> As far as we know, he only ever worked in Rotterdam from then on. By establishing a number of characteristic properties in the way Cool painted his portraits, such as the execution, composition and sitters' poses, supported by a careful analysis of the artist's handwriting, Ekkart succeeded in compiling a core oeuvre for him.<sup>51</sup> On the basis of the inscriptions with the date and the ages in the Antwerp painting, the stylistic characteristics and other considerations, he has established that this work is consistent with a number of portraits attributed, with good reason, to Cool.<sup>52</sup> We are happy to follow him in his reasoning. Family portraits are an important part of Cool's oeuvre, with variations in poses and particular attention paid to the sitters' hands or hand gestures. Taken in conjunction with the specific handling of the corners of the mouth and the face as a whole, and the rather bulbous eyes observed by Ekkart, these are characteristic features of Cool's style.<sup>53</sup> We may therefore credibly assert that Jan Daemen Cool painted the 1638 family portrait. This is also the first time that we think we can establish that Jan Daemen Cool worked for a Catholic client.

There is no evidence of any connection between the Van der Heijde family and Rotterdam, where Cool usually worked. One of Ariaentgen de Buijser's two half-sisters, Anna van Waelsdorp, went on to marry the Rotterdam-born Catholic merchant Dirck Diert; perhaps this contact had played a role in 1638, although it should immediately be noted that Anna and Dirck had their own portrait painted by Cool's competitor Abraham de Vries, not by Cool.<sup>54</sup> Since it is hardly likely that a family with five small children, including vulnerable twins who were only a few months old in the autumn of 1638, would have gone to Rotterdam to sit for Cool, we have to assume that the painter either executed the family portrait in his studio in Rotterdam after sketches made in Delft or that he had been temporarily active in Delft again.<sup>55</sup>

## Conclusion

What happened to Ariaentgen de Buijser and her children after the death of her husband and the creation of the family portrait in 1638? At some time between September 1640 and 1648, she and her children left the Binnenwatersloot and probably moved into 'het Schaeck', the Van der Heijde family home in Wijnstraat; after the death of her husband Ariaentgen de Buijser had become the owner of a third share.<sup>56</sup> As we have seen, her daughter Aechken died there, probably in 1652. Although the house would remain in the family until 1726, it appears that after the death of her brother-in-law, Dirck van der Heijde, in 1658, Ariaentgen de Buijser and her three surviving children Anna, Petronella and Digna, moved to the Bagijnhof. Exactly where the mother and daughters lived in the Bagijnhof is unclear, but it was probably in one of the many houses there owned by the Van der Dussen family. In 1660 daughter Digna married Cornelis van der Dussen and they went to live near the entrance of the Bagijnhof on the west side of the Oude Delft (nowadays number 223). In the following year her sister Pieternelle died in the Bagijnhof and when Digna van der Heijde also passed away in 1672, her mother Ariaentgen de Buijser and sister Anna were the only two members of the family left alive.<sup>57</sup> They were evidently still prosperous, because in 1674 they were assessed on their estimated wealth of 50,000 guilders and paid the "200th penny tax", a tax on wealthier residents, making them members of the select group of the 120 richest people in Delft.<sup>58</sup> On 3 December 1675 Ariaentgen de Buijser drew up her will in The Hague, probably during a family visit.<sup>59</sup> In January 1677 she was taken from her son-in-law's house in Oude Delft and buried in the central choir of the Oude Kerk, in a grave which had previously been

owned by her father Arien Woutersz de Buijser and was now owned by her daughter Anna; her daughter Digna had also been interred there.<sup>60</sup> The day after her mother's funeral, Anna, the only surviving daughter, arranged her affairs concerning the goods that she intended to bequeath to her underage heirs, her deceased sister Digna's two children.<sup>61</sup> With Anna's death and her burial on 19 July 1681 in the grave in the Oude Kerk alongside her mother and sister, the entire Van der Heijde family, as portrayed in the family portrait of 1638, disappeared from the face of the earth.<sup>62</sup> Only Digna's two children, Maria Cecilia and Cornelis Sasbout van der Dussen were still alive.

After Anna van der Heijde's death, an estate inventory was drawn up that gives a detailed picture of her household goods in her perhaps modest, but comfortably furnished house in the Bagijnhof.<sup>63</sup> For us it is particularly important that "thirteen portraits both large and small with various frames" are listed among her "household goods and chattels".<sup>64</sup> They would certainly have been the portraits that Ariaentgen de Buijser had inherited from her mother's estate in 1632, and most likely the 1638 family portrait as well.

Some or all of these portraits, as stated in 1934, were probably inherited by Digna van der Heijde's oldest and longest-living child, Maria Cecilia van der Dussen, who married Hendrick Roos and whose daughter Digna Roos married Antoni van Outheusden. No descriptions of their estates have survived, nor were there any special conditions with regard to the family portraits in their wills, so we may assume that they were passed down through the Van Outheusden family.<sup>65</sup> In this context it is interesting that the will of Cornelia Maria Roos, one of Digna Roos' younger sisters, emphatically stipulated that "all the family portraits in her estate", had to go to her nephew Hendrik Jacob van Outheusden in Brussels or to his descendants.<sup>66</sup> Evidently there was a strong awareness of the importance of keeping the portraits in the family, and the Brussels branch of the Van Outheusden family was the appropriate destination for them. The portrait of Cornelis van der Heijde of Delft and his family finally came up for sale in 1934 by way of the Van Outheusden and d'Oultremont families.

As a result of this research, the couple and their children in the 1638 family portrait, who remained anonymous for so long, have regained their names: Cornelis van der Heijde, his wife Ariaentgen Ariens de Buijser and their children Anna, Aechken, Arien (or Ariaentgen), Digna and Petronella. And we also venture to link the name of a painter to the portrait: Jan Daemen Cool. Thanks to this in-depth investigation, a family portrait like this one can come to life again. The successful restoration will add an extra poignancy to this process, which will be complete when the painting is hung in the restored and refurbished Royal Museum of Fine Arts in Antwerp.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Frans Grijzenhout (1956) has held the chair of Art History of the Early Modern Period at the University of Amsterdam since 2011. He has published widely on art and politics in the eighteenth century. In the last few years, he has focused on the decorative art of the Dutch Golden Age, in particular on questions regarding provenance and identity in portraits. In 2006 he co-authored and co-edited the book *The burgher of Delft: A painting by Jan Steen* (with Niek van Sas), and in 2015 he published *Vermeer's Little street: A view of the Penspoort in Delft*. In 2017 he presented the television series *Kunstraadsels* (Omroep MAX, NPO2) with Julia van Marissing and Sophia Thomassen.

Gwen Borms (1976) has a Master's degree in the Conservation and Restoration of Paintings. In 2000 she graduated from the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp. In that same year she became the conservator of paintings at the Royal Museum of Fine Arts in Antwerp (KMSKA). She has worked on a number of exhibitions and conservation projects, including the restoration of the 1638 family portrait by Jan Daemen Cool. She is now head of the KMSKA's restoration workshop and is responsible for the conservation and restoration of sculptures, paintings, frames and paper.

Julia van Marissing (1991) is assistant curator at Museum Prinsenhof in Delft. In 2016 she obtained her Master's degree with her dissertation about the strategy, network and contemporary appreciation of Johannes Cornelisz Verspronck. Julia previously worked as a junior expert at an auction house; she compiled the 2019 VNK bibliography and was assistant review editor of the *Early Modern Low Countries Journal*. In her research she focuses on socio-economic aspects of seventeenth-century painting with a particular focus on Haarlem and portraits.

Sophia Thomassen (1987) graduated from the University of Amsterdam in 2016, where she wrote her thesis on the artistic, economic and social strategies of the painters Job and Gerrit Berckheyde. She worked as a cataloguer at the British Museum, Christie's and the Rijksmuseum and as an assistant to the curator Norbert Middelkoop at the Amsterdam Museum. She is now employed as a collection registrar and provenance researcher at the Van Gogh Museum. Her own research focuses on the socio-economic aspects of seventeenth-century painting with a focus on cityscapes.

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## NOTES

- 1 'Importants tableaux anciens, portraits par M. van Mierevelt, A. de Vries et L. de Jongh, tapisserie de Bruxelles 18me siècle, antiquités, mobilier 17me et 18me siècle et Empire', see sale Antwerp (Galeries Breckpot), 15-10-1934. The most important results of the current research were presented in the television programme *Kunstraadsels*, produced by MediaLane and aired by Omroep MAX on 15-06-2017.
- 2 After the death of the widow and the sale of its contents, the castle was demolished in 1935-36 and the land was sold in separate lots for the construction of a residential neighbourhood; only the spacious porter's lodge survived, see L. Wylleman e.a., *Bouwen door de eeuwen heen: Inventaris van het cultuurbezit in België*, Ghent 1986, vol. 1, pp. 183, 195.
- 3 Sale 1934 (note 1), lots 14-17. We will not go in to the possible identity of the sitters in these portraits. See in this connection J. Bikker, 'Abraham de Vries, his friend Adriaen van der Tock, and his brother Isaack de Vries', in C. Dumas e.a., *Face Book: Studies in Dutch and Flemish portraiture of the 16th-18th centuries: Liber amicorum presented to Rudolf E.O. Ekkart on the occasion of his 65th birthday*, Leiden/The Hague 2012, pp. 199-206.
- 4 "Très beau groupe de famille", see Sale 1934 (note 1), lot 13.
- 5 "Een museumwerk ... een aanzienlijke verrijking zou zijn van onze Hollandsche collectie."
- 6 Correspondence between the senior curator, the Minister of Public Education and the treasurer, 1934-1935, see Minutes of the Royal Museum of Fine Arts purchasing committee, Antwerp 1932-1944, typescript, pp. 40-41, meeting 16-10-1934; Annual report Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Antwerp 1935, p. 35. With thanks to Inez Bourgeois for supplying the documentation.
- 7 The indication of the mother's age is the only one in its present form that technical research has proved not to be authentic. This inscription, in soluble paint with a different texture, was probably copied from an original inscription that would have been on the extreme right section of the painting, which was replaced, see also note 8. For children's clothes and hairstyles in the seventeenth century see S. Kuus, 'Kinderen op hun mooist: De kinderklleding in de zestiende en zeventiende eeuw', in J.B. Bedaux and R.E.O. Ekkart (ed.), *Kinderen op hun mooist: Het kinderportret in de Nederlanden 1500-1700*, Ghent/Amsterdam 2000, pp. 73-84.
- 8 As in E. Vandamme and Y. Morel-Deckers, *Catalogus schilderkunst oude meesters*, Antwerp 1988, p. 253, inv. 986.
- 9 The panel was extensively researched in 2012-13: X-ray examination was carried out by Adri Verburg and Marie Geeraerts, dendrochronology by Pascale Fraiteur (KIK-IRPA), MA-XRF by Professor Geert Van Der Snickt (University of Antwerp). From left to right, the planks are approximately 26, 31, 28, 30, 20.6 and 9.3 cm wide. The panel was planed down in the past to approximately 0.5 cm thick and a cradle was fixed to the back to strengthen it. The cradle, which was mentioned in the 1934 sale catalogue, was probably put on around 1865 (with thanks to José de la Fuente Martínez, Museo nacional del Prado, Madrid for this information). The thinning of the panel caused the old mortise and tenon joints between the five planks on the left to partially open; this did not occur in the joint with the right-hand plank. The position and size of the openings indicate that the panel must have been planed down by almost half of its original thickness around 1865. Patterns of old woodworm infestation and where the original paint did and did not run over the panel edges likewise indicate that the right-hand plank was attached later. The origin of the right-hand plank (probably from the Rhine-Maas area) differs from that of the other five (from the Baltic coast), as do the composition and the build-up of the layers of paint and the felling dates of the trees from which the planks were taken (1627-1640 and after 1656 respectively). All things considered, it is assumed that the addition on the right was made in the second half of the nineteenth century, possibly with a plank dating from the second half of the seventeenth century as support.

- The complete restoration file is in the Image and Documentation Management Department of the Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Antwerp.
- 10 M. van Balen, *Beschryvinge der stad Dordrecht*, Dordrecht 1677, vol. 1, p. 73.
  - 11 E.g. Johanna Vergouwen, *Portrait of twins*, 1668, private collection, see Bedaux 2000 (note 7), pp. 268-69, cat. 75; Salomon de Bray, *Portrait of the twins Clara and Albert de Bray*, 1648, private collection, see R.E.O. Ekkart and Q. Buvelot, *Hollanders in beeld: Portretten uit de gouden eeuw*, Zwolle 2007, pp. 90-91, cat. 7. Compare also Jan Steen, *Twin birth celebration*, 1668, canvas, Hamburger Kunsthalle, inv. 169.
  - 12 Bedaux 2000 (note 7), pp. 131-32.
  - 13 The standard study about the position of Catholics in the Republic is L.J. Rogier, *Geschiedenis van het katholicisme in Noord-Nederland in de 16e en 17e eeuw*, 3 vols., Amsterdam 1945-1947. For more recent studies see J. Pollmann, *Catholic identity and the Revolt of the Netherlands: 1520-1635*, Oxford 2011; G.H. Janssen, *The Dutch Revolt and Catholic exile in Reformation Europe*, Cambridge 2014.
  - 14 H.K. Nagtegaal, 'Het R.K. geslacht Van der Dussen in Delft', *Ons voorgeslacht* 61 (2006), pp. 206-16; 373-74; brought up to date until November 2015 via www.nagtegaal.org.
  - 15 F.K. Laarmann, 'Hendrick Cornelisz van Vliet: Het gezin van Michiel van der Dussen', *Oud Holland* 113 (1999), pp. 53-74.
  - 16 Compare with W.J.F. Juten, *Genealogische kwartierstaten van Nederlandsche katholieken uit vroeger en later tijd*, Bergen op Zoom 1907-1910, nr 70.
  - 17 Nagtegaal 2006 (note 14). See also E.B.F.F. Wittert van Hoogland, *Geschiedenis van het geslacht Wittert*, The Hague 1914, pp. 416-21.
  - 18 R. Ladan, *Gezondheidszorg in Leiden in de late middeleeuwen*, diss. Leiden University 2012, pp. 109, 111-12, 127, 134-35, 137, 213, 216, 228, 249, 257.
  - 19 G. du Rieu, *Album studiosorum academiae Lugduno Batavae: MDLXXV-MDCCCLXXV*, The Hague 1875, col. 172.
  - 20 J.J. Poelhekke, 'Nederlandse leden van de Inclyta Natio Germanica Artistarum te Padua: 1553-1700', *Mededelingen van het Nederlands Historisch Instituut te Rome* 30 (1959), pp. 265-373, spec. p. 322, nr 281 ('Cornelius van der Heyden, hollandus').
  - 21 Stadsarchief Delft (SAD), Baptism, marriage and burial books Delft (DTB Delft), inv. 117, fol. 73, 16-11-1631.
  - 22 SAD, Kamer van Charitate, inv. 365, Accounts of the levy on the conveyance of immovable property ('duit op de gulden'), 1597-1608, fol. 3v; see also SAD, Oud-Archief stadsbestuur Delft, first section, 1246-1795 (OA Delft), inv. 731, Register of rents charged for Delft houses (Huizenprotocol 1585-1648), fol. 272v2; OA Delft, inv. 1755, Ledger of the mortgages on the houses, 1620, fol. 468v; OA Delft, inv. 1761-I, Assessment register of the mortgages, 1632, fol. 479v.
  - 23 He cannot be found in the burgomasters' resolutions for 1631-1638, nor in H.L. Houtzager, *Medicyns, vroedwyfs en chirurgyns: Schets van de gezondheidszorg in Delft en beschrijving van het Theatrum Anatomicum aldaar in de 16e en 17e eeuw*, Amsterdam 1979. For his death, see DTB Delft, inv. 38, fol. 102, 08-11-1638.
  - 24 Oud-Notarieel Archief Delft (ONA Delft), inv. 1541, fol. 20-21v, 12-02-1610, notary Herman van Overgaeu. For the burial of children who died earlier, see DTB Delft, inv. 35, fol. 126, 01-8-1600; inv. 36, fol. 9v, 28-03-1603; inv. 36, fol. 46v, 09-05-1606.
  - 25 DTB Delft, inv. 36, fol. 83v, 21-03-1610. See also E.A. Beresteyn, *Grafmonumenten en grafzerken in de Oude Kerk te Delft*, Assen 1938, p. 121, nr 258.
  - 26 "Onderhouden in spijs ende drack, van clederen ende andere behoeften te onderhouden, [...] zoo in gesont- als in cranchkeijt; item tselve mijn kint ter scholen te zeyjnden om te leren lesen, schrijven ende naeijen of ander hantwerck te doen leren nae het kints vernuft vereijschen zal ... genaempt Arijantgen Ariensdr ... den tijt van thien jairen achtereenvolgende, ingaen[de] date deeser"; see SAD, Weeskamer Delft, inv. 1200. The inv. 1197-1200 gives a detailed insight into the cost of educating Ariaentgen de Buijser, including harpsichord lessons.
  - 27 For the following see Gemeentearchief Den Haag, Old notary archives, inv. 69, fol. 215-250, 31-05-1632, notary Pieter van Groeneweghen Jr, recorded in Delft, 17-07-1632. When the estate was divided up, Ariaentgen de Buijser and her stepsisters Hillegont and Annitgen van Waelsdorp were each awarded more than 15,000 guilders.
  - 28 "Een vergult kelkken", "een silver vergult crujsgen ... een schilderij van de drie coningen", "twee schilderijtges een van onse lieve heer, ende dander van onse lieve vrou", "een schilderij van Christus aende calom", "een schilderij van affneming vant crujs ... twee cruijsefix, een cleijn met een groot", see note 27, fol. 225v.
  - 29 "Een contrefeijsel van Joris Corn[eli]sz van Waeldorp ende sijn hujsvr[ouw]e Annitgen Claes", see note 27, fol. 225v.
  - 30 "Contrefeijsel van den ouders ... noch tot de schilder is", see note 27, fol. 240.
  - 31 See note 27, fol. 248.
  - 32 DTB Delft, inv. 22, fol. 66v, 19-06-1660; SAD, Archief van de ambachtsheerlijkheid Hof van Delft, inv. 126, Register of entries of marriage notifications and marriages before the courts of the Hof van Delft, Vrijenban, Abtsregt and Biesland, fol. 123v, 05-07-1660, "in den thuijn van[de] wed[uwe] van Do[cto]r vand[e]r Heijde" ("in the garden of the widow of Dr vander Heijde").
  - 33 ONA Delft, inv. 2212, deed 63, 07-10-1679, notary C. Ouwendijck.
  - 34 ONA Delft, inv. 2228, fol. 177-185v, 06-1682, notary Floris Simonsz van der Werff, with in fol. 179 mention of the debenture; DTB Delft, inv. 43, fol. 94, 19-07-1681.
  - 35 "De drie kinderen van sijn overleden broeder Cornelis van der Heijde, ... met naemen Anna ..., Digna ... en Petronella van der Heijde", see ONA Delft, inv. 1851, deed 858, fol. 415-16, 23-02-1658, notary Willem van Assendelft.
  - 36 DTB Delft, inv. 40, fol. 47, 06-09-1661.
  - 37 "Een kint van doctor van der Heijde opte Binnewatersloot", see DTB Delft, inv. 38, fol. 105v, 08-03-1639.
  - 38 DTB Delft, inv. 39, fol. 85v, 26-10-1652.
  - 39 SAD, Nederlands-Hervormde Gemeente, inv. 1576, Cashbook of receipts by the sexton for burials in private

- graves in the Oude Kerk, on the date concerned. Compare also inv. 1507, Accounts of the sexton of receipts and payment for the burials inside and outside the Oude Kerk, audited by the churchwardens, 02-1652-04-1653, with identical information.
- 40 "Bij de Boterbrug": in 1607 this house was purchased by the apothecary Pieter Cornelisz van der Heijden for 3,600 guilders, see SAD, Kamer van Charitate, inv. 365, fol. 13v; Huizenprotocol 1585-1648, fol. 312r. SAD, Oud-rechterlijk archief Delft, inv. 281-83, "1, 2 and 3 Prothocol" ('Huizenprotocol 1648-1812'), fol. 939v.
- 41 With thanks to Gerrit Bloothoof, University of Utrecht.
- 42 R. Dodonaeus, *Cruydt-boeck*, J. van Ravelingen ed., Antwerp 1644, pp. 1449-51, in the added 'Beschrijvinghe van de Indiaensche oft uytlandsche boomen, heesteren ende cruyden ende andere soo wel inlandsche ende ghemeyne, als vremde ende min bekende droghen, die van Dodonaeus niet vermaent oft niet beschreven en zijn gheweest'. We have found no mention of the clove in the commentary on the antique herbarium by Disocorides of Anazarbeus that Cornelis's grandfather, the doctor Cornelis Pietersz van de Heijde, published in 1533: *Annotatiunculæ aliquot, Cornelii Petri Leydensi physici, in quatuor libros Dioscoridis Anazarbei*, Antwerp 1533.
- 43 Bedaux 2000 (note 7), pp. 100, 109, 112.
- 44 For this problem see also Bedaux 2000 (note 7), p. 22.
- 45 Dodonaeus 1644 (note 42), p. 1450: "Dan 't selve naghel-poeder vier draginnen oft een half ounce tseffens met melck ghedroncken, maeckt den mensch bijslapens lustigh, ende doet knechtken ghewinnen" ("Then four drachms or half an ounce of the same powdered cloves drunk with milk makes a man lusty in copulation and gets male children"). With thanks to Irene Groeneweg, Saskia Kuus and Marieke de Winkel for sharing their views on this question.
- 46 This will, drawn up by the notary Johan Steelant, as mentioned in SAD, Weeskamer Delft, inv. 456, fol. 278, 25-05-1639, has not survived.
- 47 The portrayal of newborn children and deceased family members in one portrait was a not infrequent phenomenon in the seventeenth century, see R. Ekkart and C. van den Donk, *Lief en Leed: Realisme en fantasie in Nederlandse familiegroepen*, Zwolle/Enschede 2018.
- 48 Ekkart believes that Van Mierevelt's influence can be recognized in Jan Daemen Cool's work, but Cool's work differs because of 'a certain liveliness', see R.E.O. Ekkart, 'De Rotterdamse portrettitist Jan Daemen Cool (c. 1589-1660)', *Oud Holland* 111 (1997), p. 215.
- 49 Ekkart 1997 (note 48), p. 215.
- 50 Ekkart 1997 (note 48), p. 201.
- 51 Ekkart 1997 (note 48), pp. 201-40. Cool's inscriptions are exclusively the ages of the sitters, preceded by the word *.Etatis* (as in the case of Cornelis van der Heijde's age), with AE written in ligature with a longer slanting line as the left ascender of the A, and the date of the work is preceded by the letters A° or AN° where the right ascender of the A is formed by a longer, upward diagonal stroke, see Ekkart 1997 (note 48), pp. 211-12, figs. 3, 4.
- 52 See also the interview with G. Borms, 'Alsof het je kind is', *Zaal Z* 3 (2014), nr 11, pp. 11-13.
- 53 Ekkart 1997 (note 48), pp. 203-205.
- 54 Both on panel, 71 x 61 cm, Museum Catharijneconvent, Utrecht, inv. BMH S15418-h.
- 55 Cool proved to have had contacts in Delft later on: on 13-07-1649 he acted on behalf of Everard van Lodensteijn, a Delft burgomaster, who was one of the creditors in the estate of Cool's son Jasper Jansz, see ONA Rotterdam, inv. 348, fol. 814-816, notary Jacobus Delphius.
- 56 DTB Delft, inv. 125, fol. 64, 15-09-1640, notice of Anna van Waelsdorp's intended marriage in the Binnenwatersloot. The Huizenprotocol 1585-1648, fol. 272v2 for 1648 gives a later owner than Cornelis van der Heijde, the grocer Arent Hoffmeester.
- 57 DTB Delft, inv. 42, fol. 15v, 06-09-1672. For the foregoing see notes 32 and 36.
- 58 National Archives, The Hague, Rekenkamer ter Auditie Archives, inv. 15, fol. 77 as "Anna van der Heijden wed. van wijlen dr. Cornelis van der Heijden" ("Anna van der Heijden widow of the late Dr Cornelis van der Heijden"). For a similar administrative conflation of Ariaentgen Ariens de Buijser and her daughter Anna van der Heijden see note 60.
- 59 The will of Ariaentgen de Buijser dated 03-12-1675, drawn up on the same day by the notary Hendrick Terbeek van Coesfelt in The Hague, is mentioned in ONA Delft, inv. 2212, deed 63, 07-10-1679, notary C. Ouwendijck, but has not survived.
- 60 DTB Delft, inv. 43, fol. 7, 23-01-1677 as "juffr. Anna van der Heijde aen de Oude Delff naest 't Bagijnhoff" ("Miss Anna van der Heijde at the Oude Delff besides the Bagijnhof"). From other documents it has been proved conclusively that this concerns the burial of Ariaentgen Ariaens de Buijser and that her daughter Anna did not die until 1681, see also note 58. For grave ownerships: SAD, Nederlands-Hervormde gemeente, inv. 1902, Private graves Oude Kerk, 1624-1636, 5th square (old: 3rd square), 6th grave, and inv. 1907, Private graves Oude Kerk, 1661-1686, fol. 45, 62v, 69 and 79v. The tombstone has not survived.
- 61 ONA Delft, inv. 2211, deed 4, 28-01-1677, notary Cornelis Ouwendijck.
- 62 DTB Delft, inv. 43, fol. 94, 19-07-1681.
- 63 ONA Delft, inv. 2228, fol. 177-185v, 06-1682, notary Flors Simonsz van der Werff.
- 64 "Derthien contrefejtsels soo groot als cleijn met verscheijde lijste", "huisraet ende imboedel", see note 63, fol. 180.
- 65 Stadsarchief Rotterdam (SR), Oud-notarieel archief, inv. 2365, deed 5, folio 36-42, will of Hendrick Roos, 10-01-1733, notary Levinus Silverberg; SR, Oud-notarieel archief, inv. 2368, fol. 1116-17, will of Digna Roos, 22-11-1736, notary Levinus Silverberg; SR, Oud-notarieel archief, inv. 2586, fol. 201-07, will of Antoni van Outheusden, 07-01-1740, notary Adriaan Schadee. According to various records the goods left by Antoni van Outheusden were divided among his heirs on 21-03-1741 in Rotterdam by private agreement, so there is no surviving deed.
- 66 "Alle de familie pourtraiten die in haar Ed. boedel bevonden sullen werden", Gemeentearchief Den Haag, Oud-notarieel archief, inv. 2800, deed 35, 03-09-1753, notary Godefridus Trouillé.

## PHOTO CREDITS

Museum Prinsenhof Delft, Tom Haartsen (3).

## SUMMARY

Since 1935 the Royal Museum of Fine Arts in Antwerp has held an unusually animated family portrait featuring a couple and their five children, including twins, which dates from 1638. The recent restoration of the painting has led to technical and art-historical research, with new insights into the history of the creation of this painting. This has resulted in the discovery of the identity of the sitters.

The painting was originally probably twenty centimetres wider on the right-hand side, but is otherwise still in good condition. On the basis of the provenance information, marriage and death certificates and notarial archives, it was possible to discover the family's identity. The painting shows Cornelis van der Heijde (1601/2-1638), a Roman Catholic doctor from Delft, his wife Ariaentgen de Buijser (1610-1677) and their daughters – including twins – Aechken (d. 1652), Pieternelle (d. 1661), Digna (d. 1672), Anna (d. 1681) and an unknown child who died in 1639 (probably Adriaen or Ariaentgen). The painting was made only a few months after the birth of the twins, probably in the autumn of 1638. Cornelis van der Heijde died in November 1638. It is not clear whether his portrait was painted while he was still alive or made after an earlier portrait.

Rudi Ekkart convincingly attributed this family portrait to the Rotterdam painter Jan Daemen Cool (ca. 1589-1660). The form of the inscriptions and the characteristic rendering of the hands, eyes and mouths all support this attribution. It is true that Cool was trained in Delft by Michiel van Mierevelt, but until now we have known of no activities by him in that city after 1614. As far as we know, this is the only portrait that Cool made for a Catholic client. It forms an interesting pendant to the portrait of the likewise Catholic Van der Dussen family by Hendrick Cornelisz van Vliet of 1640 (Prinsenhof, Delft). In 1660 one of the portrayed sons, Cornelis, would go on to marry Digna van der Heijde, one of the daughters in the discussed family portrait by Jan Daemen Cool from 1638.