The Lives of the van Isendoorn Family of Painters and the Recognition of a Portrait of a Four-Year Old Child with a Sheep as the Work of Andries van Isendoorn (1624/25 – 1695/1702)*

Since 1862, a family collection in Scotland includes a Dutch portrait of a child with a sheep, painted in 1663 (fig. 1). An inscription indicates that the portrayed child is four years old. Although the painting is signed and dated, the painter had remained unidentified until the present authors inspected it in 2011. The signature appeared to read 'A. v. Hendooorn', but this name could not be connected to any known artist. However, when shown the photo of the signature, Rudi Ekkart suggested that it might be read as 'A. v. Isendoorn'.

In the seventeenth century, two painters named A. van Isendoorn worked in Amsterdam, the brothers Anthoni van Isendoorn (c.1625-1688) and Andries van Isendoorn (1624/25-1695/1702). They must be identical with the Andries and Anthoni van Isendoorn who were recorded among the winners of the lottery organized by the painter Jan de Bondt in Wijk bij Duurstede in 1649. A Geertruyt van IJsendoorn also won a prize in the same lottery. The prizes to be won in this lottery included several paintings, of mythological subjects and of animals, by Johan Fredericksz. van Isendoorn (c.1600-1684), who was a painter as well as schout (sheriff) and burgomaster of Wijk bij Duurstede. He was the son of Frederik Hermansz. van Isendoorn (died 1636), wine merchant and innkeeper and also a burgomaster of Wijk bij Duurstede. These important gentlemen appear to be the uncle and grandfather of the two painting brothers. It has long been a mystery who the parents of Anthoni and Andries were, but eventually it can be established that the brothers were sons of Geurt Fredericksz. van Isendoorn (died after 11th February 1651), brewer in Amersfoort. There, he also held several important public offices, such as Luitenant-Sheriff (1612-1620), raad (councillor, 1627-1629) and schepen (alderman, 1618). On 12th June 1612 he married Meijnsen Andriesdr. van Wäyenborch (died after 25th May 1641), daughter of Andries van Wäyenborch, Amersfoort, but the marriage was registered in Wijk bij Duurstede. Up to 1620, five daughters of this couple were baptised, Merritien in 1613, Jacomijntgen in 1614, Jannichgen in 1616, Jannitgen in 1618 and Geertruit in 1620 – this this must be Geertruyt van IJsendoorn mentioned above. No further children appear to have been baptised. However, this may be explained by the fact that Geurt van Isendoorn was called an Arminian in a letter of 23th December 1626. Many Remonstrant families stopped baptising their children after c.1618, which may well be the reason for the absence of any records of further baptisms. Consequently, it is likely that Anthoni and Andries van Isendoorn were not baptised briefly after having been born. From several documents which will be referred to below, however, it pertains that they, too, must have been children of Geurt van Isendoorn. In their respective marriage registrations it is noted that they originated from Amersfoort. Both brothers married quite late in life. Anthoni van Isendoorn, living on Haarlemmerdijk in Amsterdam, married Odilia van Wesel from Delft on 9th March 1664. They were married at Schipluiden, a village outside Delft. Anthoni as ‘jongman’ (bachelor) and Odilia as the