THE LIMNER COMPANY



DAVID DES GRANGES (c.1611 - c.1672)

Portrait miniature of a Gentleman, facing left, with armour breastplate and lawn collar, landscape and cavalrymen in the background

Watercolour on parchment

Oval, 54 mm (2 $^{1}/_{8}$ in) high

Gilt silver frame with spiral cresting

David des Granges enjoyed a successful career due to his continuing loyalty to King Charles II during the English civil wars, following him in his exile between the continent and Scotland. A large majority of his oeuvre depicts Charles, however he did depict others, like the present sitter, and the architect Inigo Jones (1573-1652) [1].

The current sitter has been identified as Henry Ireton in the past, but given des Granges loyalties, it is unlikely that he would have painted the man who married Cromwell's daughter and served under the parliamentarian leader. Therefore, the sitter of the portrait now remains unidentified. There are some clues within the composition that point us to who he could be. One wonderful detail is the group of cavalrymen just next to the sitter's right shoulder. These cavalrymen carry blue flags, a colour usually associated with the parliamentarians. However, it is possible that this detail is not there to show those he was loyal to, but instead his enemies.

Our gentleman's costume also places him within the period. Cuirassier style armour, like that which he is wearing, was popular in the period between Charles II and the 19th century[2]. This was not a particularly practical nor comfortable style, and tended to be chosen by those who could bear this discomfort, and afford it. Neither does this armour mean that he was actually a soldier- he could have instead chosen the style in order to make himself appear brave or courageous. Either way, we can take from this that he was certainly wealthy, and at least wanted to appear to be associated with the military.

The background of the miniature is something that also features in other miniatures by des Granges, including his portrait miniature of Charles I, from circa 1645[3]. Both share a fine quality and level of attention to detail that other miniatures by the artist, with a similar background, lack. Furthermore, the fact that this is one of the miniatures by the artist that does not depict Charles II makes this a unique example.

[1] David des Granges, Inigo Jones, 1651, Duke of Portland, Wellbeck Abbey.

[2] A.Reynolds, London, 2013, *In Style: The Art of Tudor and Stuart Fashion*, p. 242.

[3] David des Granges, after John Hoskins, King Charles I, National Portrait Gallery, NPG 1924.

Exhibitions

London, National Portrait Gallery, *Samuel Cooper and his Contemporaries*, 1974, no. 208.

Literature:

D. Foskett, London, 1974, *Samuel Cooper and his Contemporaries*, illustrated p.110.