THE LIMNER COMPANY



FRENCH SCHOOL (17th CENTURY)

Portrait miniature of a Marshal of France, probably Marshal Louis Francis, Duc d'Boufflers (1644-1711) wearing armour with gilded decoration, long, curled wig, entrenchments in the background

Circa: Probably circa 1693/4

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6.7 cm (2 $^{5}/_{8}$ inches)

Watercolour and body on vellum

Silver and gilt-metal frame, the reverse enamelled with a still-life of fruit in a bowl surrounded by flowers, including tulips, carnations and honeysuckle

The present portrait miniature is believed to depict the French Commander Marshal Louis Francis, Duc d'Boufflers. Other artists, such as Hyacinthe Rigaud, had also painted portraits of d'Boufflers (fig.1 for a studio copy, the original portrait is lost), and clear similarity between such likenesses and this portrait miniature, allows for a relatively confident identification.

Our sitter first entered the battlefield at the age of nineteen, at the Siege of Marsal. From then on, he continued to flourish with his military career, becoming a Lieutenant General in 1681. Given the probable dating of this portrait, it can be suggested that it was meant to commemorate d'Boufflers' success at the siege of Namur, in 1692. As a part of the Nine Years' War, this battle had been part of an attempt to defeat the forces of the Grand Alliance. The fact that the area had recently been heavily defended by batteries and trenches provides a possible link to this miniature, given that entrenchments have intentionally been added to the background of the portrait. A map of the siege (fig. 2) further supports this suggestion, showing where these entrenchments may have been, in the lower centre, near to where d'Boufflers was positioned.

Apart from the fantastic detail on the armour of the sitter, the present work also has an incredible amount of decoration on the reverse of the frame. This has been done in brightly coloured enamel, and contains images of numerous different flowers, and a central still-life, showing a bowl with lemons and grapes. All of these features point to the fact that this portrait was meant to be a celebration of the grandeur and success of the sitter's life.