THE LIMNER COMPANY



CHARLES BOIT (1662 - 1727)

Portrait enamel of Queen Anne (1665-1714)

Circa: Circa 1706

Circa 1706

Oval, 3.4 cm (1 $^{3}/_{8}$ inches) high

Enamel on metal

Though the present work is not a direct copy of a full-length portrait of Queen Anne, it does relate closely to portraits of the Queen by Edmund Lilly, in the Tate Collection and at Stowe House. Both paintings depict the Queen at a similar age, less than a decade before she died following a series of strokes. The only element not included in these full-scale portraits, and which is present in this miniature, is the string of pearls that has been used to decorate the queen's hair. These pearls are more akin to those worn by the queen in a portrait by Godfrey Kneller (1646-1723), which is now known only by a copy in the National Portrait Gallery, London.

It is not surprising that this portrait enamel has elements taken from different full-scale portraits- Charles Boit was employed as Enamellist to William III and Queen Anne, and copied works by court artists including Kneller, Lilly, and Michael Dahl (1659-1743). Boit was born in Sweden, and became one of the most important painters in enamel in the late seventeenth century. This medium was particularly difficult to work with- each colour had to be fired in a separate layer onto the metal base. Following Queen Anne's death, he left Britain, moving to France. A few years later, he was commissioned by Tsar Peter the Great (1672-1723) to produce a set of forty enamel portraits.

Queen Anne had inherited the throne from her elder sister, Queen Mary, who had begun her reign following the exile of their father, James, Duke of York (1633-1701). As with many monarchs, Anne had 'favourites', including Lady Sarah Churchill (1660-1744), whose influence was a source of worry for many in the court. Their relationship has been the subject of much intrigue, and extant letters between the two women have sparked questions about its nature. In one of these, the Queen asked of Churchill, 'Oh come to me tomorrow as soon as you can that I may cleave myself to you.'

By the time of her death in 1714, Queen Anne had been pregnant seventeen times, and none of her children had survived her. Only one, William, Duke of Gloucester, survived infancy. He died at the age of

eleven in 1700. His death meant the end of the Stuart reign in Britain, of which Anne was the last monarch. The remaining members of the Stuart family remained in Europe. They were prevented from returning to the throne by the Act of Settlement of 1701, which had named the protestant Hanoverians as the heirs to the British throne.