

THE LIMNER COMPANY



ANDREAS HENRY GROTH (fl. 1735 - 1755)

Portrait of a Gentleman, wearing red doublet with 'vandyke' collar

Circa: circa 1735

circa 1735

Enamel on metal

Oval, 47mm (1 7/8 in) high

For many years, the identity of German-born enamellist Andres Henry Groth was unknown. He signed miniatures with only a 'G', and many of these were instead assumed to be by Gabel or Gardelle. It was a 1966 sale of three miniatures by the same hand, one of which was signed on the reverse, 'A. Groth pinxt. 1753'. Groth replaced Bernard Lens as Enamellist to King George II between 1741 and 1742, and there are multiple portraits by him in the Royal Collection. Foskett (1987) lists some characteristics of his work, some of which are present in the present portrait. These include an emphasis on the top lip and green-yellow stippling, which is especially evident just below the bottom lip of this sitter.

Previously, it has been suggested that the gentleman in this portrait was a member of the court of George II. There is no evidence to support this, and he remains unidentified. The striking outfit he wears is exemplary of the trend of copying seventeenth-century styles during the eighteenth century. His large, broad collar, bordered with lace, is known as a 'vandyke' collar, named after those worn by many of the sitters in portraits by Anthony van Dyck (1599-1641). There were numerous reasons for an interest in the fashion of the previous century, including admiration for van Dyck himself, an interest in the history of the civil wars, and simply having to find an outfit for a masque or ball. George II, the patron of Groth, was particularly fond of Masques and attended 'subscription masques' hosted in London. These were occasions for which one wore fancy dress- Elizabeth Montagu (1718-1800), in a letter to her sister from 1749, wrote that she was wearing her '...hair curled after the Vandyke picture [1]' for one ball, and that at the same ball 'Mr Sandwich made a fine Hussar.[2]'

A similar seventeenth-century influence can be seen in portrait miniatures painted by Gervase Spencer (c.1715-1763), who depicted multiple women, including one presumed to be his wife [3], in the costume worn by Helena Fourement (1614-1673) in her portrait by her husband, Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640).

[1] Elizabeth Montagu, writing to her sister, 8 May 1749, reproduced in Elizabeth Montagu, Queen of the Bluestockings, compiled by E.J Climenson, Cambridge, 2011, p. 264.

[2] *Ibid.*, p.265

[3] Previously with The Limner Company.