THE LIMNER COMPANY



DUTCH SCHOOL (17th Century)

Portrait of a Gentleman, wearing black doublet slashed to reveal white silk and lawn collar edged with lace

Circa: circa 1620s

late 1620s

Oil on card

Oval, 59 mm. (2.32 in.) high

Later turned wood frame

This small oil dates to the late 1620s and shows a Gentleman in the fashionable lace-edged collar of the 1620s. The artist, likely Dutch, was possibly used to painting on this medium, as copper as a support for oil had become extremely popular in the Netherlands in the early 1600s. Although, as with this example, painting on metal was popular for a type of 'miniature' portrait, it was also used by more ambitious artists, such as Hendrick de Clerck (c.1560-1630), who in *The Contest Between Apollo and Pan* (c.1620), painted on a huge 43 by 62 cm (17 by 24.4 inches) piece of copper, dwarfing the works of his predecessors.

Although the artist is unknown, it is probable that the use of copper here was governed by the material's availability and coincided with the invention of printing, engraving, and etching. This meant copper plates were readily available to painters, some of whom were also etchers and engravers. Economic factors may have also led to the popularity of copper as a painting support. Readily available copper plates meant affordable prices to artists. Jørgen Wadum's study of Antwerp coppersmiths and the relative costs of panels, artists' materials, and paintings on copper revealed that prices for copper plates were roughly similar to those for oak panels of comparable size.

The sitter in this portrait was likely relatively wealthy – certainly his doublet and lace edged collar suggest a gentleman from the professional classes.