THE LIMNER COMPANY



Attributed to GONZALES COQUES (1618 - 1664)

Portrait of a Gentleman, wearing black cloak over a brown jacket and tied white jabot with red striped, fringed ends, his curled hair worn long

Circa: circa 1664

circa 1664

Oil on copper

Oval, 88mm (3 1/2in) high

Silver filigree frame

This superbly painted oil on copper portrait would appear to be one of a small group by the Flemish artist Gonzalez Coques in this medium which earned him the epithet ‘the little Van Dyck’. The only securely attributed and signed oil on copper portrait by Coques is that which dates to 1664, depicting The Family of Jan Baptista Anthoine [Royal Collection Trust, RCIN 405339]. However, several other miniature portraits, with which the present work also shares many qualities, have been attributed to Coques by way of comparison with that larger family portrait.

Born in Antwerp, Coques was registered at the city's Guild of Saint Luke in the year 1627/28, when he became a pupil of Pieter Brueghel II (1564/5-1638). The fact that he was not admitted to the guild as an independent master until 1640/41 suggests that he may have spent the intervening years travelling. One likely destination is England, where Coques could have befriended a fellow Flemish painter – namely Sir Anthony van Dyck (1599-1641), who was in England after 1632. Like van Dyck, Coques counted rulers and the nobility amongst his sitters: King Charles I of England (1600-1649), Archduke Leopold Wilhelm of Austria (1614-1662) and Elector Fredrick William of Brandenburg (1620-1688), to name but a few.

Datable to the mid 1660s, this beautifully rendered, miniature-like picture is characteristic of Coques's elegant style, which was so much to the taste of Antwerp's sophisticated burgher class. The treatment of

the drapery, the naturalistic wisps of hair which frame the sitter's face and the lively expression suggest that the sitter may have been known to the artist. The pose and arresting gaze recall artists' self-portraits – including Coques's own [Saint Petersburg, The State Hermitage Museum]. The dress of the sitter, while expensive, is also relatively modest recalling portraits such as John Michael Wright's (1617-1694) image of the architect Sir William Bruce (circa 1630-1710). For a work of similar scale and technique see the portrait of a young girl, also painted in oil on copper, which sold at Christie's, 25th May 2016, lot 49 (39,900 euros). Another portrait, also attributed to Coques, can be found in the collection of the Fondation Custodia (Collection Frits Lugt).