THE LIMNER COMPANY



DAVID DES GRANGES (c.1611 - c.1672)

Portrait miniature of a Gentleman in a black robe with a wide white lawn collar, his light hair worn down

Circa: circa 1660s

circa 1660s

Watercolour on vellum

Oval, 63 mm (2 ½ in) high

Signed on the obverse with initials ‘DDG’

The dating of this portrait comes largely from the distinctive, wide, lawn collar that the sitter is wearing. This style is named after the fabric used to make these collars, lawn, which was a lightweight silk also used in the making of ruffs. In contrast to more elaborate lace collars, these appear simpler and more opaque and are associated with northern, rather than southern, European fashion from the period.

David de Granges enjoyed a successful career as the King’s Limner to Charles II; he also worked for Charles I. The majority of his known works are versions of portraits of both kings, though he also painted noblemen and women from the period, including Inigo Jones (1573-1652). It is not known who the gentleman in this portrait is, and there are very few clues given by his simple attire. He may be a cleric, given his lawn collar is worn with a robe and not with armour, though there is no certainty that this is the case.

In 1660, the Stuart monarchy had been restored and Des Grange’s patron, Charles II, had returned to the throne. As a result, one of the main purposes for hiring a miniaturist to paint depictions of the King had become irrelevant. Many of the versions of portraits painted by Des Granges were intended to be sent as tokens of loyalty to the King’s followers and strongest supporters. The artist himself listed some

of these in a petition to the King written in 1671, in which he claimed he was owed £72 (equivalent to around £14,000 today). Commissions from other clients, as in this example, would have therefore made up an important part of De Grange's work and income, though they had clearly not supported him enough by the end of the decade.