



Portrait Of A Lady In Lace And Pearls C.1618-1622, Oil On Panel, Historical, Cornelius Johnson



12 850 EUR

Signature : Entourage de Cornelius Johnson (1593-1661)

Period : 17th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Oil painting on wood

Width : 69

Height : 85

Depth : 7

Description

Portrait of a Lady, Mary Hammond in Sumptuous Attire, Jewels and Lace c.1618-22 Circle of Cornelius Johnson (1593-1661) This portrait of a lady is an exquisite example of early seventeenth-century portraiture, remarkable both for the lavishness of its subject's attire and for the distinguished provenance that has accompanied it across four centuries that adds a rich layer of historical significance. It was once part of the notable collection of Sir William Temple, 1st Baronet (1628-1699) at Moor Park, a stately mansion in Hertfordshire. Temple was a diplomat, essayist, philosopher, and the patron of Jonathan Swift. He was a key participant at an important period in English history, helping not only to negotiate the Triple Alliance, but also the marriage between William of Orange and

Dealer

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Princess Mary. His collection at Moor Park was well known in its day, reflecting both his cultivated taste in art and literature and his international connections. Its fabulous attire, rendered with almost microscopic attention, is not merely decorative but emblematic of a world in which visual display was a language of power. Its provenance, stretching from the English country house and Enlightenment scholarship to modernist circles, forms a microcosm of cultural exchange across four centuries. Thus, the portrait of Mary Hammond stands as both a masterpiece of early seventeenth-century craftsmanship and a witness to the grand narrative of collecting and connoisseurship--a testament to the enduring fascination of beauty, status, and history intertwined.

By tradition the portrait depicts Mary Hammond (born c.1602), who was Sir William Temple's mother, and the daughter of the royal physician who served James I, Dr John Hammond (c.1555-1617) and whose family owned Chertsey Abbey in Surrey. The woman appears between 18 and 25 years old, and Mary would be about 18-20 when the portrait was painted circa 1620, therefore this matches the apparent age of the sitter and the fashion perfectly.

Mary stood at the intersection of learned/courtly and gentry worlds. On 22 June 1627 she married her first cousin (a common practice for consolidating family wealth and influence during that era.) Sir John Temple (1600-1677) at St Michael, Cornhill in the City of London. The couple resided nearby, at Blackfriars. Her marriage to Sir Temple placed her at the heart of the social and political circles that shaped British history. The couple had at least five children, and they became highly significant historical figures: The eldest son, Sir William Temple, 1st Baronet, became a distinguished diplomat, statesman, and essayist, famous for his role in the Triple Alliance and as a patron and mentor to the writer Jonathan Swift - our portrait was in his collection. Their daughter, Martha Temple, later Lady Giffard, was a notable figure

in her own right. She became her brother William's first biographer and a respected letter-writer, providing a rare female perspective on the events and high society of the time.

Another son, also named Sir John Temple, became Attorney General for Ireland and was involved in the turbulent politics surrounding the English Civil War and the Act of Settlement in Ireland. Mary died in November 1638 after giving birth to twins and was buried at Penshurst, Kent.

The family's connection to Penshurst Place is a major point of interest as this historic manor was the seat of the Sidney family, a major aristocratic and literary dynasty. The portrait was in the collection of the Mary's son, Sir William Temple.

From there it descended to his daughter, and then to her nephew, the Reverend Nicholas Bacon of Spixworth Park, Norfolk (his mother was Dorothy Temple who died in 1758). Indeed, by this time, many Temple relics were in the collection at Spixworth including the engagement ring of the illustrious Dorothy Osborne, Lady Temple, wife of Sir William Temple. The portrait thus linked two prominent English families--the Temples and the Bacons--for generations. It is listed in a Spixworth Park inventory of 27 October 1910 by the local collector and art historian, Prince Duleep Singh.

He described it with characteristic precision as: "No. 69. Lady Half Length, body and face turned towards the sinister, hazel eyes upwards to the dexter, red hair dressed low and over the ears, a jewelled coronet behind, pearl ear-rings tied with black strings. Dress: black, bodice cut low and square, with lace all round the opening and over shoulders, sleeves with double slashes showing red lining and lace under, falling thin pleated lace collar, black strings tied behind it, a jewel suspended on a black string round the neck, and a double row of agate and silver beads all round to the shoulders. M. In brown veined stone frame. Age 30. Date c.1620. It is called 'Dutch portrait from Moor Park, mentioned by Nicholas Bacon of Coddenham and Shrubland as a very valuable

painting.' A few years later, when Robert Bacon Longe's executors sold the contents of Spixworth Park (19-22 May 1912), the portrait appeared as lot 262, described as: "A very valuable half-length portrait on panel, 'Dutch Lady, with deep lace collar and pearl and amethyst necklace, pendant, and ear-rings, and auburn hair, with coronet' Early Dutch School 1620." Following this sale the painting entered the collection of David and Constance Garnett, prominent literary figures of the early twentieth century, before being gifted to Andre Vladimervitch Tchernavin by 1949, and subsequently passed by him to the present owners in 1994. The two great houses associated with the painting, Moor Park and Spixworth Park, further underscore its pedigree. Moor Park, in Hertfordshire, was among the grandest country estates of seventeenth-century England--its gardens famously redesigned by Sir William Temple himself and later influencing landscape design across Europe. Sir William's Temple's secretary was Jonathan Swift, who lived at Moor Park between 1689 and 1699. Swift began to write "A Tale of the Tub" and "The Battle of the Books" at Moor Park. Spixworth Park, near Norwich, was an Elizabethan country house in Spixworth, Norfolk, located just north of the city of Norwich. It was home to successive generations of the Bacon family, one of Norfolk's most distinguished dynasties (later, the Bacon Longe family), who were considerable land owners (owning Reymerston Hall, Norfolk, Hingham Hall, Norfolk, Dunston Hall, Norfolk, Abbot's Hall, Stowmarket, and Yelverton Hall, Norfolk). Spixworth Hall and the surrounding parkland remained in the Longe family for 257 years until 1952, when it was demolished. Rendered with meticulous precision and sumptuous detail, the painting depicts an elegantly dressed woman--her poise, costume, and jewels all communicating a message of wealth, refinement, and social rank. Every brushstroke conveys an artist deeply attuned to the textures of luxury and the nuances of

feminine dignity. The sitter's attire is nothing short of magnificent. Her bodice and sleeves are fashioned from the finest black silk or satin, the fabric absorbing and reflecting light in equal measure, suggesting both depth and lustre.

Around her shoulders lies an opulent lace ruff--a deep, radiating lace collar worked in such intricate detail that it testifies to both the artist's technical skill and the sitter's extravagant taste.

Lace of this quality, especially Venetian or Flemish bobbin lace, was one of the costliest materials available in early seventeenth-century Europe, its weight worth more than gold, and was a marker of prestige that rivalled jewels in value.

The painter has taken great care to delineate every loop and scallop of the lace, achieving an almost tactile realism. Pale skin was also a desired beauty standard, sometimes accentuated with contrasting black ribbons or strings. Her jewels amplify this display of affluence.

Matching earrings and a delicate coronet or jewelled hair ornament with a feather adorn her hair, which is styled in the modest yet fashionable manner of the time. These details are far from decorative excess--they serve as visual emblems of social standing, refinement, and lineage.

Portraits of this kind were statements of both identity and aspiration, intended to project a family's prosperity and moral virtue to posterity. The portrait was most likely painted in London around 1618-1622. The low-cut, décolletage-revealing neckline was fashionable in the courts of England and France during the late Elizabethan and Jacobean eras (c. 1590s-1610s), this style did not prevail in the public fashion of the Low Countries at this time. This style of lace ruff -- delicate needle lace with geometric openwork -- was fashionable from c.1615 to 1622, and the jewelled caul (hair net) and lace edging over a stiffened coif are consistent with high-status English women's portraiture between 1610-1620. The puffed sleeve slash and the use of pink satin beneath black velvet belong squarely to the late Jacobean phase (not yet Caroline). So,

even without artistic comparison, the clothing alone fixes a terminus ante quem of about 1622. A portrait painted c.1618-1622 would show her just prior to marriage, and as such, the portrait was likely a betrothal or coming-of-age portrait commissioned by her family when the young Mary Hammond would have been in her late teens. The earlier "Dutch School" attribution fits the surface style very well: the smooth enamelled paint handling, dark oval frame, and the precise lacework are all features of early 1620s English portraiture and 19th and early 20th century cataloguers often grouped them under the Dutch School label. In reality, portraits painted in England by émigré Netherlandish, or second-generation émigré Netherlandish artists such as Cornelius Johnson, or his immediate circle, account for almost all of those examples. Cornelius Johnson (c. 1593-1661) was a highly regarded portrait artist, born in London, painting English gentry and professional families -- including those with medical or legal ties (like the Hammonds and Temples). In 1632, he was appointed "picture-drawer" to King Charles I. The portrait is a very close stylistic and technical alignment -- the enamel like surface, the fine stippling of the lace, and controlled lighting are typical of Johnson's work at this time. His work is prized for their exquisite and intimate detail, showcasing the technical mastery. Unlike the more dramatic style of his famous contemporary, Anthony van Dyck, Johnson's reserved aesthetic offers a timeless, sophisticated elegance. His portraits are also remarkable for their quality, with his meticulous use of high-end pigments and carefully layered painting techniques contributing to their excellent preservation over centuries. Johnson's work is significant in art history. As one of the first British-born artists to consistently sign and date his work, his paintings are vital historical documents of both portraiture and the fashions of the era. Furthermore, his close artistic circle of fellow Dutch and Flemish émigrés contributed to a vibrant and innovative

London art scene, making Johnson's work an essential piece of a significant cultural movement.

Recent exhibitions and scholarship have solidified Johnson's reputation. As his historical importance becomes more widely recognized, the appreciation for his carefully rendered, well-preserved portraits continue to grow. As an object, the oil on panel painting encapsulates more than the likeness of a single woman--it represents a moment in the evolution of European identity, where artistry, wealth, and moral self-presentation converged. In its stillness and refinement, this portrait captures the ideal of aristocratic femininity in the early seventeenth century and its unbroken line of ownership through some of England's most notable families combine to make it a painting of real historical and aesthetic significance. Provenance: (Probably) the sitter, and by descent to her son; Sir William Temple, 1st Baronet (1628-1699), Moor Park, and by descent to his granddaughter; Elizabeth Temple (d. 1772), Moor Park, and by descent to her nephew; Rev. Nicholas Bacon, Spixworth Park, Norfolk, and by descent within the family to; Robert Bacon Longe, Spixworth Park, Norfolk, by whose executors sold; Sale, S. Mealing Mills, Spixworth Park, 19-22 May 1912; Collection of David and Constance Garnet, UK, 1912, by whom gifted to; Collection of Andre Vladimervitch Tchernavin, 1949, by whom gifted to the present owners family in 1994. Measurements: Height 85cm, Width 69cm framed (Height 33.5", Width 27.25" framed)