



## Ath 1753, Queen's Water Box, Solid Silver



525 EUR

Signature : Maître orfèvre poinçonnant d'une main

Period : 18th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Sterling silver

Width : 2 cm

Height : 3 cm

Description
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Lovely little box for flies or water from the Queen of Hungary with the hallmarks of the city of Ath and a master goldsmith stamping with one hand. Its style is typical for the period 1730-1750. It is made of solid silver. Inside there are remains of a pretty vermeil. The water of the Queen of Hungary was a perfume based on rosemary, orange blossom and rose water, which was very popular in the eighteenth century. According to legend, a hermit offered it to a Queen of Hungary, aged 72 at the time. She used the miracle water for a year and, suffering from the ailments of old age, she then regained her health, her shape and the beauty of her twenties. A prodigious story of which there is a written trace: "I, Dona Isabelle, Queen of Hungary, being seventy-two years old, very infirm and gouty, used the following recipe

Dealer
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Affligem 1790

for a whole year (...) Which had such an effect that at the same time I was cured and regained my strength, so that appearing beautiful to everyone, the King of Poland wanted to marry me: which I refused." It was then called the Water of the Queen of Hungary. Historians have recently looked into this legend, wanting to find this queen who gave her name to the perfume. Several queens are then mentioned between 1370 and 1666, without any of them being able to correspond to the testimony of this 72-year-old queen. The reality would therefore ultimately be less miraculous since it could be the first "marketing stunt" in history. The perfumers of Montpellier are said to have invented the story out of whole cloth to arouse the curiosity and lust of their customers and thus introduce the Queen of Hungary water to the court of Louis XIV! Madame de Maintenon, governess of Louis XIV's children whom he married in secret after the death of his legitimate wife, made this water her favorite product. She also recommended it to the boarders of the royal house of Saint-Cyr to protect them from illnesses and epidemics. Madame de Sévigné was also a very regular user, writing to her daughter Madame de Grignan: "I am crazy about it, it is the relief of all my sorrows". Until the end of the 18th century, the fame of this water with a thousand benefits continued to grow. It was then gradually replaced by another famous water, eau de Cologne. However, it did not fall completely into oblivion. The goldsmiths of Ath had great difficulty in meeting their basic needs with orders from local customers. This is why they specialized in the manufacture of what their contemporaries called "menuties", i.e. small silver objects that could be easily exported to other cities in the Austrian Netherlands to be sold at the annual markets or at merchants. This is why the hallmark of the city of Ath is clearly over-represented on the many snuff boxes, fly boxes, shoe buckles and other costume buttons that can be found on Belgian goldsmith production from the eighteenth century. Price:

EUR525 Weight: 20 grams