



Antique Spanish Gilt Silver Chalice. Joan Ferrando. Reus, Tarragona Ca. 1804-1808



2 400 EUR

Signature : Joan Ferrando

Period : 19th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Sterling silver

Height : 26,8 x 13,5 x 8 cm (10,55 x 5,31 x 3,15 in)

Description

Magnificent Spanish chalice from the early nineteenth century, a documented work by the master silversmith Joan Baptista Ferrando Ferrer, made in the city of Reus (Tarragona) between 1804 and 1808. Made of high-quality gilt silver and adorned with superb repoussé decoration of vegetal leaves, this chalice represents the perfect meeting point between the last echoes of late Rococo and sober Neoclassicism. Each section of the chalice, cup, shaft, knop, and base, is richly decorated with stylised acanthus leaf motifs, reinforcing its solemnity without falling into ornamental excess.

The condition is excellent. The gilding retains its brightness and presence, barely altered by the passage of time. It bears three perfectly visible

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hallmarks on the base: the first, "REVS", corresponds to the city mark of Reus used from the late eighteenth century to the mid-nineteenth century. The second, "FO", is the personal mark of the silversmith Ferrando (Joan Baptista Ferrando Ferrer), active between 1804 and 1831. The third, "J. PROPS", belongs to Josep Props i Gelabert, official assayer of the city between 1792 and 1808 and recognised royal assayer in Catalonia.

Joan Baptista Ferrando Ferrer was one of the foremost exponents of Catalan liturgical silverwork between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Active in the city of Reus, Tarragona, his activity is documented from 1804 to 1831, although his training began much earlier in the family workshop. Ferrando was also one of the founders of the Reial Col·legi d'Argenters de Reus (Royal College of Silversmiths of Reus), an institution that brought together the main silversmiths of the region and played a key role in the quality control and authenticity of religious pieces.

Among his signed works are reliquaries, chalices, ciboria, and other sacred utensils made for parishes in Montbrió del Camp, Duesaigües, and the Prioral of Reus, reflecting a regional influence in the Camp de Tarragona. His hallmarks, especially the cartouche with the initials "FO", appear alongside the city mark of Reus and the official assayer's punch, following the triple hallmark system imposed by the decree of Philip V in 1732. This system guaranteed the authenticity of the material, the authorship, and the supervision of the official assayer, in this case Josep Props i Gelabert.

Ferrando is distinguished not only by his technique but also by his constant presence in ecclesiastical documentation of the time. Between 1804 and 1831, he appears as "obrer" or religious works manager in various brotherhoods, showing

the trust placed in him for important commissions. Thanks to the preservation of punches and documents, works signed by Ferrando like this chalice can be dated with great precision, enhancing their value in the art and antique market.

J. Props, whose full name was Josep Props i Gelabert, was one of the most important assayers and official markers of the city of Reus during the transition from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century. Born into a family of silversmiths in Barcelona, Props passed the demanding master's exam of the Col·legi d'Argenters de Barcelona on January 4, 1773, presenting a ring set with several diamonds as a test piece. Shortly after, he moved to Reus, where he settled permanently and married the local woman Magdalena Molins i Bolart, fully integrating into the artisanal and artistic environment of the city and region of Reus.

On May 2, 1792, he received from the king the privilege of official marker for the city of Reus, initially for seven years, although he remained in office until his death in 1808. This privilege also authorised him as royal assayer for all of Catalonia, a title of great prestige that made him the guarantor of the quality and authenticity of precious metals used in silverwork. His appointment replaced that of the previous marker, Josep Aran, and represented a renewal of oversight over the quality of silversmithing in a region with a strong artisanal tradition.

Props worked during a period of intense artistic activity in Reus, alongside silversmiths of the stature of Joan Baptista Ferrando Ferrer, with whom he collaborated on numerous occasions. His marks are frequently found on liturgical and domestic pieces from the area, especially chalices, candlesticks, ciboria, and objects linked to Catholic worship. Among the documented pieces with his mark are religious silverworks

preserved in Altafulla, two-light candlesticks auctioned in Paris, and several table objects now part of private and parish collections in Catalonia.

Josep Props died on June 23, 1808, in Reus. With his death, his official punch fell out of use, allowing historians and experts to date many pieces where it appears with great precision. His role as guarantor of authenticity and metal purity makes him a key figure in the history of Catalan silverwork, especially in the Camp de Tarragona.

Thanks to the presence of these three hallmarks, FO, REVS, and the chronology of the marker Props, we can date this piece with great accuracy between 1804 and 1808, at the height of Napoleon's rise in Europe and on the eve of his invasion of Spain. This historical context, together with the author's name, makes the chalice a liturgical jewel not only for its craftsmanship but also for its documentary and symbolic value.

This gilt silver chalice perfectly embodies the most refined techniques of Catalan sacred silverwork of the time. Due to its authorship and features, this chalice is comparable, and in many cases superior, to other liturgical pieces preserved in historical parishes of the Camp de Tarragona, Altafulla, Tortosa, or private collections.

For its beauty, condition, and provenance, this piece represents an extraordinary opportunity for any collector or religious institution interested in historical liturgy. Its presence in a display case or exhibition will immediately stand out for its proportion, elegance, and heritage value. Moreover, it would be ideal for a priest or someone about to be ordained, reintroducing this historical piece into its original function for which it was lovingly made: to serve God and the Church.

Unique piece offering a tangible connection to the

history of Catalonia and the excellence of its ecclesiastical silverwork.

Measurements: 26.8 x 13.5 x 8 cm (10.55 x 5.31 x 3.15 in). Weight: 472 g

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