



Liège, 1740, Dieudonné Crasset, Solid Silver Incense Shaker



3 350 EUR

Signature : Dieudonné Crasset

Period : 18th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Sterling silver

Length : 18 cm

Width : 10,5 cm

Height : 12 cm.

Description

This solid silver incense burner, made in Liège in 1740 during the reign of Louis XV, is the work of the Liège silversmith Dieudonné Crasset, who was born in 1695 and died in 1754. It features a distinctive oblong shape, reminiscent of a ship's hull, and rests on a circular, fluted base. Its lid, consisting of two hinged parts, is adorned with a rich decoration of foliage scrolls and rocaille motifs set against a finely engraved background. Weight: 400 grams. In the center of the main decorative panel is a coat of arms, surmounted by a helmet and mantling. These arms, which do not appear to belong to a major aristocratic house, may have belonged to a family of the Liège bourgeoisie. This remains to be determined. The second medallion bears the date "1741," likely linked to the object's first use, its

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donation, or a specific event concerning its first owner. Inside the base of the piece, a set of four Liège hallmarks is preserved. Among them are the master's mark of Dieudonné Crasset, consisting of the capital letters "D C," as well as the hallmark bearing the coat of arms of Prince-Bishop Georges-Louis de Berghes. The double-headed eagle of the Holy Roman Empire, accompanied by the year marking the beginning of the prince's reign, recalls the Principality of Liège's membership in the Empire. Finally, the capital annal letter "R" allows us to precisely date the inspection and hallmarking of the piece within the chronological system of Liège goldsmithing. Thanks to the quality of its craftsmanship, the balance of its proportions, and the vigor of its decoration, this navette is a particularly representative example of mid-18th-century religious goldsmithing in Liège.

Incense and the navette in the Roman liturgy: Incense was not used in the early Christian celebrations in Rome in the same way as it is today. Its presence is clearly attested in the Roman pontifical liturgy at the end of the 7th century: the **Ordo Romanus I**, written during that period, describes incense being carried before the pope during processions to the church and upon his entry into the sanctuary.^[1] During the Middle Ages, its use gradually expanded to include the proclamation of the Gospel, then the altar, the offerings, the celebrant, and the faithful. The navette is the small container holding the grains of incense intended for the censer. Its name comes from the Latin *navicula*, a diminutive of *navis*, and means "small ship" or "small boat."^[2] Its shape often resembles a boat hull with a lid. Medieval navettes are preserved today in several collections. The famous gilded copper and enamel navettes produced in Limoges date notably from the 13th century: they demonstrate that the object was by then fully integrated into liturgical furnishings, but they do not constitute proof of its first appearance.^[3] In the current Catholic Mass, incense may be used

during the entrance procession, at the beginning of the celebration to incense the cross and the altar, during the procession and the proclamation of the Gospel, during the presentation of the gifts, and at the elevation of the host and the chalice.[4] The incense scoop accompanies the censer and allows the priest or deacon to scoop up the incense--usually with a small spoon--to be placed on the burning coals.