



Brussels, 1822-1831, Solid Silver, Empire-style Teapot, Silversmith François Thomas

1 750 EUR



Signature : Corneille dit François Thomas
(Ostende 1793-Ixelles 1879)

Period : 19th century

Condition : Parfait état

Material : Sterling silver

Length : 28 cm

Width : 10,5 cm

Height : 18 cm

Description

This solid silver teapot was made in Brussels between 1822 and 1831, during the reign of William I of the Netherlands, a particularly prosperous period. It still belongs to the Empire style, reflecting its simple lines and decor inspired by antiquity. The widely flared body rests on an oval pedestal adorned with a frieze of pearls and water leaves. The lid, hinged by a mechanism entirely concealed within the thickness of the metal, attests to particularly meticulous craftsmanship. This solution, technically more complex than a visible hinge, preserves the purity of the teapot's lines and demonstrates the silversmith's great craftsmanship. The lid is crowned with a swan in the round resting on a platform of water leaves. The slightly curved spout ends in a finely

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chiseled swan's head. Its attachment is decorated with palmettes and foliage. The black ebony handle, whose elegant curve evokes the long neck of a swan, is secured at its upper end by a chiseled silver rosette. At its base, it emerges from the head of a woman adorned with flowers and feathers. This figure recalls the allegorical representations or exotic personifications that were highly popular in the early 19th century, inspired by the peoples of Oceania discovered during the great scientific expeditions. The presence of the swan on the fretel is fully in keeping with the iconography of the Empire style. A legacy of antiquity, the swan is associated with Apollo and symbolizes purity, elegance, and harmony. Since antiquity, it has also been associated with marital love and fidelity, due to the stability of the pairs it forms. The combination of this swan, the long black handle, and this female figure wearing exotic flowers could also evoke--though it is impossible to say for certain-- the famous black swans from Australia that Empress Joséphine introduced to Malmaison. Their arrival in Europe helped reinforce the swan's prestige in the imperial decorative repertoire, where it became one of the most iconic motifs. Thanks to the quality of its craftsmanship, the attention paid to its technical details--notably its invisible hinge--and the restrained richness of its decoration, this teapot stands as a remarkable example of Brussels goldsmithing from the first third of the 19th century. Given the swan motif, which is omnipresent in its decoration, it is almost certain that this was a wedding gift or an anniversary gift (25th anniversary, or "silver wedding"). It weighs 645 grams. It has a capacity of 800 ml or 0.8 L.