



Also 1754-1770, Stew Spoon, By Silversmith Jean Affre, Solid Silver



575 EUR

Signature : Jean Affreux 1723-1805/07

Period : 18th century

Condition : Parfait état

Material : Sterling silver

Length : 33 cm

Width : 6 cm

Description

LARGE ARMORIAL SILVER BASTING
SPOON
AUCH, SECOND HALF OF THE 18TH
CENTURY
JEAN AFFRE, MASTER SILVERSMITH
WORKING UNDER THE SUBSCRIPTION
SYSTEM

Solid silver

Overall length: 33 cm

Length of the bowl: 10 cm

Width of the bowl: 6 cm

Weight: 187 g

This important solid silver basting spoon is distinguished by its imposing dimensions, substantial weight and particularly elegant simplicity. Its large, plain, deeply formed oval bowl extends into a long handle terminating in a

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Affligem 1790

broad, rounded spatula. A moulded thread border follows the outline of the handle and spatula but does not extend around the bowl.¹

The spatula is finely engraved with a coat of arms set within an oval shield surrounded by mantling. The field gules, indicated by vertical hatching, is charged with three rocks arranged two and one; the chief azure, represented by horizontal hatching, bears three birds passant to dexter. The shield is surmounted by a count's coronet with nine pearls. Beneath the shield is a ribbon arranged in a saltire, from which hangs a cross recalling a decoration of the Ancien Régime.²

THE HALLMARKS

The reverse of the handle bears three marks arranged in a line: in the centre is Jean Affre's large maker's mark, transcribed as "I/AF/FRE", flanked by two impressions of his smaller "IA" mark. This combination of the large and small maker's marks is also recorded on works by Jean Affre preserved in French public collections.³

This group of three impressions corresponds to the marking system employed by Jean Affre as a master silversmith working under subscription. It enables the spoon to be attributed to his production in Auch after his admission as a master in 1754.^{3 4}

THE AFFRE DYNASTY IN AUCH

The Affre family constitutes the principal documented dynasty of silversmiths working in Auch during the 18th century. The family's activity in the city began with Étienne Affre, born circa 1689 and admitted as a master silversmith at Toulouse for Auch on 8 June 1723. The following year, he married Marie Bajadoulie and continued to work in Auch until his death in 1749.⁴

Following Étienne Affre's death, Marie Bajadoulie continued the activity of the workshop. Her production is still documented in 1763 by a chalice preserved at Blanquefort in the Gers, bearing the mark of the widow Affre of Auch.⁵

Their son Jean Affre was born in Auch in 1729 and admitted as a master silversmith at Toulouse

for Auch on 4 July 1754. He remained active in his native city until his death, which occurred between August 1805 and 1808, and thus continued his profession into the period of the First French Empire.⁶

From Étienne Affre's establishment in Auch in 1723 until Jean Affre's death at the beginning of the 19th century, the Affre family's activity in the city extended over more than eighty years. This remarkable continuity demonstrates that the family marked almost the entire 18th century in Auch through its work as silversmiths, before continuing the tradition into the opening years of the following century.^{4 6}

THE MASTER SILVERSMITH WORKING UNDER SUBSCRIPTION

Under the Ancien Régime, silversmiths established in towns without an assay office, or situated at a considerable distance from the office upon which they depended, could enter into a subscription agreement with the tax farmer responsible for the duty on precious-metal wares. The amount was assessed on a fixed basis according to their estimated production. This arrangement spared them the repeated journeys otherwise required for the application of the fiscal charge and discharge marks.⁷

Depending on the place and the terms of the agreement, the work of a subscribing master could therefore bear only his personal maker's mark, struck once or several times. The repetition of the maker's marks is consequently characteristic of many objects produced by subscribing silversmiths, although repetition alone does not constitute universal and absolute proof of such an agreement.⁷

On the present spoon, the combination of the large "I/AF/FRE" mark and the smaller "IA" mark, struck twice, corresponds to the known marking system of Jean Affre working under subscription in Auch.^{3 4}

Through its imposing proportions, the quality of its threaded pattern, the rarity of its subscription marks and the presence of its comital coat of

arms, this spoon constitutes a particularly interesting example of civil silver from Auch and of the Affre family's long period of activity during the 18th century.

REFERENCES

Description based on photographic examination of the object; dimensions and weight supplied by its owner.

On the conventional representation of heraldic colours in engraving: azure is indicated by horizontal lines and gules by vertical lines.

University Library of Poitiers, "L'héraldique dans le livre ancien": read the article. On the external ornaments of the shield, see Michel Pastoureau, *Traité d'héraldique*, Paris, Picard, 1979, and subsequent expanded editions.

French Ministry of Culture, Palissy database, record PM32000532, "Calice", Bétous: Jean Affre's marks transcribed as "I/AF/FRE" and "IA": consult the record.

Jean Thuile, *L'Orfèvrerie en Languedoc du XIIe au XVIIIe siècle. Tome II : Généralité de Toulouse, Montpellier, Causse*, 1966, register of the silversmiths of Auch.

French Ministry of Culture, Palissy database, record PM32000527, "Calice", Blanquefort, dated 1763 and bearing the mark of the widow Affre of Auch: consult the record.

Jean-Philippe Maisonnave, *Inventaire général du patrimoine culturel*, record IM40007419, "Ciboire", Lesgor: Jean Affre, born in Auch in 1729, admitted as a master at Toulouse for Auch on 4 July 1754, and deceased between 1805 and 1808: consult the record.

Lise Moor, "L'empreinte du maître-orfèvre répétée trois fois à l'exclusion de tout autre poinçon sur l'orfèvrerie française de 1672 à 1798. Partie 1 : Le marquage par les maîtres-abonnés sous l'Ancien Régime", *ASCAS*, no. 139, 2010: read the complete study. See also Nicolas Poullin de Viéville, *Code de l'orfèvrerie*, Paris, Knapen, 1785.

<https://www.proantic.com/en/1820977-also-1754-1770-stew-spoon-by-silversmith-jean-affre-solid-silver.html>