Finch & Co



NORTHERN FRENCH BOXWOOD LOVE TOKEN OR MARRIAGE GIFT

A FINE NORTHERN FRENCH BOXWOOD LOVE TOKEN OR MARRIAGE GIFT THE BOX-LID CARVED WITH AN ALLEGORY OF CUPID HOLDING HIS BOW LEADING A DOG ON A CHAIN AN INSCRIPTION TO THE TOP EDGE 'SANS CELLE CY. LES TOIS LIBRE' SURROUNDED BY FLOWERING FORGET-ME-NOTS EMANATING FROM HEARTS
THE BACK SIDES AND BASE ALL SIMILARLY PROFUSELY CARVED WITH SCROLLING FOLIATE DESIGNS TIED WITH LOVERS KNOTS
ALL IN THE MANNER OF CESAR BAGARD OF NANCY
PROBABLY MADE TO HOLD A BODKIN FOR THREADING RIBBONS OR LACE
A LABEL INSIDE READING: 'LIEBESGABE 17 JH'
LATE 17TH CENTURY
SIZE: 2.5CM HIGH, 8CM WIDE, 2.5CM DEEP - 1 INS HIGH, 3 INS WIDE, 1 INS DEEP

LITERATURE

HIGHLY DECORATIVE, MINUTELY AND ELABORATELY CARVED BOXES AND TOILET SETS ARE OFTEN ATTRIBUTED TO CESAR BAGARD OF NANCY, ALTHOUGH THERE WAS MOST PROBABLY MORE THAN ONE WORKSHOP PRODUCING THESE FINELY CARVED BOXES. BORN IN NANCY IN 1620 BAGARD WAS THE FOURTH CHILD OF THE SCULPTOR NICOLAS BAGARD. HE BECAME A PUPIL OF THE SCULPTOR M JACUIN AND SPECIALISED IN SCULPTING COLOSSAL STATUES MOSTLY INTENDED FOR CHURCHES AND PUBLIC PLACES. HE WAS NICK-NAMED 'LE GRAND CESAR' AND HIS OUTPUT WAS LARGE, MUCH OF WHICH WAS DESTROYED IN THE REVOLUTION.
THE FINE SCALE CARVING NOW ASSOCIATED WITH HIS NAME CLOSELY RESEMBLES THE CARVING ON SOME OF THE STONE PEDESTALS USED FOR HIS STATUES, BUT THERE IS NO EVIDENCE TO LINK HIM WITH THESE. THE WOOD CARVING IS ESSENTIALLY LOUIS XIV IN DESIGN BEING A GOOD TRANSLATION OF THE SILVER OF THE PERIOD, BEARING THE SAME MOTIFS AND FOLLOWING THE SAME OUTLINES. THE OBJECTS ARE MOSTLY CARVED IN PEAR-WOOD AND BOXWOOD AND COVER THE WHOLE RANGE OF TOILET ACCESSORIES AND OTHER SMALL-WORK FOUND IN SILVER OF THE SAME PERIOD. MOST OF THESE OBJECTS MUST HAVE BEEN COMMISSIONED BY THE FRENCH NOBILITY AS THERE IS OFTEN A COAT OF ARMS, A MONOGRAM OR A MOTTO CARVED INTO THE DESIGN, AS ON THIS EXAMPLE.