
Koopman Rare Art

Director's Choice – Timo Koopman The Comtesse Von der Leyen's Toilet Service



*The Toilette Service of Countess Von der Leyen
Strasbourg, 1788 - 1789, by Johannes Jacob Kirstein & Carl Ludwig Emmerich*

Strasbourg is a city steeped in history of the goldsmith and its geographical location on the Rhine River has had clear influence from both the German and French courts to create an individual and spectacular style recognisable for its crisp lines and superb craftsmanship. The goldsmiths of Strasbourg have always had a penchant for the richness of gilded silver, and it is with this in mind that I introduce this weeks Director's Choice. It is rare to find individual pieces in such good condition from Strasbourg but to find fourteen pieces belonging to one toilet service survive together with such a fascinating history is truly exceptional.

The toilet service comprises of two covered makeup pots and their display stand, a pair of candlesticks, six powder boxes, two oval trays, a brush, a box and a patch box. Each piece is engraved with the marital coat-of-arms of Count Philippe de La Leyen (1766-1829) and Countess Sophie Thérèse de Schönborn (1772-1810)

Provenance:

Countess von der Leyen and commissioned by the subjects of Bliescatel on the occasion of the birth of her first child

The Collection of Koehler-Schlumberger.

The two large powder boxes and the root box - Bonnefoy et Cie, circa 1936

Drouot Montaigne sale, Paris, November 21, 1987, no. 145, PP. 42-43

Candlesticks: Roger Ehrhardt Collection, Schiltigheim, circa 1936

Ehrhardt sale, Drouot Paris, February 16, 1939

J. Kugel Gallery

The commission for this famous toilet service which initially contained more than twenty pieces, is known thanks to the dedication engraved under the ewer basin located at the Museum of Decorative Arts in Strasbourg

Exhibitions:

1936, Paris, Musée des Arts décoratifs 'Provincial civil goldwork from the 17th to the 18th century', no. 387

1948, Strasbourg: "French Alsace, 1648-1948", n°657-669

1964, Paris, "L'Orfèvrerie de Strasbourg", Galerie J. Kugel, n° 119-122

The Collection of Edouard Cochet

The service, which was subsequently scattered across several private collections, was brought together at the exhibition "French Civil Provincial Goldsmithing from the 17th to the 18th Century", which took place at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris in 1936. The Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Strasbourg received the ewer and its basin, the bowl and its tray, the pair of perfume bottles and the extinguisher as a gift from Maurice Burrus in 1946.

The toilet service is based on the model created in 1786 by Kirstein for the Princess of Deux-Ponts. The candlesticks and large powder boxes, practically identical to those of this service, were formerly in the collection of Baron Alain de Rothschild (1910-1982) and now reside at the Munich Residenz (Res. Mü. SK 3931-3933, see ill. p. 109). Kirstein's elegant and refined neoclassical style, at the cutting edge of fashion, rivalled in the eyes of the German princely houses, with the greatest Parisian goldsmiths such as Robert Joseph Auguste. We can see in the quality of the relief carvings, in particular the bouquets of roses decorating the tray of the makeup pot, the hand of Jacob Friderich Kirstein, who was then working in his father's workshop.

Philippe de La Leyen (Philipp Franz Wilhelm Ignatius Peter von der Leyen und zu

Hohengeroldseck, 1766-1829), Count of the Holy Empire (Reichsgraf), was the son of Count François-Charles (1736-1775), Knight of the Golden Fleece, and his wife Marianne, Baroness of Dalberg (1745-1804).

In 1775, upon the death of Count François-Charles, Marianne assumed the Regency. She undertook to reform the management, education, agriculture and trade on the estates. She created an orphanage, a hospice and a glassworks and abolished serfdom in 1787. Her regency ended in 1791.



Philipp von der Leyen und zu Hohengeroldseck

During this period, her son Philipp became a member of the Academy of Sciences of Erfurt in 1781 and married Sophie (Sophia Therese von Schönborn Wiesentheid, 1772-1810) in 1788. They had two children, Amalie (1789-1870), future Countess Tascher de la Pagerie and thus cousin of Joséphine, on the occasion of whose birth the toilet service was offered, and Erwein (1798-1879), future Prince of La Leyen and husband of his first cousin, Sophie de Schönborn (1798-1876).

In May 1793, the Revolution spread to Bliesgau and the Revolutionary Council in Paris gave an order to seize the property of the German princes across the Rhine. Bliescastel, where the Von der Leyens lived, was occupied and they fled to Frankfurt. During the Treaty of Lunéville in 1801, Count Von der Leyen was compensated, as well as in 1804, thanks to the support of his uncle, the Prince-Primate of the Confederation of the Rhine, Karl Theodor von Dalberg. In 1806, he was created a prince. He lost sovereignty over the principality of Hohengeroldseck in

1815, which was finally attached to the Grand Duchy of Baden.

The finely engraved coat-of-arms on this toilet service rest on a mantle and are surrounded by the collar of the White Eagle, a very prestigious order which was conferred in 1786 on Philipp Von der Leyen by Stanislas II Auguste Poniatowski (1732-1798), King of Poland from 1764 to 1795. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that the mantle, mark of the dignity of Count of the Holy Empire, is represented without the crown because Philipp Von der Leyen's mother still exercised the regency.

Strasbourg and its Development as a Cultural and Prosperous City:

Strasbourg, the “city of roads” (the origin of its current name in ancient German) lies at the border of the Roman and Germanic worlds. This location adds to the wealth of its past, for better and worse.

Strasbourg benefited from a long period of expansion and prosperity thanks to obtaining justice and minting rights following Otto the Great's founding of the Holy Roman Empire in 962. On the strength of this temporal power, the Bishop of Strasbourg continued to enjoy a strong influence, especially Werner of Habsburg, who decided to construct a Romanesque cathedral in the 11th century.

Towards 1100, the town was protected by a new fortified wall. In 1160, religious authorities decided to replace the Romanesque cathedral with one even more grandiose. They wished to raise a majestic church in the Gothic style, which was popular in Île de France. At the same time as the crucial demographic growth (the city became one of the most populated in the Holy Roman Empire), several monastic orders, notably Franciscan and Dominican, established themselves here. In 1201, Emperor Phillip of Swabia raised Strasbourg to the coveted rank of Imperial Free City under the impetus of wealthy seigniorial Alsatian families. A Municipal Council was formed in 1220 and was in charge of administration and justice. These duties were previously reserved for the clergy. The growing influence of the bourgeois threatened the bishop's authority. It resulted in armed conflicts between the Episcopal army of Walter of Geroldseck on one side and the Strasbourgeois, supported by Emperor Rudolph I of Habsburg, on the other side.

The outcome of the Battle of Hausbergen in 1262 was disastrous for the bishop, who lost his influence. Following this episode, the 14th century was the stage of many political schemes. Within the city, two rivalling noble families, the Zorns and the Mullenheims, confronted each other. They provoked a civil war in 1332, resulting in the rise in power of the working class and its takeover of the city.

The Imperial Free City of Strasbourg profited from its autonomy and the right to raise taxes and mint coins to prosper. It benefited from a central crossing point for the freight of merchandise (the Ill River connects it to Colmar, and the Rhine links it to the other large cities of Basle, Mainz and Cologne). The town did not baulk at the different taxes and controls imposed by the powerful Guild of Boatmen. With a

substantial population of 26,000 inhabitants (10,000 of which were refugees of the Hundred Years War who resided outside the fortification), Strasbourg was able to raise an army of 4,500 men.

At this time, Gutenberg, originally from Mainz, came to stay in Strasbourg and invented movable printing. Shortly after, the city became a significant printing centre in Europe and began to attract many intellectuals and artists.

In the late 14th century, the town underwent further expansion. Monks and noble families founded numerous churches across the city.

In the early 15th century, the humanist movement took advantage of printing development. Its leading advocates were Jakob Wimpheling, Geiler von Kayserberg, and Sébastien Brant.

Another highlight of this century of change was the marked introduction of the Reformation. Strasbourg adhered to Protestantism from 1525, some six years after the Theses of Martin Luther were attached to the cathedral's doors.

Strasbourg officially became Protestant in 1532 with the adhesion to the Augsburg Confession. Along with Basel, Montbéliard, Mulhouse and Zurich to the south of the Upper Rhine region, Strasbourg was one of the main bastions of Protestantism. At the same time, the rest of Alsace remained Catholic and loyal to the Habsburgs. The cathedral, as well as other churches in Strasbourg, held Protestant services.



The city became a haven for Huguenots, Protestants driven out of France for their beliefs. Among them was John Calvin, who later settled in Geneva. Naturally, Strasbourg's behaviour was not to the taste of Charles V of the Habsburg dynasty. The Holy Roman Emperor was indeed an ardent defender of the Catholic faith who repeatedly entered into war against the Protestant Princes.

Eventually, Strasbourg agreed with Emperor Ferdinand II, vowing not to participate in the conflict and to remain neutral. The Emperor's compensation was the authorisation for Strasbourg to found a university.

With the Treaties of Westphalia negotiations in 1648, the Habsburgs lost their hereditary possessions in South Alsace (the Sundgau) to the profit of the Kingdom of France. But Strasbourg remained an Imperial Free City. On 28 September 1681, Louis XIV's army besieged the city and, two days later, accepted the surrender and became French for the first time in its history.



Louis XIV approaching Strasbourg

Louis XIV demolished part of the fortifications to symbolise the reunion of Strasbourg to France and the return of the cathedral exclusively to the Catholic religion.

Negotiations between Strasbourg and the Sun King preserved certain freedoms of the former Free City, notably on political, administrative and religious levels. Vauban was commissioned to construct a defence system at the forefront of what was done at the time (a large part of these fortifications are still visible today).

In 1716, the city adopted the French monetary system and housed a sizeable French garrison. Having become French 33 years after the Upper-Alsace of the Habsburgs (the Sundgau), Strasbourg was given the title of capital of the Alsace province, which had never been unified. With the other side of the Rhine remaining Austrian (Offenburg and the Brisgau), Strasbourg found itself once again lined by a border and became the main crossing point to Germany.

In religious terms, the town took a critical turning point. In 1704, a prince of the Rohan family became bishop of the town. The family retained episcopal power until

1790 and built the famous Palais des Rohan (or Rohan Palace) close to the cathedral. Situated on the banks of the River Ill, the palace is the witness of the prosperous 18th century in Strasbourg.

Throughout this period, Catholicism developed, and six Catholic parishes were established. However, the town remained nonetheless predominantly loyal to Protestantism. The University of Strasbourg, dormant after its annexation by France, gradually regained its former glory.

Between 1721 and 1755, the city hosted over 4,000 students. The university boasted an international outlook, with foreign students from Germany, Scandinavia, the Netherlands, Great Britain, and Russia. Some, like Goethe, who studied law here, gained fame. Strasbourg's university's reputation is strong, especially in law and medicine. Despite a 15th-century surgical school, Strasbourg lingered in Basel University's shadow. However, in the 18th century, its practical teaching propelled it to prominence as a major university centre.

During the French Revolution, the Storming of the Bastille on 14 July 1789 sent a shock wave through Strasbourg when its inhabitants devastated the City Hall seven days later. As elsewhere in France, clergy property was confiscated. However, the tension rapidly declined until 1792, the year of the declaration of war opposing France to Prussia and Austria.

On 26 April, the mayor of Strasbourg, Frédéric de Dietrich, asked Rouget de Lisle to compose a hymn to the glory of the Army of the Rhine. Volunteers from Marseille returned to their city with the hymn and made it known across France. The song naturally took the name "la Marseillaise".

In 1805, during Empress Joséphine's stay in Strasbourg, the creation of an orangery began, now known as the Parc de l'Orangerie.

Check all the News
and Discover our
Latest Acquisitions
on our Website!

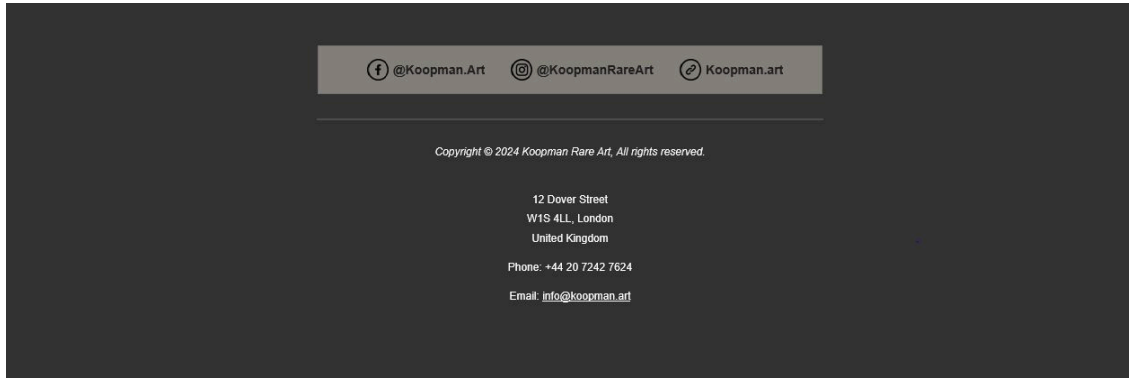
[Visit Our Website](#)



All works shown, unless otherwise indicated, are available to view and purchase in our gallery located in 12 Dover Street, London, W1S 4LL

For all enquiries please do not hesitate to call or email on:

020 7242 7624 / info@koopman.art



Copyright © 2024 Koopman Rare Art, All rights reserved.

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

