



Benjamin Godfrey

An Exceptionally Rare Pair of Rococo Candelabra

George II

London, 1739

Maker's mark of Benjamin Godfrey

Height: 41.2 cm, 16.2 in.

Weight: 4603gr., 148 oz

Bearing the coat-of-arms of Phipps Townsend

A pair of silver candelabra depicting Mrs Catherine Phipps wearing her gold Fetish jewels, and a Kente Ashantee cloak. Made in 1739 for Bridget the daughter of Captain -General, James Phipps of Cape Coast Castle, of the Royal African Company.

The figures supporting the candelabra are female in reference to the Mrs Catherine Phipps, wife of the late James Phipps Captain-General of the Royal African Company of England stationed at Cape Coast Castle, Accra who died in 1738. Her Kente Ashantee dress and her gold Fetish jewellery put together with the known family provenance provide the keys to her identification.

Both candelabra are richly cast and chased, the domed shaped circular bases of rococo scrolling foliage incorporating three cartouches enclosing a coat of arms and two crests, the stems in the form of kneeling slaves, each with detachable two-light branches, the sconces supported on the heads of female caryatids, the drip pans each engraved with two crests above esquires' helmets and foliate

mantling, the undersides with scratch weights: '40 - 19' and '39 = 9'

Artist description:

No records exist for the apprenticeship or freedom of Benjamin Godfrey. However, it is almost a certainty that he was under the employment of Abraham Buteux. Godfrey married Buteux's widow, Elizabeth, in 1732 and entered his first marks in the same year. He was recorded at the same address in Norris Street, Haymarket when his subsequent marks were registered in 1739 and 1741. Huguenot influence is evident in his fine plate, but rococo designs can also be found among his works. Elizabeth entered her mark alone, also in 1741, and is described as the goldsmith, silversmith and jeweller to the duke of Cumberland. It is not known if Benjamin worked with her after this date.