



The Walpole Inkstand

A George II Treasury Inkstand

George II

London, 1729

Maker's mark of Paul de Lamerie

Length: 29.5 cm, 11 5/8 in.

Width: 19.1 cm, 7 ½ in.

Weight: 2,892.6 g, 93 oz

Of rounded rectangular form, raised on four shell-headed scroll supports, centrally hinged flat covers finely engraved with 'Hogarthian' borders, strapwork and shells, enclosing on one cover arms and supporters and on the other crest, motto and supporters of Sir Robert Walpole, the interior fitted with a removable covered inkwell and a sander, the latter pierced with diaper and formal foliage and both held in frames engraved with foliage and flowerheads on matted grounds.

The arms are those of Walpole impaling Shorter for Sir Robert Walpole (1676 – 1745) and his first wife Catherine Shorter. The crest and motto are those of Walpole. The supporters granted to Walpole are the stage and antelope which supported the Royal Arms on the Exchequer Seal from the reign of Henry VIII.

This is the first of two treasury inkstands ordered by Sir Robert Walpole from Lamerie. The second was a gift to Sir Peter Burrell (1692 – 1756), a sub-governor of the South Sea Company, in which Sir Robert invested heavily. The Burrell inkstand passed by inheritance to Sir Edward Durand and was sold at Christie's, May 5, 1937, lot 108, purchased by the Bank of England, in whose possession it remains. The decoration on the Walpole inkstand relates to that on the famous seal salver, supplied by Paul de Lamerie to him in the previous year and engraved with the obverse and reverse impressions of the second Exchequer seal of George I. This commemorated his second term as Chancellor of the Exchequer to George I and is one of the best known examples of Lamerie's work.

Exhibitions

London, 1990, Goldsmiths' Hall, Paul de Lamerie, The Work of England's Master Silversmith, cat. No. 51, p. 96.

Norwich Castle Museum, October 12, 1996 – January 5, 1997 and The Iveagh Bequest, January 23 – April 20, 1997, Houghton Hall: The Prime Minister, The Empress and The Heritage, item 22

Literature:

Andrew Moore, ed., Houghton Hall: The Prime Minister, The Empress and The Heritage, p. 110, cat. No. 22

Octagon, vol. XXVI, no. 1, Spinks, 1989, "The Walpole Inkstand" by Judith Banister