

# koopman rare art



**Isaac Liger**

**A Royal Inkstand**

Silver- gilt

London, circa 1695- 1704

Maker's mark only of Isaac Liger of London (Grimwade, no. 1931)

Width:29.4cm, 11 1/2in

Weight: 1949gr., 62oz. 14dwt

On four bun supports, the oblong tray with upcurved sides and engraved twice with the cypher of William III. Complete with a hand bell at the centre flanked by two cylindrical pots, one for ink and quills, the other for pounce, all similarly engraved, the underside with scratch weight: '600 9'.

£ 26,000

This inkstand is thought to have belonged to William Beckford of Fonthill Abbey (1760-1844) and then acquired by the Dukes of Hamilton following the marriage on 26 April 1810 of Beckford's daughter and co-heir, Susan Euphemia (1786-1859) to Alexander Hamilton, 10th Duke of Hamilton (1767-1852).

Isaac Liger, who was the chief supplier of plate to George Booth, 2nd Earl of Warrington (1675-1758), is first recorded in London in early 1700. He was made a freeman of the Broderers' Company on 14 September 1704 and entered his first mark (IL below flowers, as struck on this inkstand) at Goldsmiths'

Hall on 2 October following. He lived at Hemming's Row, a thoroughfare demolished in 1886 during the creation of Charing Cross Road, which once formed the eastern end of Orange Street, Leicester Fields (now Square). He died on 12 November 1730: 'Yesterday Morning dy'd Mr. Isaac Liger, a very eminent and noted Goldsmith, in Hemmings's Row near St. Martin's-Lane, Charing-Cross, a Gentleman of a fair Character, and much lamented by all that knew him. He is succeeded in his Business by his Son, Mr. John Liger.' (The Universal Spectator and Weekly Journal, 14 November 1730)

A very similar two bottle inkstand with bell in white silver, Isaac Liger, London, 1716, originally among the Earl of Warrington's 'Chamber Plate,' is now at Dunham Massey in Cheshire (James Lomax and James Rothwell, Country House Silver from Dunham Massey, The National Trust, 2006, p. 101, cat. 43, inventory no. DUN/S/303. See also another inkstand of similar design, engraved with the cypher of Queen Anne, Louis Mettayer, London, 1710, from the collection of Sir William Bromley-Davenport (1862-1949), illustrated in W.W. Watts, Old English Silver, London, 1924, p. xix, no. 78a and pl. Others bearing the marks of David Tanqueray and Anthony Nelme have also been recorded.

The engraving of the cypher of William III, who died on 8 March 1702, and the likely date of manufacture of this inkstand of about 1715 seem at first to be at odds. It has been suggested that an earlier object bearing the King's cypher was refashioned into its present form and then engraved to match. The bell at the centre of the Inkstand being in its original, untouched, form bearing the Royal Arms of William III dates circa 1695.

#### **Artist description:**

Huguenot silversmith, Isaac Liger, was first recorded in London in the early 1700s, though there is no record of the apprenticeship. His freedom from the Broderers' Company was granted in September 1704, and he entered his first mark the following month, giving his address as Hemings Row, where he remained for the rest of his life. By 1706 Liger had received a commission from the earl of Warrington for chapel plate at Dunham Massey; this was the beginning of an association that was to continue for more than twenty years and he became the chief supplier of plate to George Booth, 2nd Earl of Warrington (1675-1758). Small articles for the table or personal use comprise the greatest portion of Liger's known work. Most of these items are relatively plain, while others are densely engraved with designs in the style of Simon Gribelin.