

SALT-CELLAR WITH THREE CITYSCAPES, PROBABLY OF NUREMBERG, SILVER, PARTLY-GILT

Object number # 303

Nuremberg, c. 1685/9

Heinrich Gottfried Anton Hammon

Maker: "HH"ligated with a star above for Heinrich Gottfried Anton Hammon (also Hammond and Hemmon), (s. Nürnberger Godtschmiedekunst no. 311).

H.: 10 cm (3,9 in.); Gewicht: 120 gr. (4,2 oz.)

Pictures

Detailed Information

Salt-cellar with Three Cityscapes, probably of Nuremberg, Silver, partly-gilt

The present silver partly-gilt salt-cellar is a rare example of salt vessel of the baroque period. The richly embossed foot is standing on a wavy-formed ring, which is very exceptionally decorated with three medallions which show cityscapes. These are worked quite in details and are left in white silver. Among these three cityscapes, there is a very typical for Nuremberg décor of flowers and fruits. The gilded throat of the salt is left smooth and the deep bowl is richly decorated on the exterior side with stylised acanthus leaves. The bowl is further accentuated with a wavy ring, which imitates the ring of the foot. The choice of the decorative motives and the quality of the craftsmanship are the proofs of a competent maker.

During the Baroque period, interest in landscape painting was growing. In the domain of decorative arts and, especially silver, many drinking vessels and other objects were adorned with architectural settings and cityscapes during the seventeenth century. These works follow the artistic developments and decorative fashions of painting.

Salt and Silver Salt Cellars

Thanks to the important meaning of salt for the human nutrition and the conservation of food, a "salt culture" was already developed since the Middle Ages. Saltcellars were very often made of silver. Salt had a privileged position between the uniform ensemble of the table silverware and a ceremonial content. Hence such objects had won a particularly sumptuous and rich décor. Smaller salts served for the distribution and use of it by the banquet guests.

Already by reading the New Testament can one understand the meaning of salt, when Jesus tells the Apostles: "You are the salt of the earth"(Matt. 5:13). Even though salt was the condiment par excellence since very early times, it has been in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, the subject of repeated taxation. This was also often a reason of tumult amongst the people.

In Germany, different manners and customs around salt were introduced. One would give salt to the newlyweds, one would welcome the first-born boy with salt and bread after the baptism and one would give a visitor salt and bread as a welcome gesture.

Maker

Heinrich Gottfried Anton Hammon was born in 1656. He has apprenticed during 1667-1673 by Thomas Ringler and became a master maker in 1684. During 1701-1705, he was a juror in the council, since 1696 named at the large council and since 1709 a councillor. Together with Christoph Marx and Johann Conrad Romedi, Hammon established in 1712 the faience manufactory of Nuremberg (Nürnberger Fayencem), but he got out of the firm three years later. Hammon had a very active workshop and among his clients was also the city council. He died in 1723. Two objects made by him – a beaker on ball-feet and a hand-painted

jug with silver mountings – are held in the Germanisches Nationalmuseum in Nuremberg.