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The Infantado Side Chair By Giles Grendey

A Rare George II Scarlet Japanned Side Chair By Giles Grendey, Commissioned by the Dukes of Infantado, for the Palace of Lazcano, Northern Spain

REF881

Height: 41 1/2 in (105.5 cm)

Width: 21 1/2 in (55 cm)

Depth: 19 1/2 in (50 cm)

PROVENANCE

Almost certainly supplied to either Don Juan Raimundo de Arteaga-Lazcano y Chiriboga (d.1761), III Marqués de Valmediano, for Lazcano Castle, San Sebastián, Spain, circa 1735-1740, and by descent at Lazcano

Or, to Don Juan de Dios de Silva Mendoza y Sandival, X Duque del Infantado (1672-1737), or his daughter, Dona Maria Teresa de Silva y Mendoza, XI Duquesa del Infantado (1707-1770), and by decent at Lazcano.

£ 38000

LITERATURE

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R.W. Symonds, 'In Search of Giles Grendey', 1955, p. 145.

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C. Ordoñez Goded, 'Japanning en España. Un lote de muebles de laca color escarlata realizado por Giles Grendey'. *Revista de la Asociación para el estudio del mueble*, nr. 14. Barcelona, 2011, pp.14-21.

DESCRIPTION

GILES GRENDY AND THE INFANTADO SUITE

These chairs, magnificently decorated in Chinese red, are part of the most celebrated suite of English furniture of the 18th century. From the workshop of Giles Grendey, and commissioned by the Dukes of Infantado for their castle in Lazcano, Northern Spain, much of the suite is now represented in major museums around the globe, such as the V&A, London; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Temple Newsam House, Leeds and the Museo de las Artes Decorativas, Madrid. Comprising of at least 77 pieces, the Infantado commission also included tables, mirrors, tripod stands and several desks and bookcases. It is renowned as one of the most important groups of English furniture of the 18th Century.

This magnificent palatial suite has been extensively published and its importance is unprecedented, with R.W Symonds describing pieces as 'the best English cabinet-work' in 1935 and Christopher Gilbert, referring to its 'outstanding importance' in 1971.

Part of the suite is pictured below in 1944. This was after Venice based dealer Adolph Loewi had acquired the majority of the suite in 1930.

The outstanding Infantado Suite is completely unparalleled in showing the pinnacle of English japanning of the early 18th Century. No name is more synonymous with fine decoration of this type than that of Giles Grendey and furniture he produced in his Clerkenwell workshop. These chairs from this workshop display all the expertise, for which Grendey is so renowned.

GILES GRENDY

(b 1693 – d 1780)

Giles Grendey of Aylesbury House, St John's Square, Clerkenwell, was described at the time of his wife's death as a 'great dealer in the Cabinet Way', and further in 1755 when his daughter married the Royal Cabinet Maker John Cobb as an 'eminent Timber Merchant.' Apprenticed in 1709, Grendey who was born in Wotton-under-Edge in Gloucestershire, became a freeman in 1716, by 1726 taking apprentices into his own employ. After his marriage in 1720, he became a freeman of the city of London and was elected to the livery of the Joiner's Company in 1729.

In 1731, Aylesbury House caught fire and the majority of the building and its contents were almost completely destroyed. According to contemporary newspaper reports, Grendey experienced a devastating loss in the fire, with 'among other rich and valuable Goods was burnt a Chair of such rich and curious Workmanship... it being intended, to be purchas'd by a person of Quality who design'd it as a Present to a German Prince,' together with furniture to the value of £1000 which he 'had pack'd for Exportation against the Next Morning.' It is clear therefore, from such contemporary accounts, that not only was Grendey's business as furniture maker a considerable one, but that he also made furniture specifically for exportation. Furthermore, according to Symonds, he is the only English furniture maker, of whom definite evidence exists to support this.

It is well known that in the 18th century, very few English furniture makers identified their work, however Grendey is an interesting exception to this rule and his trade labels have been recorded on a small number of pieces all of which can be dated on stylistic grounds to the 1740s. The Infantado Suite is an

example whereby some pieces retain stamped initials of Grendey's workmen.

Furniture made in London for the Spanish market invariably displayed distinctive features designed to appeal to the Spaniard's love of opulence. Wealthy Spaniards were passionately fond of lacquer at a time when the dominant demand in England was for walnut and mahogany. Giles Grendey and other firms involved in the export trade therefore produced pieces suitable for japanning. Scarlet was the most popular ground colour, generously enriched with gilt ornament in the Chinese taste. The Lazcano furniture illustrates admirably how English prototypes were adapted to allow a maximum of flat surfaces for decorative treatment. The chairs in particular display features highly typical of native Spanish furniture, which at the time was strongly influenced by English fashions.

The Lazcano Suite, made up of at least 77 items, is the largest recorded suite of 18th century English furniture. Part of the suite was published in 1944, photographed in situ in the late 19th century in the Saloon at the Palace of Lazcano. This was after the Venice-based dealer Adolph Loewi had acquired the majority of the suite in 1930. The suite has since been widely dispersed with many pieces having been acquired by important museums and collections worldwide.

THE DUKES OF INFANTADO

The title, Duke of the Infantado, was granted to Diego Hurtado de Mendoza y Figueroa, son of Inigo Lopez de Mendoza, 1st Marquis of Santillana, by the Catholic Monarchs, Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella I of Castile, on 22 July 1475. They remained an important family throughout Spanish history and the family counts seven knights in the Order of the Golden Fleece and one Prime Minister of Spain. They had a number of important residences, such as the Castillo de Manzanares in Castilla, the Palacio del Infantado in Guadalajara and the Palacio Lazcano.

The Palace of Lazcano was built between 1620 and 1640, San Sebastian, Spain, and is associated with one of the oldest noble titles in Spain. The Infantado's were perfectly positioned in the early 18th century to embark on the commissioning of a suite of furniture such as this for their magnificent castle in Lazcano.