

William III. An extremely rare Britannia Standard Chocolate Cup made in London in 1697, maker's Mark of VN, mARK 3855 gRIMWADE.

£12,500



Description

The Cup stands on a ring foot and has a slightly baluster plain body, of thick heavy gauge. This piece has a cast scroll handle and the front is engraved with the lozenge shaped Armorial of a Lady, surrounded by a pluming scroll cartouche. This piece is in excellent condition and is very well marked on the side of the main body. It is of an excellent gauge and weight and has a fine colour. The distinctive maker's mark of Vn is shown in "London Goldsmiths 1697-1837", Mark 3855. Interestingly, the example of his work cited is a Mug, so he must have specialised in this area. Drinking chocolate was introduced into England in the middle of the 17th century, however silver chocolate cups are rare from this early date. It was taken warm, rather than hot, so could be drunk from a silver vessel. The beverage, as prepared in the 17th and 18th centuries, was boiled with claret and mixed with eggs, milk, sugar, vanilla and spices. Thick with cocoa butter, the mixture had to then be milled, whirled between the hands, to produce a liquid of uniform consistency and desired froth. The technique is described in John Worlidge's, *Vinetum Britannicum*, published in 1676: '...be sure whilst it is boyling, keep it stirring, and when it is off the fire, whirr it with your hand mill...and the rough end in the liquor, causes an equal mixture of the liquor with your chocolate and raises a head or froth over it...' These arms are a spinster of the Strode family. The arms are given as those of Strode of Shipton Mallet (sic), Somerset or those at Stoke-under-Hambden, Somerset. In the Consistory Court of Canterbury there is the Will of an Elizabeth Strode of Downsyde, Somerset, Spinster. Her Will was made in 1714 and was probated in 1715. She was extremely wealthy and the will is several pages long with numerous bequests for £500. This cup could have been her property at one stage. Height: 2.8 inches, 7cm. Diameter at the rim: 3 inches, 7.5 cm Weight: 6.5 oz