The Lowther Castle Salt Cellars. An important set of four George III Silver Gilt Salt Cellars made in London in 1803/1804 by Digby Scott & Benjamin Smith.

Sold

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Description

These magnificent vessels are cast and stand on a circular stand with three bracket feet chased with an anthemion against a matted ground. The cellar above, is bolted in place, and is circular in form with a gilded interior and an everted rim chased with linear palm motifs, identical to the outer border of the stand. The large slightly baluster main body is decorated with unusual linear curtains interspersed with very detailed lion mask mouldings and lion paw feet, the surface textured to simulate the fur of the lion. The legs each display a shield of crossed oak branches and acorns. The top of the domed platform is engraved with a contemporary Crest, with the Coronet of an Earl above and the Crest surrounded by a garter engraved with the Motto of the Order of the Garter. The cellars are fully marked on the underside and on the side of the cellar. All are in excellent condition and are of an exceptionally heavy weight. Two are also stamped on the under base "RUNDELL BRIDGE & RUNDELL AURIFICES REGIS LONDINI FECERUNT". The difference in dates is just where the Hallmarking year changes in May and two were marked on the last day of the hallmarking year and two on the first day of the new year. This is often seen with the components of sets of silver items.The crest is that of William, Viscount and Baron Lowther (1757-1844), created 1st Earl of Lonsdale in 1807. He married Augusta, eldest daughter of John, 9th Earl of Westmorland, in 1781. The Earl was a significant patron of the arts and commissioned the rebuilding of Lowther Castle. He was one of the great patrons of plate in the Regency era, including owning one of the Shields of Achilles (now at Anglesey Abbey, National Trust).The present group of four salt cellars was originally part of a group of twelve, hallmarked for 1803, 1804, 1808 and 1810, which was dispersed in the Lonsdale sale in 1947. They can be compared to a group of 36 salt cellars in the Royal Collection, designed in an even more pronounced Egyptian taste with sphinx heads (RCIN 50821). These, part of the 'Grand Service', were produced by Digby Scott and Benjamin Smith, and Philip Rundell, between 1802-19 (see Carlton House: The Past Glories of George IV's Palace, 1991, p. 131, no. 92). Another set, with lion head and shield supports by Benjamin and James Smith of 1810, sold at Christie's, London, October 23, 1991, lot 47.These Salt Cellars were part of the fabulous Collection of Regency Silver belonging to Alan & Simone Hartman, which was sold by Christie's in New York in October, 1999. They formed lot 188 and the catalogue entry is shown. They are offered at a very good price, as the estimate in 1999 was $ 40,000-$60,000, the set.Height: 3.75 inches, 9.38 cm.Diameter at the rim: 4.2 inches, 10.5 cm.Weight: 72oz, the set.PROVENANCE:William, 1st Earl of Lonsdale (1757-1844), by descent toLancelot, 6th Earl of Lonsdale O.B.E. (1867-1953), soldChristie's, London, February 19-20, 1947, lot 220 (set of 12; £170 to M. Hedges)Christie's, London, October 6, 1948, lot 81 (£60 to Black)The Alan & Simone Hartman Collection, Lot 188, Christie's New York, October, 1999.Digby Scott & Benjamin Smith w...

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