

# James Craggs - Tripod Table

to you Squire, £100,000...

(& thanks to very helpful folk at Ronald Phillips, Bruton St, London)



## A GEORGE I CHINESE LACQUER TRIPOD TABLE

An exceedingly rare early 18th century Chinese lacquer tripod table, having a triangular tip-up top with one money well on each of the three sides and finely decorated with *chinoiserie* landscapes in gold and red hues on a black background, bearing the coat of arms of James Craggs of Westminster to the centre, the base being black japanned and having a birdcage action on a gun barrel column with turned pendent finial; on cabriole legs terminating in pad feet.

**Note:** This exceptionally rare table is one of only three examples known. One was formerly in the Leigh Block Collection, Chicago, and the third, illustrated in *The Dictionary of English Furniture*, was made for the Tower family of Weald Hall, Essex. This unusual table was especially designed for a three-player card game called 'hombre', a trick game that originated in Spain and was very popular all over Europe at the end of the 17th century and the beginning of the 18th.

James Craggs the elder (baptised in 1657) possessed considerable wealth through his connection to the Duchess of Marlborough. He was a Member of Parliament between 1702 and 1713 and was subsequently made Postmaster General in 1715. His son James also achieved high office, becoming Secretary of State to the King and a Privy Counsellor, but sadly he died shortly before his father. Craggs the elder invested heavily and disastrously in the South Sea Company,

losing vast amounts of money as a result. He died in disgrace shortly afterwards in 1721, only a month after his son. After his death, his property was confiscated by act of Parliament to pay off his debts incurred in the South Sea Bubble, and this table may have been seized together with his other belongings at the time.

English, *circa* 1720

Height: 28¾ in; 73 cm  
Width: 41¾ in; 106 cm  
Depth: 36 in; 91.5 cm

### Provenance:

James Craggs the elder;  
Private collection, England.

### Literature:

William Ince and John Mayhew, *The Universal System of Household Furniture*, 1762, pl. LIII.

Percy Macquoid and Ralph Edwards, *The Dictionary of English Furniture*, revised edition, 1954, vol. III, p. 198, fig. 20.