

Finch & C^o



A FINE PAIR OF 17TH CENTURY VENETIAN BRONZE CHERUBS ATTRIBUTED TO THE WORKSHOP OF NICCOLO ROCCATAGLIATA (ACTIVE 1593 - 1636)

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NOW MOUNTED ON GREEN MARBLE COLUMNS AND BASE
17CMX27CM

LITERATURE

MANY PUTTI HAVE BEEN ATTRIBUTED TO ROCCATAGLIATA BUT VERY LITTLE IS ACTUALLY KNOWN ABOUT HIM DURING THE 43 YEARS HE WORKED INTERMITTENTLY IN VENICE.

HOWEVER THIS BRONZE HAS A COMPARABLE EXAMPLE FORMERLY IN THE BUTE COLLECTION AT LUTON PARK IN THE SHAPE OF AN ANDIRON THAT WAS ORIGINALLY COMMISSIONED FROM ROCCATAGLIATA'S VENETIAN WORKSHOP BY THE SORANZO FAMILY OF VENICE, A FAMILY WHO WERE AMONGST THE WEALTHIEST OF THE VENETIAN NOBILITY OF THE TIME. IT WAS THEN BOUGHT IN VENICE BY JOHN, 3RD EARL OF BUTE (1713-1792) FOR HIS DRAWING ROOM AT LUTON PARK. ON THIS LARGE 24 INCH BRONZE ARE TWO IDENTICAL CHERUBS.

THESE PUTTI ALL HAVE DISTINCTIVELY PROPORTIONED BODIES, HOODED EYES AND CURLING HAIR PILED UP OVER THE FOREHEAD AND ARE PARTICULARLY LIKE THOSE OF OTHER PUTTI KNOWN TO BE FROM THE HAND AND WORKSHOP OF ROCCATAGLIATA SUCH AS THOSE ON THE DOCUMENTED CANDLESTICKS THAT HE WAS COMMISSIONED TO MAKE IN 1593 FOR THE CHOIR IN SAN GIORGIO MAGGIORE. IN 1594 HE WAS PAID FOR CASTING TWENTY TWO BRONZE PUTTI FOR SCONCES IN THIS CHURCH AND IN 1595 FOR CASTING SIX CANDELABRA DECORATED WITH PUTTI.

IT IS EASY THEREFORE TO SEE WHY ROCCATAGLIATA HAS BEEN CALLED THE 'MASTER OF THE PUTTO' BUT FROM THESE TWO CHERUBS IT IS EVIDENT THAT HE WAS INDEED 'A MASTER' OF HIS ART.

CF. WORKS OF ART FROM THE BUTE COLLECTION , CHRISTIES JULY 1996 LOT 27