Finch & Co



BLOODSTONE GEM, ENGRAVED WITH A CLASSICAL SCENE OF MERCURY AND FORTUNA

A FINE BLOODSTONE GEM, ENGRAVED WITH A CLASSICAL SCENE OF MERCURY AND FORTUNA DANCING

LATE 18TH CENTURY

SIZE: 2.5CM HIGH, 3CM WIDE – 1 INS HIGH, 1¼ INS WIDE

LITERATURE

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS IN HIS PORTRAIT OF THE SOCIETY OF THE DILETTANTI SHOWS THE GROUP, WITH SIR WILLIAM HAMILTON AND CHARLES GREVILLE AT THE CENTRE, EXAMINING GEMS OF WHICH PERHAPS SOME WERE FROM HAMILTON'S OWN COLLECTION.

SIR WILLIAM HAMILTON MADE USE OF HIS LONG STAY AS AMBASSADOR TO NAPLES TO ACQUIRE GEMS. MANY OF THESE CAME FROM EXCAVATIONS IN THE AREA AND HE ALSO BOUGHT FROM DEALERS IN ROME AND COMMISSIONED WORKS FROM BIRCH, MARCHANT, PICHLER AND OTHER CARVERS. A LARGE NUMBER OF GEMS WERE INCLUDED IN A BATCH OF ANTIQUITIES THAT HE SOLD TO THE BRITISH MUSEUM IN 1772.