Finch & Co



NEAPOLITAN GOLD PIQUE INLAID TORTOISESHELL SNUFF BOX

A RARE NEAPOLITAN GOLD PIQUE INLAID TORTOISESHELL SNUFF BOX FINELY DECORATED WITH A GRAND TOUR VIEW OF VESUVIUS AND THE BAY OF NAPLES WITH SHIPPING AND THE LIGHTHOUSE THE SIDES ADORNED WITH ISLANDS CASTLES SHIPS BIRDS AND INSECTS

SECOND HALF OF THE 18TH CENTURY

SIZE: 4.5CM HIGH, 7.5CM DIA. - 1¾ INS HIGH, 3 INS DIA.

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LITERATURE

IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 18TH CENTURY NAPLES EXPERIENCED A GOLDEN AGE. THE BRITISH, INCLUDING THE ENGLISH AMBASSADOR TO THE CITY, SIR WILLIAM HAMILTON, LOVED NAPLES, ITS PEOPLE, ITS SURROUNDINGS AND ITS HISTORY. VESUVIUS WAS THEN MORE ACTIVE THAN AT ANY TIME SINCE ANTIQUITY AND HAMILTON OBSERVED AND RECORDED IT PYROTECHNICS WITH SCIENTIFIC ACUMEN. AT THE SAME TIME THE ANCIENT CITY OF POMPEII, ENGULFED IN LAVA AND ASH IN AD 79 WAS BEING REDISCOVERED AND SIR WILLIAM'S COLLECTION OF ANTIQUITIES INCLUDED OBJECTS FROM THESE EARLY EXCAVATIONS. IN 1772 HE OFFERED THEM TO PARLIAMENT FOR SALE AND THEY ENTERED THE COLLECTIONS OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM FOR THE THEN CONSIDERABLE SUM OF £8400. THIS LARGE ACQUISITION HAD A SIGNIFICANT AND LASTING IMPACT ON THE BRITISH MUSEUM'S COLLECTIONS AND WERE IMPORTANT IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH CLASSICAL TASTE.

PROVENANCE

EX PRIVATE COLLECTION HON. MRS N. IONIDES

SOLD SOTHEBYS, LONDON, 12TH OCT 1964, LOT 169

EX PRIVATE ENGLISH COLLECTION

PUBLISHED IN 'OBJECTS OF VERTU', HOWARD RICKETTS, LONDON, 1971, PG. 62