

Finch & C^o



ANCIENT ROMAN WHITE MARBLE ALTAR FRAGMENT CARVED WITH A DEPICTION OF AN ORNATE BRONZE 'THYMIATERION'

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1ST CENTURY AD

SIZE: 52CM HIGH, 16.5CM WIDE, 20CM DEEP - 20½ INS HIGH, 6½ INS WIDE, 8 INS DEEP

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LITERATURE

AT EVERY LEVEL OF ANCIENT ROMAN SOCIETY RELIGION WAS A MATTER OF OBSERVANCE, NOT DOCTRINE. BY CICERO'S TIME (106 B.C - 43 B.C), THE PUBLIC FACE OF RELIGION WAS ENTIRELY IN THE HANDS OF COLLEGES OF PRIESTS, PROMINENT CITIZENS WHO WERE APPOINTED OR ELECTED TO PERFORM THE PROPER CEREMONIALS AND RITUALS ON BEHALF OF THE COMMUNITY THEY REPRESENTED. DOMESTICALLY THE FATHER OF THE FAMILY FULFILLED THE SAME OFFICE ON BEHALF OF THE HOUSEHOLD UNDER HIS CARE, OFFERING DAILY PRAYERS, GIFTS AND BURNING INCENSE AT THE 'LARARIUM' WITHIN WHICH WERE DISPLAYED THE FIGURES OF TRADITIONAL HOUSEHOLD GODS, THE 'LARES', THE 'PENATES' AND THE 'GENII' AND OF SUCH OTHER DIVINITIES AS THE FAMILY HELD IN ESPECIAL HONOUR. IT WAS HERE THAT RITUALS WERE ALSO PERFORMED ASSOCIATED WITH IMPORTANT FAMILY EVENTS SUCH AS A BOY'S COMING OF AGE. THESE SIMPLE RITUALS WERE A PART OF DAILY LIFE WHICH NO PRUDENT ROMAN WOULD HAVE WILLINGLY NEGLECTED.

PROVENANCE

EX PRIVATE WEST LONDON COLLECTION

ACQUIRED 1970'S