Finch & Co





A RARE AND IMPORTANT LATE ROMAN MARBLE COLUMN

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WITH A FLUTED SPIRAL CENTRAL COLUMN SHAFT RISING TO A CARVED INTEGRAL CAPITAL WITH CORINTHIAN 'ACANTHUS' LEAF DECORATION, THE BASE WITH A RELIEF CARVED CHARIOT AND CHARIOTEER

WHITE MARBLE

EASTERN ROMAN EMPIRE

CIRCA 300 AD

SIZE: 288CM HIGH - 113½ INS HIGH / 9 FEET 44 INS HIGH

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LITERATURE

'CORINTHIAN' DESCRIBES AN ORNATE COLUMN STYLE DEVELOPED IN ANCIENT GREECE AND CLASSIFIED AS ONE OF THE 'CLASSICAL ORDERS OF ARCHITECTURE'. THE NAME COMES FROM A 'MYTH' ABOUT A YOUNG CORINTHIAN GIRL WHO DIED TRAGICALLY, AND AN 'ACANTHUS PLANT' WHICH 'SPROUTED' FROM HER GRAVE, WITH THE 'LEAVES' OF THE CAPITALS, RESEMBLING THOSE FROM THE GRAVE. THE COLUMNS ARE USUALLY TALL AND SLENDER, WITH FLUTED SHAFTS AND INCLUDE BASES.

FAVOURITE CHARIOTEERS AND HORSES WERE RECEIVED BY THE PUBLIC WITH LOUD APPLAUSE, AND IN INSCRIPTIONS THE NAME OF THE VICTORIOUS HORSE IS FREQUENTLY MENTIONED TOGETHER WITH THAT OF THE

CHARIOTEER. CAPPADOCIA, SICILY, SPAIN AND AFRICA WERE CELEBRATED FOR THEIR RACE HORSES WHOSE PEDIGREE, AGE AND NAMES WERE METICULOUSLY RECORDED.

CHARIOTEERS WERE FREE CITIZENS, BUT OVER TIME THE OCCUPATION, ALTHOUGH NEVER CONSIDERED DISHONOURABLE LIKE THAT OF THE GLADIATOR, CAME TO BE REGARDED AS UNWORTHY OF A FREE ROMAN. IT WAS THEREFORE LEFT TO BE TAKEN UP BY MOSTLY SLAVES AND FREEDMEN WHO WERE TRAINED AT SPECIAL SCHOOLS. THESE WERE COMPRISED OF A COMPLETE STAFF OF CHARIOT MAKERS, TAILORS, SHOEMAKERS, SURGEONS AND TEACHERS, AND WERE KEPT BY ONE OR SEVERAL OWNERS, 'DOMINI FACTIONUM', WHO WOULD LET OUT BOTH THE CHARIOTS AND THE CHARIOTEERS TO THE HIGHEST BIDDERS OF THE PARTIES IN CONTROL OF THE CIRCUS. VICTORIOUS CHARIOTEERS RECEIVED SILVER CROWNS, VALUABLE GARMENTS AND MONEY, AND THE SUCCESSFUL OFTEN MADE LARGE FORTUNES AND BECAME 'DOMINI FACTIONUM'.

PROVENANCE

EX PRIVATE DIPLOMATIC RESIDENTIAL LONDON PROPERTY, SINCE 1980'S

EX PRIVATE UK COLLECTION