



Three Solid Silver Tondi On A Red Jasper Background



12 000 EUR

Period : 19th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Sterling silver

Width : 22 et 29 cm

Height : 22 cm

Description

Three silver and silver-gilt tondi representing two tragic masks and a fountain spout. Silver, silver and vermeil for the central tondo, red jasper, giltwood. Italy. 19th century. 22 x 22 cm (8,66 x 8,66 in) and 22 x 29 cm (8,66 x 11,42 in) (central tondo). The central tondo, in silver and silver-gilt on a red jasper background, represents a fountain spout from the Palazzo Pitti in Florence, traditionally attributed to Pietro Tacca, although the latter is not mentioned by Piero Torriti in his monograph dedicated to the artist. The other two tondi, meanwhile, are based on Pompeian marble antefixes preserved at the Naples Archaeological Museum, which take the form of a tragic hero and heroine, or rather their persona, that is, the mask worn by actors in Roman theater for tragic plays. Such ornaments were often used as architectural

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elements, in both the Republican and Imperial eras, in the form of appliques, antefixes, or even fountain spouts, which doubtless explains the connection of these tragic masks with the central tondo. As these three reliefs are apparently without hallmarks, it is difficult, if not impossible, to attribute their remarkable sculpture to any specific silversmith, about whom only the virtuosity is certain. This artist, moreover, took the liberty of interpreting the motif of the tragic masks, here dramatized, so to speak, even somewhat 'baroquisés' in any case freed from their ancient hieraticism. It is also remarkable that the silversmith did not choose as a model the famous colossal masks from the Pio-Clementino Museum in the Vatican, originating from the scaenae frons of Hadrian's Odeon at Tivoli, and that he preferred these two Pompeian antefixes, whose fame is in no way comparable to the Hadrianic reliefs. Thus, this choice reflects a certain classical education, and perhaps a form of elitism, far removed from the majority of Roman works produced for the Grand Tour industry. The choice of a Florentine fountain for the central tondo, and the total absence of any strictly Roman motif, allows us to dismiss the hypothesis of a silversmith active in that city (Rome), and perhaps to consider that of a silversmith active in Florence in the 19th century.