

MACKINNON FINE FURNITURE



A GEORGE II CALAMANDER COMMODOE

England, *circa* 1755

The serpentine form of this superb commode, with its rococo frame on scrolled cabriole legs, is inspired by English furniture designs of the mid 18th century. It relates to patterns for 'French Commode Tables' published in Thomas Chippendale's *The Gentleman and Cabinet-Maker's Director*, 1754 (plates XLIII-XLIV), while his *Director*, 3rd ed., 1762, includes related patterns for elaborate rococo mounts amongst his 'Designs of Handles & Escutcheons for Brass-Work' (plate CC). On this commode, the shells sculpted on the rococo ormolu handles and escutcheons echo those found on the stand. It is made of richly-figured Indian calamander, the black striations earned it the name of 'marblewood' and it is rare to find on such an early piece of English furniture. Although the use of calamander in cabinet-making is associated to Galle, on the south-west coast of Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon), a former Dutch colony, it was also prevalent in South India, parts of which were British East India territory from the late 17th century.

A related three drawer commode on stand, formerly in the collection of the Viscounts Galway at Serlby Hall, Nottinghamshire, was sold from the Samuel Messer collection, Christie's London, 5 December 1991, lot 105. Another similar from the O'Dwyer family, was sold anonymously Christie's London, 5 June 2008, lot 116. A calamander and ebonised commode with bracket feet, rather than a stand, was sold from the collection of the late Dr. Eric Till, Christie's London, 14 June 2001, lot 25. A pair of late 18th century calamander commodes made in Galle were exhibited by Michael Lipitch Antiques at LAPADA in 2014 – another sold from Lyon & Turnbull 5 March 2014, lot 245 – stylistically the example from Galle in general relate more closely to Dutch and Portuguese furniture – the island being a Portuguese colony up until 1658.

SOLD

An extremely rare and fine George II calamander and ebony serpentine fronted commode, the top with gadrooned border above a green baize-lined slide and three graduated drawers, the apron centred by a stylised scallop shell issuing foliage and rockwork, on foliate-capped cabriole legs, scroll feet and leather castors.

Height: 2' 7¹/₄" in (80 cm)

Width: 3' 0" in (91.5 cm)

Depth: 1' 9" in (53.5 cm)

Stock Number

P07.46

5 Ryder Street - St James's - London, SW1Y 6PY

Phone: +44(0)20 7839 5671 Mobile: +44(0)7725 332 665

Email: charlie@mackinnonfineart.com Web: mackinnonfineart.com

