

MACKINNON FINE FURNITURE



AN ITALIAN PARQUETRY COMMODE

Italy, circa 1755

During the 18th century, the north of Italy was very much influenced by French fashion and taste, and this had particular impact on the decorative arts. The northern territories, like the kingdom of Piedmont and Sardinia or the Great-Dukedom of Tuscany not only imported works of art from France, but also many artists came looking for work, which naturally had a deep impact and influence on local artists and craftsmen.

Therefore, furniture made in these parts of Italy, during the mid 18th century, often exhibited idiosyncratic interpretations of the French styles, particularly the Louis XV taste and the rococo spirit prevalent at this time. This commode is a fine example of this blend of foreign influences with local craftsmanship, interpretation and materials.

Giallo de Siena, of which the top is made, is a fine-grained calcareous limestone of Jurassic age, weakly metamorphosed in Eocene times. It is coloured by finely disseminated goethite and contains abundant stylolites and some white calcite-filled veins. The famous egg-yolk marble of Siena has been used extensively all across Italy and farther afield since at least the 16th century. At its finest, it rivals the famous *giallo antico* of Tunisia for translucency and richness of colour. The best stone comes from Montarrente in the Montagnola Senese mountains, near the town of Sovicille. Siena marble has been exported all over the world - fine examples include the twenty four columns in the court Chamber of the US Supreme Court in Washington DC and the decoration of the Birmingham Oratory in England built in the early 1900s.

A very fine and rare mid 18th century Italian serpentine walnut parquetry two drawer commode, the sides and each drawer decorated with borders of broad cross-banding framing a lozenge parquetry pane. The drawers retain their original gilt handles which take the form of interlocking 'C' scrolls bordered within foliate ornament. The whole standing on cabriole legs terminating in ball and claw feet, the sides of each leg enriched with a 'S' scroll in low relief. With a fine quality of Siena marble top. The walnut with superb colour and patination throughout.

Height: 2' 10⁵/₁₆" in (88 cm)

Width: 4' 3¹/₁₆" in (130 cm)

Depth: 2' 0" in (61 cm)

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