

MACKINNON FINE FURNITURE



THE COUNTESS OF HARDWICKE'S GILT GESSO TABLES

England, *circa* 1720-25

The magnificent specimen marble tops are probably those referred to in a letter from James Byres to Phillip Yorke, 3rd Earl of Hardwicke, dated 17 April 1779. Byres writes 'the two tables / studies of the different marble, & alabasters were forgot in the note you gave me, but Sigr. [Antonio] Vinelli call'd upon me the other day to inform me that they were finish'd, I have paid him forty four Sequins for them'. What is particularly interesting is in the same letter Byres continues saying that 'Rome begins to be very thin of English. Sir George Strickland went on Thursday'. Strickland, also on the Grand Tour, was the owner of our Boynton Hall table and the comparison of the marble tops is extraordinary, quite probably suggesting they were made in the same workshops at the same time and purchased by Yorke and Strickland on their respective Grand Tours.

A magnificent and highly important pair of early 18th century George I period gilt gesso side tables in the manner of James Moore with Roman specimen marble tops attributed to Antonio Vinelli, *circa* 1779.

The gilt gesso tables, of outstanding quality, with foliate carved friezes with a punched ground, supported on cabriole legs headed by plumed masks and scrolling acanthus leaves terminating in scroll feet. The rectangular tops inlaid with a collection of hexagonal marble and hardstone specimens including lapiz lazuli, alabaster, amethyst, porphyry and granites, later enlarged to fit the tables.

Literature:

Inventory & Valuation of Furniture, Fixtures and Effects at Tittenhanger [sic] House St Albans, the property of the late Countess Dowager of Hardwicke, 20 July 1858, p. 67

An Inventory of Furniture, China, Glass, Books and other effects at Tyttenhanger House near St Albans, The Property of the Right Honourable Countess of Caledon and let to H. W. Eaton Esq., July 1864

H. Avray Tipping, 'Tyttenhanger, Hertfordshire, The Seat of the Earl of Caledon – II', *Country Life*, 11 October 1919, p. 454, fig. 1

H. Avray Tipping, 'Furniture at Tyttenhanger', *Country Life*, 8 November 1919, p. 590, fig. 1

H. Avray Tipping, *English Homes, Period IV – Vol. I, Late Stuart 1649 – 1714*, London, 1920, p. 77, fig. 108A

L. Syngé, *Great English Furniture*, London, 1991, p. 86, pl. 90

Height: 2' 7³/₄" in (80.5 cm)

Width: 3' 11⁵/₈" in (121 cm)

Depth: 2' 5⁷/₈" in (76 cm)

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U07.66

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