

Adam Calvert Bentley and Ardgowan Antiques

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Antique Etruscan Marquetry Panel

£2,500

A fine marquetry panel depicting Venus and Cupid with doves attributed to George Haupt and Christopher Fürloh. The old label on the back states the source as a fresco found at Pompeii, though we have yet to trace this particular scene. The same panel features on one of a pair of commodes at Osterley Park which were commissioned by Robert Child, designed by Robert Adam and attributed to Linell, the marquetry attributed to George Haupt and Christopher Fürloh. This marquetry panel was possibly produced in the same pack of veneers as the central panel from the Osterley commodes, as indicated by the undulating outline of Venus' right breast.

Presented in an oak frame with gilt-wood slip.

SKU: OWPanel

Height: 32 cm (12.5 inches) framed

Width: 36.5 cm (14.25 inches) framed

Year: London. 1773



The Osterley Commodes

There was a delay of some three years before the Childs turned their attention to the drawing room where the magnificent pair of elliptical marquetry commodes ordered for the pier walls are among the finest pieces of furniture to be preserved in the house. They are veneered with harewood, satinwood, rosewood and other woods and richly mounted with ormolu, including a tablet in the frieze consisting of winged griffins supporting a portrait medallion. There is no doubt that these commodes owe their design to Robert Adam. He intended their side panels to be ornamented with figures in oval frames and their central panels with a classical subject in a roundel set within an octagonal frame. He may have taken the latter feature from the ceiling of the great drawing-room at Syon House where G. B. Cipriani had painted figure subjects in roundels within octagonal surrounds.⁶⁴ As the figures on the drawing-room commodes were to be painted it is possible that he had originally planned their execution by Cipriani. However, this did not materialise. Instead, the decoration was carried out in marquetry. Both the subjects illustrated in these marquetry panels and the way in which the commodes are constructed, has been discussed at length in Chapter S. The evidence suggests that the pieces may have been supplied by the Linnell firm but were set with marquetry obtained from George Haupt and Christopher Fürlong or from one of their compatriots working in London.

Christopher Fürlog and George Haupt

Christopher Fürlog came to London late in 1766 or early in 1767 and was followed at the end of that year or early in 1768 by his brother-in-law, Georg Haupt. These young men had completed their apprenticeship in Sweden and had then set off on their wander years together in 1762, working first in Amsterdam and then in Paris. They were outstanding craftsmen and each was destined to reach

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the top of his profession. Fürloh remained in England and was later to become cabinet maker to the Prince of Wales. Haupt, on the other hand, returned to Stockholm in August 1769 after receiving news from the Swedish envoy in London of his appointment as cabinet maker to the King of Sweden.

Upon their arrival in England they were looking for work and turned for help to Sir William Chambers, who was held in high regard in Sweden and was a close friend of the Swedish envoy in London. Chambers was known to receive many Swedish friends in England and it seems likely that he introduced the young craftsmen to John Linnell, with whom he would have come in contact while working for Francis Child at Osterley Park. There is evidence to suggest that they became, not unexpectedly, temporary employees of the Linnell firm. Their particular importance lay in their knowledge of French cabinet making design which John Linnell would have been eager to exploit.