



F.POZZI (1790-1844). An important Neoclassical Rock Crystal Intaglio. Napoleon Bonaparte.

Circa: First half of the 19th Century

Intaglio: 7.8 x 5.5 cm (3 1/8 x 2 1/8 inches)

Italy, First half of the 19th Century

A remarkable early 19th-century rock crystal intaglio, exquisitely engraved by Francesco Pozzi (1750–1805), depicts Napoleon Crossing the Alps at the Great St. Bernard Pass. Based on the iconic composition by Jacques-Louis David, this finely detailed work captures the heroic and idealised vision of Napoleon’s legendary campaign. The intaglio—mounted in unmarked gold and still housed in its original fitted case—is a rare and evocative object of neoclassical craftsmanship.

As Pozzi passed away in 1844, this piece is not only directly inspired by David’s celebrated paintings (produced between 1801 and 1805) but may also reflect early 19th-century fascination with Napoleonic imagery. Commissioned originally by the King of Spain, David’s equestrian portrait portrayed Napoleon as a determined and commanding figure, leading his troops through the Alps in May 1800. The intaglio translates that grandeur into miniature, painstakingly engraved in rock crystal.

Given its age, artistry, and connection to one of history’s most iconic images, the intaglio undoubtedly holds a compelling, yet untold, provenance.

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TASSINARI ;G. (2020), "Un ignoto incisore di gemme: lo scultore e ceroplasta Francesco Pozzi", MDCCC, 9-5-46. The journal MDCCC 1800

Literature

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