

PATRICK JEFFERSON



SET OF FOUR NEOCLASSICAL GILT BRONZE WALL LIGHTS

France *circa* 1860.

Height 14" (36cm)

Width 17¾" (45cm)

Depth 8" (20cm)

The cartouche-shaped backplate surmounted by a shell, above the head of Hercules wearing the pelt of the Nemean lion, flanked by Greek keys issuing a pair of acanthus-wrapped, scrolling arms supporting foliate sconces; variously numbered; some of the original gilt-lacquer surface remaining.

Related Antique inspired wall sconces appear in the final years of the seventeenth century, notably at the court of Louis XIV. This set of four *appliques a deux lumières* relate to designs by André-Charles Boulle that must have influenced the sumptuous bronze mounts by François-Antoine Vassé on the marble chimneypiece commissioned in 1724 by Louis XV for the Salon de Hercules at the Château de Versailles (J. Pérouse de Montclos, *Versailles*, pages 262-3). In the early eighteenth century, other variants appeared throughout Europe, such as the carved mahogany mask wall light that recalls a design for a clock case in Batty Langley's *Treasury of Designs*, 1740, which, in turn, was taken from a pattern book by Johann Friedrich Lauch (*World Furniture*, ed. Hayward, page 130, no. 472). The Palladian flavour is also reminiscent of the eighteenth century architect and designer William Kent, who used similar devices of shell-backed masks for consoles and looking glasses, such as the oval mirror for the White House at Kew (Susan Weber, *William Kent*, page 290, fig. 11.28).

The inspiration for these wall lights is the myth of Hercules, son of Zeus, who was forced by Eurystheus, King of Mycenae, to perform twelve tasks of inordinate difficulty, commencing with the slaying of the Nemean lion. Upon his victory, the lion's pelt, which was impervious to all but the most powerful weapons, became Hercules' enduring symbol.

£15,000

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fig. 1



fig. 2



fig. 3