

A highly important and unique Italian Rococó carved and giltwood mirror, over a structure of poplar, decorated with the original etched glass plates.

Turin, half XVIII Century.

Height: 226 cm. (89 in.)

Width: 132 cm. (52 in.)

Comparative Literature:

- R. Antonetto, *Minusieri ed ebanisti del Piemonte: storia e immagini del Mobile Piemontese, 1636-1844*, Turin, 1985, p. 206, pl. 286.
- R. Antonetto, *Il mobile piemontese nel Settecento. Vol. 2, Anonima eccellenza*, Turin, 2010, p. 186, no. 16 and p. 250, no. 10.
- S. De Blasi, *Genio e maestria: mobili ed ebanisti alla corte sabauda tra Settecento e Ottocento*, exh. cat., Reggia di Venaria, Venaria Reale, 17 March – 15 July 2018, p. 233, no. 24.

Some interiors in this style can be documented in Piedmont from second quarter of XVIII Century until 1771, on the occasion of the wedding of Maria Giuseppina of Savoy, Vittorio Amedeo's eldest daughter, with Louis Xavier, Count de Provence (the future Luis XVIII). The wedding was celebrated in Palazzo Isnardi di Caraglio, seat of the Asinari di San Marzano family since 1770 and house of the French ambassador François Etienne, Duc de Choiseul. There we see for the first time ornaments in gilt wood in what can be recognised as an early Neoclassical style decorating overdoors and mantelpieces (fig. 1), in our mirror still not present yet. These were designed by Filippo Castelli and were beautifully harmonised with the Rococo stucco decorations by Benedetto Alfieri (1699–1767) and Giovan Battista Borra (1712–86). A collector of neoclassical architectural prints, Castelli appropriated the Parisian style reinterpreting it according to aesthetic canons matured from the Rococo, but not completely independent from it. This so-called '*grazia decorativa*' (grace in decoration) can be fully witnessed in the aforementioned overdoors of Palazzo Isnardi, where medallions with allegorical figures, probably carved by Giovanni Battista Bernero (1735–96), are framed by ample coils inspired by the Antique from which originate floral garlands that have much in common with those of the present mirror, at the height of the *barocchetto* style.



The mirror is characteristic the end of the exuberant Baroque taste at the Savoy court in Northern Italy in the second half of the 18th century. It is part of a small group of mirrors with etched glass peripheral plates all produced by the same yet-to-be identified Turinese workshop.

Other early examples include :

- a pair of mirrors of slightly smaller proportions in a private collection illustrated in Antonetto 2010, *op. cit.*, no. 16
- A pair of *girandoles* in Turin's Palazzo Reale, illustrated in Antonetto 1985, *op. cit.*, pl. 286. (Fig.2).
- Further pairs of *girandoles* in private collections including those exhibited in the important recent exhibition of Savoy court furnishings at Venaria Reale (De Blasi, *op. cit.*, no. 24)
- A pair of very similar mirrors of the same period in an important private collection in Piedmont, illustrated in Antonetto, *Il mobile piemontese nel Settecento*. Vol. 2, *Anonima eccellenza*, Turin, 2010, p. 186, no. 16. (Fig.3).

Condition:

The mirror was lightly cleaned 10 years ago. It retains restorations to the gilding.



Fig. 1 Overdoor of Palazzo Isnardi di Caraglio



Fig.2



Fig.3