Finch & Co



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WITH FLAT SINGLE EDGED RE-CURVED BLADE STAMPED ONCE WITH A CUTLER'S MARK AND WITH AN ENGRAVED STRIP OF SILVER ALONG THE BACK EDGE. THE GREEN STAINED IVORY HANDLE IS INSET WITH SILVER CABBALISTIC DEVICES, FOLIAGE AND FLOWERS, THE TANG OF THE BLADE ALSO ENGRAVED WITH CABBALISTIC DEVICES, THE POMMEL WITH SIMILAR DEVICES WITHIN A ROCOCO FRAME. THE ORIGINAL SILVER MOUNTED VELVET LINED CASE COVERED IN GREEN SHAGREEN. THE LID WITH A SILVER PLAQUE ENGRAVED 'CAGLIOSTRO'

LATE 18TH CENTURY

SIZE : 39 CM LONG – 15 ¼ INS LONG

LITERATURE

BORN IN THE SLUMS OF SICILY IN 1743 GIUSEPPE BALSAMO ROSE FROM OBSCURITY TO BECOME THE LEGENDARY COUNT ALESSANDRO DI CAGLIOSTRO. HE BECAME FAMOUS THROUGHOUT EUROPE AS AN ALCHEMIST, MAGICIAN AND HEALER, AND FOR HIS INVOLVEMENT IN FREEMASONRY. CONSTANTLY PURSUED BY HIS CREDITORS AND THE AUTHORITIES HE TRAVELLED THROUGH MUCH OF EUROPE STAYING FOR MANY YEARS AT THE COURT OF LOUIS XVI UNTIL FORCED TO FLEE OWING TO HIS INVOLVEMENT IN THE SCANDAL OF THE 'QUEEN'S NECKLACE'. A SWINDLE INVOLVING A DIAMOND NECKLACE ALLEGEDLY BOUGHT BY QUEEN MARIE ANTOINETTE. CAGLIOSTRO'S DANGEROUS CHARM, AND REPUTED HEALING POWERS, MADE HIM THE DARLING OF THE EUROPEAN ARISTOCRACY. BY TURNS HE WOULD FEED THE POOR, HEAL THE ILL, AND AS A CHARLATAN AND OPORTUNIST RELIEVE THE CARELESS RICH OF THEIR MONEY. CAGLIOSTRO WAS A FRIEND OF THE COMTE DE SAINT-GERMAIN WHO INTIATED HIM INTO EGYPTIAN FREEMASONRY. CAGLIOSTRO DEVISED A SYSTEM OF 'EGYPTIAN MASONRY' WHICH FROM 1777 HE TRIED TO HAVE ADOPTED ALL OVER EUROPE. THE RITUALS INCLUDED THE MASTER DRAWING MYSTICAL CIRCLES IN THE AIR WITH A 'SWORD' IN THE FOUR CORNERS OF THE LODGE AND IT IS LIKELY THAT THIS KNIFE WAS CREATED FOR THIS PURPOSE, AS WELL AS BEING CAGLIOSTRO'S PERSONAL DAGGER.

CAGLIOSTRO TANGLED WITH MOST OF THE MAJOR FIGURES OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT OF EUROPE, AMONG THEM MOZART, WHO INCLUDED HIM IN "THE MAGIC FLUTE' AS THE EGYPTIAN MASON SARASTRO, GOETHE, CASSANOVA AND

CATHERINE THE GREAT. HIS BUST WAS SCULPTED IN MARBLE BY HOUDON. HOWEVER, EVENTUALLY HE WAS IMPRISONED BY THE INQUISITION AND SENTENCED TO DEATH, BUT THE POPE COMMUTED THIS TO LIFE IMPRISONMENT. IN PRISON HE WENT MAD AND DIED IN 1795, BUT HIS DEATH WAS NOT WIDELY ACCEPTED AS HE HAD ALWAYS BELIEVED HIMSELF IMMORTAL. NAPOLEON WAS FORCED TO COMMISSION AN INDEPENDENT REPORT TO PROVE THAT HE WAS AT LAST DEAD.