

PATRICK JEFFERSON



- Item** REGENCY GILT-BRASS-MOUNTED ROSEWOOD LIBRARY WRITING TABLE
- Date** In the manner of John McLean (1770-1815), London, *circa* 1800.
- Provenance** The Earls of Rosse, Birr Castle. Co. Offaly, Ireland; and by descent.
- Dimensions** Height 29" (74cm) Width 48 1/2" (122.5) Depth 24" (61cm)
- Description** *The gilt-brass mounted rectangular top veneered in rosewood, inset with a re-entrant leather writing surface, above a mounted frieze with cedar-lined drawers, the patera-mounted urn-form end-supports raised on outswept feet terminating in cast brass ribbed capped castors; leather replaced, small repairs.*
- This sophisticated library writing-table relates to designs in the 'Grecian' taste, illustrated by Thomas Hope in *Household Furniture ...*(1807), that are associated with the Regency cabinetmaker John McLean & Son. Thomas Sheraton's 1803 *Cabinet Dictionary* lists McLean as one of London's master cabinetmakers, illustrating one of his tables and stating that 'he finishes these articles in the neatest manner'. At the turn of the 18th century, McLean was at the very forefront of fashionable court taste, producing sophisticated interpretations of neo-classical Louis XVI and Empire furniture. The best pieces are invariably veneered in the highest quality rosewood, which was not only the most expensive timber available but provides a vigorous contrast to the gilded bronze mounts of a markedly idiosyncratic form, resulting in a highly distinguished and sophisticated French-influenced English restraint. Indeed McLean's calling card and advertisements in *The Times* described him as a 'specialist in Elegant Parisian Furniture', of which he may be considered the pre-eminent exponent. A number of comparable gilt-brass-mounted rosewood writing tables are known, similarly characterised by end-standards, re-entrant corners and cedar-lined drawers.
- Price** £45,000

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Fig. 1



Fig.2



Fig.3