



18th Century Antique

A spectacular 15th century style Istrian stone marriage chimneypiece. With triangular shaped overmantle topped by a deeply carved peacock, in a circular cartouche, above a central urn bearing a pair of embracing swans, symbolising everlasting love. The apron is richly embellished with arabesque fruiting vines, forming roundels inhabited by carved dogs, symbolising loyalty. The shelf with running dentil, foliate and beaded decoration, the frieze and jambs decorated with more swirling vines. The Roman arched opening flanked by a further pair of dogs. *See following page for further details.*

Dimensions

Height 83in (210.8cm) width 65½in (166.4cm)

Internal height 45¼in (114.9cm) width 42in (114.3cm)

Footblock to footblock 61⅞in (157cm)

Shelf height 59⅝in (151.4cm) depth 7in (17.8cm)

Reference

I136

Further details

The iconography surrounding the peacock is worthy of further discourse. The ancient Greeks believed that the flesh of the peacock did not decay after death, and thus it became a symbol of immortality, a significance that continued into early Christian iconography. In Roman mythology, the peacock was the protectress of women, the companion of Juno after she was wronged by Jupiter.

This chimneypiece epitomises the juxtaposition of conflicting influences found in the Venetian Renaissance. The unification of Classical Roman, Byzantine and Islamic styles shown in this design is emblematic of the rich trading culture of Europe's then largest economic and cultural power.