Finch & Co



**CIRCULAR INTARSIA ITALIAN HARD-STONE INLAID BELGIAN BLACK MARBLE PEDESTAL TABLE**

A FINE CIRCULAR INTARSIA ITALIAN HARD-STONE INLAID BELGIAN BLACK MARBLE PEDESTAL TABLE
2ND HALF 19TH CENTURY
SIZE: 71.5CM HIGH, 69 CM DIA – 28 INS HIGH, 27¼ INS DIA

**LITERATURE**

OFTEN REFERRED TO AS TOURNAI MARBLE, BELGIAN BLACK MARBLE HAS BEEN QUARRIED SINCE AT LEAST THE 11TH CENTURY. IT WAS ALSO CALLED 'TOUCH MARBLE' BY THE CRAFTSMEN BECAUSE IT WAS USED AS A TOUCHSTONE FOR TESTING PRECIOUS METALS. IN ITALY IT WAS REFERRED TO AS THE 'PARAGONE DI FIANDRA', THE PARAGON OF FLANDERS, AND WAS THE PREFERRED BACKING STONE FOR INLAYS OF COLOURED MARBLES AND HARD-STONES. USING THE VENEERS OF BOTH ANCIENT AND MORE RECENTLY QUARRIED HARD-STONES, THE PIECES OF INLAY ARE HELD IN PLACE WITH A WARM CEMENT MADE OF RESIN AND BEESWAX, AND THEN THE SURFACE IS LEVELED AND POLISHED. DEPENDING ON THE COMPLEXITY, A DESIGN CAN TAKE WEEKS, MONTHS OR YEARS TO COMPLETE. TABLES SUCH AS THIS WERE OFTEN COMMISSIONED IN ROME BY WEALTHY TRAVELLERS ON THE GRAND TOUR DURING THE 18TH AND 19TH CENTURIES. THESE PATRONS MUST HAVE INCLUDED THE DUKES OF DEVONSHIRE AS THEY RETURNED HOME AND INSTRUCTED THEIR OWN LOCAL CRAFTSMEN TO CREATE SIMILAR INLAYS IN ASHFORD BLACK MARBLE.