Finch & Co



PAIR OF TURNED CORNISH SERPENTINE TABLE CANDLESTICKS

A LARGE AND IMPRESSIVE PAIR OF TURNED CORNISH SERPENTINE TABLE CANDLESTICKS
CIRCA 1860-80
SIZE: 40CM HIGH – 15¾ INS HIGH

LITERATURE

CORNWALL'S WINDSWEPT AND FLAT LIZARD PENINSULA PRODUCES A REMARKABLE VARIETY OF DIFFERENT SERPENTINE ROCKS. SOME ARE MOTTLED RED AND BLACK, OTHERS ARE NEARLY WHITE, AND SOME VEINED PALE GREEN. DECORATIVE ITEMS WERE TURNED ON LATHES FROM THESE STONES FROM THE 1820'S ONWARDS AND THEN IN 1846 QUEEN VICTORIA AND PRINCE ALBERT VISITED CORNWALL AND PURCHASED SEVERAL ORNAMENTS FOR THEIR NEW VILLA, OSBOURNE HOUSE ON THE ISLE OF WIGHT. THIS EVENT, AND A STAND AT THE GREAT EXHIBITION OF 1851, BROUGHT CORNISH SERPENTINE TO THE NOTICE OF THE BRITISH ARISTOCRACY AND IT BEGAN TO BE USED FOR ARCHITECTURAL DECORATION IN CHURCHES, PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND STATELY HOMES. HOWEVER, COMPETITION FROM THE ITALIAN SERPENTINE INDUSTRIES AND THE FACT THAT THE STONE DID NOT WEATHER WELL WHEN USED FOR EXTERIOR CLADDING FORCED THE PROCESSING MILLS IN PENZANCE AND POLTESCO TO CLOSE BY THE END OF THE 19TH CENTURY.