



## 19th Century Antique

A very fine George III Neoclassical chimneypiece in statuary and Siena marbles. The central tablet is carved in low relief depicting a Vestal Virgin conducting a harvest sacrifice. She is flanked by dancing muses bearing flutes and lyres and offerings of food and wine. The frieze, jambs and dentils are finely inlaid with convent Siena marble of the highest quality. The corner blocks are carved with beautifully articulated urns. The inground frame is bordered on the outside with deep opulent egg & dart, balanced with fasces on the inside. See following page for further details.

### Dimensions

Height 59 $\frac{3}{4}$ in (150.8cm) width 62in (157.5cm)

Internal height 41 $\frac{3}{4}$ in (106cm) width 40in (101.5cm)

Footblock to footblock 63in (160cm)

Shelf width 71 $\frac{3}{4}$ in (181.5cm) depth 9 $\frac{5}{8}$ in (24.5cm)

### Reference

G353

## Further details

Vesta was the goddess of the hearth, home and domestic life. The Latin word for hearth is *focus*, the practical and spiritual centre of the home. Sacrifices to the gods of the home were made by the fire and thrown into the flames. When one left home for a prolonged journey, one carried some of the hearth fire along in order to keep one's home close even when away. Further, the difficulty of making or transporting fire made the constantly burning hearth a vital element in the home as well as state buildings. Vesta, therefore, along with the house spirits of the Penates, Panes and Lares, was a goddess revered in every strata of Roman society as she was thought to literally 'keep the home fires burning', from the most modest apartment to the grandest villa. In this scene, a shrouded Vestal Virgin holds a garland of flowers over the ever burning pyre in the temple to Vesta in the Roman Forum. The tablet is 18th century in date, but a re-sited piece.