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17th Century Baroque Giltwood Stand

£4,500

An extraordinary baroque gilt-wood torchere or stand, the serpentine shelf supported on a flowering tree faced by a Roman Centurion wearing a flat helmet and cingulum and holding a shield and spear, the leaf-scroll tripod base faced by a grotesque mask

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SKU: B4706
Depth: 41 cm (16 inches)
Height: 102 cm (40 inches)
Width: 41 cm (16 inches)
Year: 1680s/90s

Provenance: Willyams family, Carnanton House, Cornwall. John Willyams, born 1660, married in 1685 the daughter and heiress of the Attorney General, Humphrey Noye, and it's possible that the offered stand came into the collection at the time of this inheritance. Carnanton House was completely re-built in 1710, and then had subsequent alterations, notably in the early 1800s, the 1830s, and again later in the 19th century so it is also possible that the stand came into the collection at one of these later dates.

This palace-scale stand would originally have been one of a pair, or possibly a larger set, either intended to flank a pier-table and mirror, a suite that was known at the time as a triad, or around a room, and would have been intended to support a candelabrum. Similar carving can be seen in the overdoor panels supplied to Queen Mary in the late 1680s/early 1690s for The Queens Gallery at Kensington Palace by Grinling Gibbons, though the offered stand could be slightly earlier in date, from the reign of Charles II or James II. Queen Mary, in the same Gallery, had three pier-tables each flanked by a pair of torchère stands, and in the same room had elaborately carved shelves and brackets to support her collection of oriental porcelain and Delft pottery. Perhaps because of a later layer of gilding, the carving on the present stand is not quite of the crispness associated with Gibbons, and may be by one of the contemporary carvers/furniture-makers working very much in the same style, such as William Emmett, who provided carved giltwood brackets and other furniture for Kensington Palace.