

CHRISTIE'S

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CLASSIC WEEK

REMARKABLE TUSCAN RENAISSANCE CASSONI
TO BE OFFERED IN CHRISTIE'S
OLD MASTERS EVENING SALE

6 July 2017



Giovanni Toscani (Florence 1370/80–1430) *Scenes from the tale of Ginevra and Bernabò of Genoa and Ambrogiuolo of Piacenza* (Boccaccio, *Decameron*): a cassone front, tempera and gold on panel, estimate: £600,000–900,000.

London – Christie's Classic Week will present a remarkable collection of Tuscan Renaissance Cassone panels as part of the *Old Masters Evening Sale* on 6 July 2017. The collection, comprising eight panels in total, is incredibly rare to the market. Typically commissioned to commemorate marriages of the Florentine or Sienese elite until the mid-fifteenth century, this comprehensive collection of cassoni represent the artistic development of this important Italian tradition including early examples of the genre by the Master of Charles III of Durazzo (active *circa* 1382) to some of the finest cassone painters of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries including Giovanni Toscani and Lo Scheggia. The works will be on view and open to the public in London from 1 to 6 July 2017.

Highlighting the collection is an exceptional and unusually well-preserved cassone front by Giovanni Toscani (1370/80–1430). The panel has been recognised as the pendant to that in the National Gallery of Scotland and depicts *Scenes from the tale of Ginevra and Bernabò of Genoa and Ambrogiuolo of Piacenza* (estimate: £600,000–900,000, *illustrated above*), a story illustrating the triumphs of female virtue. As the story of Ginevra had not been represented by earlier illuminators, Toscani was not constrained by any traditional iconography.



Giovanni di ser Giovanni Guidi, Lo Scheggia, (San Giovanni Valdarno 1406-1486 Florence),
Trajan and the Widow: a cassone panel, tempera and gold on panel, estimate: £300,000-500,000

The collection also includes a panel by Giovanni Di Ser Giovanni Guidi, Lo Scheggia (1406–1486) depicting *Trajan and the Widow* (estimate: £300,000–500,000). Lo Scheggia was the younger brother of Masaccio, and his work and, in particular, skill for narrative earned him important commissions during his career including executing the desco da parto for the birth of Lorenzo de' Medici in 1449.

The Triumph of Scipio Africanus (estimate: £250,000–350,000) by Apollonio Di Giovanni (C. 1416–1465), one of the most successful cassone painter of mid-quattrocento Florence, is another highlight of the collection. Scipio, the hero of republican Rome had an obvious appeal in ostensibly republican Florence; it is therefore unsurprising that five *cassone* fronts celebrating him by Apollonio are known. This panel is almost certainly the pendant to the Triumph of Caesar, formerly in the Faringdon collection.



Apollonio di Giovanni (Florence c. 1416–1465),
The Triumph of Scipio Africanus,
 tempera and gold on panel, estimate: £250,000-350,000

Cassoni, literally translated as 'large chests', were amongst the most prestigious and luxurious objects made for wealthy patrons in Renaissance Italy and are today recognised for the exceptional artistry of their decoration and ornamentation. Usually commissioned in pairs and made to commemorate marriages of the city and court elite, cassoni were, until the mid-fifteenth century, frequently used as part of the bridal procession which accompanied the bride and her trousseau (carried in a *cassone*) from the house of her father to that of her husband. The use of arms and heraldry would publically announce the alliances of families and the extent of decoration could display the wealth and status of the patrons. In a more intimate context, the painted panels which usually decorated the front and sides of these chests were frequently selected to portray scenes with a moralising message by using classical, historical and literary subjects illustrating masculine valour and honour and feminine virtue.

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**Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer's premium and are reported net of applicable fees.*

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