

Cassone Venetian 16thc Renaissance Cedar Original Stand
Neptune Armorial Unicorn

£22,500



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REF: 11635

Height: 87 cm (34.3")

Width: 177 cm (69.7")

Depth: 68 cm (26.8")

Description

A large, museum-quality, late-16th century, cedar, Venetian, cassone on its original stand ; the sea creature ornament probably drawn from De la Cosmographie Universelle, livre III, engraving 1550-1568

- This is the only, known, cassone of this type retaining its original stand.
- The collection in Italy that it originally came from was a palazzo that it had reputedly been in for generations of the same family and this most likely why the stand has survived. • The decoration is very unusual, and delightful in the array of sea creatures depicted. The connection of the region with the sea is very strong.
- The inner lid is very practical and can be used for display or serving. The interior offers masses of storage space which is particularly suitable for textiles being cedar which repels moths. • The cassone is a beautiful, rich colour and has developed a lustrous patina.
- The cassone is Illustrated & discussed in 'Woods in British Furniture Making', (Bowett) c13

Provenance: Private collection, Mayorca. Private collection, Italy Related to: Cassone in V&A collection, no 4886-1858

Width 177 cm., 70 in., Height 87 cm., 34 ½ in. Depth 68 cm. 26 ½ in. With lid open 155 cm., 61 in

"Late 16th and 17th century, London inventories confirm that cypress wood chests were relatively common in prosperous households. In 1598 there was a cypress chest in the hall of John Mason, a vintner, valued at 50 shillings. It was the most expensive piece of furniture in the house. Similarly there was a 'fair cypress chest' in the great chamber of Adrian Moore, haberdasher, in 1618, and a cypress chest worth £ 9 in the hall of Thomas Willis, a clothworker in 1630. The chests were sometimes described as 'great' or 'small' but not otherwise described - presumably they were familiar to the compilers of the inventories. They were placed in halls, chambers and parlours, places where they would have been on prominent view. It is noteworthy that only the chests were imported and not, apparently, the wood. " (p282, Cypress, Woods in British Furniture making)

The decoration is very unusual, and delightful in the array of sea creatures depicted. The connection of the region with the sea is very strong. I have never seen one of these chests on its original stand. The collection in Italy that it came from was a palazzo that it had reputedly been in for generations of the same family and this most likely why the stand has survived. In practical terms, the stand makes the chest a comfortable height to use. The exterior of the chest is a beautiful, mellow colour and has developed a lustrous patina.

The top comprises three planks faced with a shallow, cleated, moulded edge nailed on. The front retains its original hasp and lockplate and, as is commonly found, the lock has been removed but, unusually the original ring hinges have survived. The top opens to reveal an inner lid with ring hinges and a brass ring, revealing a large open storage compartment below, the bottom lined with an old fabric. The underside of the lid retains its original penwork and pierced decoration. The central panel depicts sea creature...