

A rare, late-16th century, Italian, cedar, Alto Adige, penwork, cassone

Sold



REF: 10355

Height: 66 cm (26")

Width: 161 cm (63.4")

Depth: 61 cm (24")

Description

The plank top reversed, the hinges and the underside blocks replaced. The underside decorated with a scrolling, foliate border. The center decorated with a vignette of a nobleman surrounded by trunks and packed bags within a classical arcade. Borders either side depicting two gentlemen and two ladies. To the left a panel depicting 'astromonia', as winged lady, beside an exotic bird and a globe. To the right, a panel depicting, 'geometria', a lady beside a globe. A border of birds and lions below. The frieze with a unicorn and a lion either side of a patched keyhole, the escutcheon plate removed. The lock replaced. Either side a border of four cherubs, some playing musical instruments. The central panel depicting the wind blowing a galleon flying the British Ensign and three, other flags, retaining traces of original painted decoration. Either side a vignette of a gentleman within a classical facade. To the left a panel depicting music as a lady playing a lute beside a cherub within a landscape scene. To the right a panel depicting a centaur beside reclining naked women. A foliate border with three lion heads above the deep, moulded base. The sides with repeats of 'astromonia' and 'geometria'. Italian, probably Genoa, fourth quarter of the 16th century.

This piece is profusely decorated with exceptionally fine penwork decoration and has, unusually, retained traces of the original polychrome painting on the panel depicting a ship. It is most likely that it was made specifically for a nobleman as a memento of his grand tour. It is curious that the face in on the portrait on the underside of the top has been repainted which supports the probability that it was reworked for an individual who may have felt that the original portrait was not a good likeness. The subject matter of the decoration reflects the interests and experiences of the nobleman on his travels and the images within the panels are probably drawn from engravings of the time. As this chest was made from cedar it was probably used to store clothing. The costume suggests that this chest was made in the 1580's with the narrower line of mens' dress, the rosettes on the shoes, longer, fuller hairstyle and the pointed beard and moustache.