

LEO CADOGAN RARE BOOKS

74 Mayton Street, London N7 6QT

UNLOCATED EARLY SERIES

[Tempesta, Antonio, after:] [Twelve Emperors On Horseback]. [*Bologna?*] [17th century].

Twelve engraved and etched prints, with uniform engraved and etched borders (measurements: 513 mm. x 382 mm. including borders; 289 mm. x 226 mm. excluding). The sheets themselves, 533 mm. x 402 mm. Printed on a thick paper. Light browning, occasional damage to extreme corners where the prints had been stuck in an album (one extreme outer corner torn, the damage only touching the platemark). Overall very good.

An unlocated set of prints, of the first twelve Caesars on horseback, after the famous and influential series by Antonio Tempesta (1555-1630). They show what appears to be a new set of plates produced not long after the original, being similar in size and composition to the 1596 work of Tempesta. Our set is very unusual for its large borders of military spolia. These borders enlarge the design by almost 80%, turning the original compositions into much larger objects. The scale, and the thickness of paper, suggest that the set may have been intended for vertical display - hanging on walls, or similar. A border of military spolia was a new (although not original) idea for presenting these prints. It was taken up later by the Remondini press of Bassano, who presented emperors on horseback after Tempesta with quite different borders of spolia, for example surmounted by a large eagle. Only three of that set are located (see 'The Illustrated Bartsch' 35/2.534, 537, 542).

Bologna seems a possible source for the present prints if one considers their recent provenance (they were purchased by us from a dealer in Emilia Romagna, before being imported from there to the UK with export licence). The prints and border are unsigned, and the prints are on paper watermarked with probably a GA in a circle with trifoglio. This is content that would be quite usual in watermarks in Bologna (see 'Filigrane bolognesi tra 1650 e 1750' at <http://badigit.comune.bologna.it/filigrane/indice.htm>) - although we have not found another sheet with the precise watermark itself.

Looking for a possible workshop for the borders, we note that of Giovanni Battista Coriolano in Bologna (d. 1649), who produced soldiers and armour, borders with spolia, and Tempestan leaders on horseback. We have not however located these borders under his name in 'The Illustrated Bartsch' nor indeed anywhere in 'Catalogo generale della raccolta di stampe antiche della Pinacoteca nazionale di

Bologna, Gabinetto delle stampe. Sezione 3 Incisori bolognesi ed emiliani del sec. XVI [-XVIII]' (Bologna, 1973-5).

While compositionally, they keep close to the originals and early copies - with the emperors presented on simple plinth, without background - comparison between Tempesta's first print of the series, of Julius Caesar (1596) and ours, still points up small differences. Both prints face in the same direction, but there is different contouring to the face, there are differences in detail in hair at back, there is different lettering to plinth. If we compare the same with the image in an early set of copies made in the same direction, a series published in Rome by Domenico de' Rossi (see 'The Illustrated Bartsch' 35/2.534 C6) we again see different lettering to plinth, different contouring to face, and difference in detail in hair at back.

"The 'Twelve Emperors on Horseback' issued in 1596 are among the most successful and influential prints that Tempesta ever produced. The impact of the series can be gathered not only from numerous engraved copies, but also from pictures of rulers and noblemen on horseback by Rubens, Van Dyck, Zurbarán, Velázquez and many others that were produced throughout the Baroque age. Even Jacques-Louis David's painting 'Napoleon at St. Bernard' is indebted to the visual standards of representing supreme rulership which Tempesta created and diffused in these etchings [...]" (Eckhard Leuschner, Introduction to the series in The Illustrated Bartsch 35/2, p. 153).

Not in Bartsch. With many thanks to Caroline Duroselle-Melish and to Robin Halwas for comments and advice.

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