

LEO CADOGAN RARE BOOKS

74 Mayton Street, London N7 6QT

UNLOCATED EARLY SERIES

[Tempesta, Antonio, after:] [Twelve Emperors On Horseback]. *[Bologna?]*
[17th/18th centuries].

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. 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). This is one of only two sets that we have found to feature a border of military spolia. The Remondini press of Bassano was also to present emperors after Tempesta with a border of spolia (only three of the twelve of that set are known - see *The Illustrated Bartsch* 35/2.534, 537, 542) - but our borders are completely different in composition, those for example being surmounted by a large imperial eagle. Our prints are also - very possibly - considerably earlier, as, unlike with the Remondini, the present edition of Tempesta's images is very close to the original (1596) and its earlier copies by Giovanni Domenico de' Rossi, in composition as well as size.*

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 of this time 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. Bologna seems a possible source for the present prints if one also considers their recent provenance (they were purchased by us from a dealer in Emilia Romagna).

*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). The borders show signs of considerable prior use of their plate. This use suggests they had appeared in other contexts, but if so, these other prints*

have been lost.

The images of the Caesars themselves are roughly as wide as those from the original (1596) plates (and the copies from Rome, Giovanni Domenico de' Rossi), although somewhat reduced in length. Compositionally, they keep close to the originals and the de' Rossi copies - with the emperors presented on simple plinth, without background. A 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 a series published by de' Rossi (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, Velazquez 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.

[ref: 3108] **£15000**