

A massive, 14-16 seater, Milanese, Renaissance-revival, monastery, trestle table, 10ft long, 4 ¼" thick, single plank walnut top & trestles with the heraldic charge of the dukes of Milan, Italian

£40,500



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REF: 11672

Height: 82 cm (32.3")

Width: 305 cm (120.1")

Depth: 84 cm (33.1")

## Description

A massive, 14-16 seater, antiquarian, milanese, renaissance-revival, monastery, trestle table with 10ft long, 4 ¼" thick, single plank walnut top & oak trestles carved with an armorial, the heraldic charge of the dukes of milan & heraldic shields. Monastery tables are long tables with thick, one-piece tops used originally for dining in the Medieval refectory which evolved into banqueting and feasting tables. They are a rare form. I have handled half a dozen over the last 35 years which have all been made from oak and this is the most outstanding and impressive for the following reasons : - The single plank, 10ft long, 4 ¼" thick walnut top is outstanding oozing character and tactility. It has old repairs from worm damage and knots falling out. The walnut tree that was felled to make it must have been many hundreds of years old. - The massive trestles are exceptionally rare, possibly unique. I have never seen and do not know of another table carved with a coat of arms particularly in conjunction with an heraldic charge of the significance of the Biscione. They are crisply carved and made from oak for practicality. - The trestle form is the most practical and comfortable for seating. Not only is this table 10ft long but it is 34 inches wide which is not common in period tables. The table is the ideal height for a traditional backstool. - These table are renowned for being 'as fixed as the freehold' and the reputed three family ownership provenance of this table supports this. - Almost certainly made in Italy most likely in Milan, this table is very hard to date and it could be 18th century - When I acquired the table it was covered in black stain which was very popular in the 19th century. This has been carefully removed revealing the original patina which is a rich, walnut brown with a lustrous surface. One carved trestle front depicting the Biscione, the heraldic charge of a dragon eating or giving birth to a child which is the symbol of the Visconti family, the Dukes of Milan, who gained control over the city in 1277. The Biscione is a reference to Milan and should be interpreted in conjunction with the coat of arms. Legend suggests that, around the XIIIth century, Tarantasio the dragon arrived in Milan. Many knights tried to free the territory from the unwanted guest, but they all ended up devoured. The news spread with terror among the inhabitants. One day the dragon was about to devour a child, Uberto Visconti defeated the dragon by cutting off its head and saved the child. The Duke thus decided to depict the dragon about to swallow the child on the family crest. The Biscione has become a symbol for Milan found around the city, such as the door of Castello Sforzesco, Milan's most famous landmark, built in the 14th century by the Duke of Milan. It is exceptionally rare, possibly unique, to find a coat of arms carved on a trestle table. The Biscione carved on the opposing trestle undoubtedly indicates that the coat of arms is from a Milanese family. Research is underway. The reverse trestle fronts depict a large shield with three bendlets, also being researched

Provenance : Private Collection, Rhineland, acquired 1979 from a Private Collection, Cologne reputedly bought in Italy possibly Milan in the 1920...