



**FABBRI ARTE**  
*Alto Antiquariato*



**Temple-shaped casket**

*Poplar wood, plaster, gold leaf*

*Central Italy*

*End of 14th - Beginning of 15th Century*

*Measures: 23,5 x 8,5 x 10 in*

## Work analysis

The work under analysis is a casket from central Italy and can be dated between the end of the 14th and the beginning of the 15th century.

In particular, it is an example belonging to the production of Umbrian-Tuscan caskets which spread between the 14th and 16th centuries.

It was in fact made of poplar wood, tablet and gold leaf, according to the canons of this executive tradition; as proof of this, the poplar is an important clue, as this material was widely spread in this area, and used to create pictorial supports and sculptural works of various kinds.

Processing also takes us in this direction, in many respects.

Note the so-called "pagoda" shape (name due to the sloping and curved shape of the upper part of these caskets), as well as the tablet decoration, depicting phytomorphic motifs with spirals.

These processes, carried out several times in the workshops of central Italy, went to emulate the productions of goldsmiths or ivory artists.

The pastiglia technique, used for this purpose, consists in applying figures or decorative elements made with a mixture of plaster and strong glue, on the surface formerly gilded, forming scenes and motifs of various kinds.

The upper end of the lid has a series of punches, sometimes present on this type of casket and also in paintings of a similar period.

We also find some coats of arms, contained in typical panels of the XIV - XV century, also found in similar caskets and in pictorial works of the same period.

An interesting feature are the columns, which mark a connection to the International Gothic architectural taste, at the time still persistent.

As for the function of the work, we can assume that it was commissioned by a noble family, as a gift for a dynasty with which to form an alliance, perhaps as a wedding dowry for a political marriage.

This hypothesis is strengthened by the presence of coats of arms, the content of which, however, is no longer clearly legible.



*Detail of one of the coats of arms surrounded by the decorative tile*

In the next pages we will show some examples of caskets belonging to the same executive tradition, starting with this specimen which is part of the English V&A collection.

It is a casket from Central Italy and it can be dated between 1350 and 1400.



This other example is instead part of a slightly later executive tradition, and is in fact dated by the experts of Koller International Auction to the 15th - 16th century.



Sieneſe caſket dated to the late 14th century, alſo made in wood, plaſter and gold. It's important to note the preſence of the characteristic tiles we mentioned earlier. This piece is part of the collection of the Cleveland Muſeum of Art, located in the homonymous city in Ohio, USA.



Casket of Tuscan origin and dated to the late 15th century, also made in wood, plaster and gold leaf.

The structural and iconographic characteristics are extremely similar to those of the work under analysis.

Example published in a Sotheby's auction catalogue, the characteristics of which were identified by the experts of the same auction house.



Finally, we conclude with this last casket, preserved in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, in New York City.

This is a work of probable Senese origin, dated to the first 15th Century.

It has been made in walnut wood, with the usual plaster and gold leaf manufacture, but it also present inserts in leather.



## Sitography

- <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O118501/casket/casket-unknown/>
- [https://www.kollerauktionen.ch/en/84074-0002-----1142-kleine-geldschatulle-mit-\\_pas-1142\\_107028.html?RecPos=5](https://www.kollerauktionen.ch/en/84074-0002-----1142-kleine-geldschatulle-mit-_pas-1142_107028.html?RecPos=5)
- [https://www.clevelandart.org/art/1954.600?f%5B0%5D=field\\_collection%3A836&collection\\_search\\_query=jewelry&year\\_operator=1&year=1675&year\\_era=1&year\\_end&year\\_end\\_era=1&op=search&form\\_build\\_id=form-YcqCSmEBlcxO11Lk4eMiYLbDK11W\\_mmBdAOkZtGgS\\_U&form\\_id=clevelandart\\_collection\\_search\\_form](https://www.clevelandart.org/art/1954.600?f%5B0%5D=field_collection%3A836&collection_search_query=jewelry&year_operator=1&year=1675&year_era=1&year_end&year_end_era=1&op=search&form_build_id=form-YcqCSmEBlcxO11Lk4eMiYLbDK11W_mmBdAOkZtGgS_U&form_id=clevelandart_collection_search_form)
- <http://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2013/european-sculpture-works-of-art-113231/lot.73.html>
- <https://collectionapi.metmuseum.org/api/collection/v1/iii-f/467760/946283/main-image>



*Pursuant to Articles 1490 - 1491 of the Civil Code, with the signature of this Fabbri Arte document by Juri Fabbri attests and guarantees the authenticity and lawful origin of the work, as per D.L. n.42 of 22 January 2004.*



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