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A stunning Continental early 19th century old master oil on canvas painting titled, "Susanna and the Elders" after Giovanni Martinelli. The wonderfully executed painting is set in its original Louis XV st. giltwood frame with a fine mottled border, striking richly carved scrolled foliate movements and delicate seashell reserves set on a most decorative lattice pattern. The painting depicts the beautiful Susanna bathing in her garden draped in a flowing garment with the two elders spying from behind her. The biblical story of Susanna and the Elders tells of a young married Jewish woman bathing in her garden. After she sends her two attendants to fetch oil and perfumes for her bath, two lustful elders of the community spy on her. They conspire to force her to submit to them sexually and threaten her saying that, if she refuses, they will accuse her of adultery with another man. Adultery being a capital crime for women, Susanna refuses preferring the fate of death to the sin they propose. She is subsequently accused and condemned to death. Daniel vindicates Susanna by exposing the elders' mendacity. Interrogating them separately, he asks them under which tree Susanna committed adultery. Each elder named a different kind of tree. They are then executed for the crime of false witness.

Giovanni Martinelli (Montevarchi, Arezzo 1600 - Florence 1659) was an Italian, Baroque era painter active mainly in Florence.





