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Gallaecia Regnum descripta a F.Fer. Oja Ord Pred.

Stock#: 41640
Map Maker: Blaeu
Date: 1640 circa
Place: Amsterdam
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG
Size: 20 x 15 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Willem Blaeu's regional map offers a fine early 17th Century depiction of the Kingdom of Galicia, a historical region in northwestern Spain. It extends from the Asturias de Oviedo region and Aviles in the Northeast to Bayona and the Portuguese border on the South, with Santiago de Compostela at the center.

One of the primary features of the map is its detailed representation of the cities and natural features of the region. Major cities including Corunna, Mondonedo, Rivadeo, Lugo, Orense, Pontevedra, and Padron are illustrated meticulously. Each city is presented with architectural detail symbolizing castles and walled cities, signifying their fortifications and strategic importance during that period. The map's level of detail offers a comprehensive view of Galicia's geographical context and human settlements.

Blaeu's artistic talents are evident in the large decorative scale of miles cartouche embellished with a coat of arms held aloft by two cherubs. The coat of arms symbolizes the ruling power of the region, offering insights into the political context of the time.

The title cartouche, intriguingly, is carried by Neptune, the Roman god of the sea. This highlights the maritime importance of Galicia, which, with its extensive coastline, played a significant role in navigation and sea trade during the age of exploration. This is further emphasized by the depiction of three sailing ships, a sea monster, and two compass roses. These elements, rich in symbolism and artistic detail, convey a sense of the adventure, danger, and mystery that characterized sea voyages of the period. The sea monster, in particular, is an imaginative representation of the unknown dangers lurking in the vast, unexplored oceans.



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During the 17th century, the Kingdom of Galicia underwent significant changes politically, economically, and culturally. As a historic region located in the northwest of the Iberian Peninsula, Galicia was part of the greater Crown of Castile, which itself was part of the composite monarchy that made up Habsburg Spain. It held a distinctive place within this political landscape, thanks to its unique culture, language, and geography.

Politically, Galicia was bound by the administrative and judicial system of the Habsburg Empire. However, its peripheral location resulted in a certain degree of autonomy. The local nobility exerted significant influence over regional affairs, often acting as intermediaries between the local populace and the royal administration.

Economically, Galicia was predominantly rural, with its economy largely reliant on agriculture and fishing. However, the 17th century also marked the expansion of trade, particularly seaborne trade, which led to the development of Galician ports like Corunna and Vigo. This maritime activity was depicted beautifully in Blaeu's map, highlighting the important role Galicia played in the broader maritime network.

Religion played a central role in 17th-century Galicia. The region was renowned for Santiago de Compostela, one of the most important Christian pilgrimage sites. During this period, the pilgrimage route, known as the Way of St. James (Camino de Santiago), attracted tens of thousands of pilgrims from all over Europe, fostering cultural exchange and contributing to the local economy.

The 17th century also saw the spread of the Counter-Reformation in Galicia. As the Catholic Church sought to counter the spread of Protestantism, religious orders like the Franciscans, Dominicans, and Jesuits established monasteries and schools in the region. This had a profound influence on Galician society, contributing to an increase in literacy rates and the spread of Catholic doctrine.

In the realm of culture, the 17th century was the period of the Seicento, or the Spanish Golden Age. Despite the dominance of Castilian culture, Galicia managed to retain its unique cultural identity. The Galician language, though under pressure from the increasingly influential Castilian Spanish, remained the common tongue of the people. The culture was further enriched by traditional music, folklore, and festivals, which continue to be a hallmark of Galician identity.

Detailed Condition:

Old Color. Minor toning.