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Melite vulgo Malta cum vicinis Goza, quae olim Gaulos, et Comino insulis uti exhibeteur a Nic. de Fer . . .

Stock#: 49249

Map Maker: Seutter

Date: 1730 circa

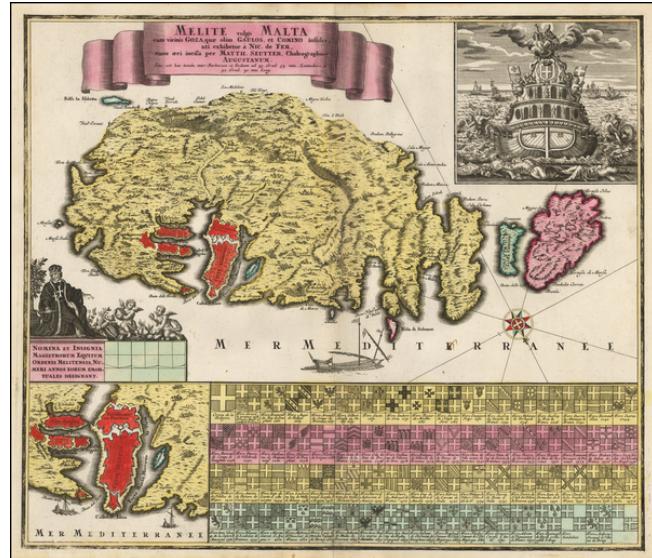
Place: Augsburg

Color: Hand Colored

Condition: VG+

Size: 22.5 x 19.5 inches

Price: SOLD



Description:

Fine example of Seutter's decorative map of the Island of Malta and environs, published in Augsburg. The map and the coats-of-arms (67 at lower right) are based on an earlier map by De Fer, but Seutter has added an inset of the fortifications surrounding Valletta and the Grand Harbor (lower left) and an inset engraving of a ship of the Knights of St. John (upper right).

The map is oriented with south at the top, a typical cartographic convention of the early modern period (see, for example, maps of Malta by de Fer (1722) and Giacomo de Rossi (1686)). The islands of Malta, Comino, and Gozo are labeled with great detail, including the networks of watchtowers that ringed both Malta and Gozo, prominent churches and aqueducts. Malta's important position as a maritime fortress, the gateway between the eastern and western Mediterranean, is highlighted by the prominent fortifications labeled in red.

Near the center of the island is a fortified town, Citta Vechia, or Old City. This is Mdina, the original capital of Malta. Founded by the Phoenicians and expanded by the Romans, it is said St. Paul lived here after being shipwrecked on Malta. When the Knights of the Order of St. John arrived in 1530, they moved the capital to Birgu, along the Grand Harbour in the north. Birgu is easily found because it is the location of one of the great fortresses for which Malta under the Knights became known, Castel St. Angelo. Birgu is also known as Vittoriosa, or Citta Vitoriosa, as it is labeled on Seutter's map.



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Birgu would only be the capital for a few decades. After an initial invasion and the takeover of Gozo by Ottoman raiders in 1551, the Knights quickly constructed Fort St. Michael and Fort St. Elmo on the peninsulas behind (St. Michael) and across from (St. Elmo) the Grand Harbor and Castel St. Angelo. These are labeled as Citta Sanglea (city of Sanglea) and Castel St. Elmo on the Seutter map. The Ottomans returned in 1565 to lay siege to Malta. Led by Grand Master Pierre de Valette, the Maltese people and the Knights withstood Ottoman bombardments for seven months. In the aftermath, the Knights set about building a grand capital city above Fort St. Elmo (which the Ottomans had captured in the siege); they named the city Valetta, after the victorious Grand Master.

The siege looms large in Maltese history. It was also well known across Europe in the centuries following; Voltaire is famously supposed to have said, "Nothing is better known than the siege of Malta." Seutter commemorated the victory of Christianity over the Islamic Ottomans in the engraving at upper right. It shows the stern of a mighty ship of the Knights. The vessel has just crushed Ottoman sailors, who are floundering in its wake. Mermen and mermaids celebrate the Christian victory, trumpeting Malta's position as a maritime stronghold.

Georg Matthäus Seutter (1678-1757) was a prominent German mapmaker in the mid-eighteenth century. Initially appreciated to a brewer, he trained as an engraver under Johann Baptist Homann in Nuremberg before setting up shop in his native Augsburg. In 1727 he was granted the title Imperial Geographer. His most famous works is *Atlas Novus Sive Tabulae Geographicae*, published in two volumes ca. 1730, although the majority of his maps are based on earlier work by other cartographers like the Homanns, Delisles, and de Fer.

Detailed Condition: