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La Presa Di Tunes / La Presa de Tunisci Co la Goletta fatta da Carlo quinto Emperatore 1535

Stock#: 51754
Map Maker: Vavassore

Date: 1535 circa
Place: Venice
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 16 x 11 inches

Price: SOLD



Description:

An Extraordinary Rarity -- A Masterwork of the Venetian Publisher Giovanni Vavassore

Quite possibly the only surviving example of Giovanni Vavassore's finely engraved plan of Tunes -- one of the earliest surviving examples of Vavassore's work.

The map is one of the only contemporary depictions of the conquest of Tunis by a Christian Fleet under the Command of Emperor Charles V, prepared by Giovanni Vavassore, widely considered to be the most important early Italian mapmaker and highly regarded print maker from Venice.

Tunis was one of the most important naval bases of the Ottoman Empire in the western Mediterranean. Oriented with south at the top, this map provides an excellent overview of Tunis and its harbor and bay, with the fort of La Golette at the narrow point in the bay. The ruins of ancient Carthage are noted, as are the ancient aqueducts.

Executed in a quality reminiscent of the some of the old masters of engraving from the period, the details of the ships, fortifications and the competing Turkish and Christian armies is quite extraordinary.

Attribution, Dating, and Watermark

Our attribution of this work to Vavassore is based several factors. Laszlo Grof in an article in The Map Collector (see reference below), in which he attributes a map of Hungary to Vavassore, cites the present map as a known work by Vavassore. We have not been able to locate the copy cited by Grof. Also, the watermarks on the Hungary map and ours are very similar. Moreover, the present work's watermark,

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Briquet 3413 and/or 3414 (which appear to be the same ones) align correctly as to date and place of publication. The latter was found on a Venetian imprint of 1528 and the former on Vincenza imprint of 1528. Finally, there are unmistakable stylistic convergences between our map and Vavassore's other known works. His bold, rounded lines are highly distinctive.

Giovanni Vavassore

Giovanni Andrea Vavassore (1495 ca to 1572 ca) (also Zoan Andrea or Zav; Valvassore, Vavasore Vadagnino, Vadianus, Guadagnino), was a Venetian publisher and printer and one of the most important early Italian mapmakers. Woodward, in his essay on the Italian map trade (1480-1760), calls Pagano and Vavassore, the "early Venetian masters of map engraving" who came into their own in the 1530s. Woodward explains that Vavassore was born in Telgate and was working as an artist and blockcutter by 1510.

The British Museum and Whitcombe state that Vavassore started as a printmaker, but then started publishing as well around 1530. It was in that year (before November) that he published *Opera nova contemplativa per ogni fidel christiano*, which had 120 illustrations attributed to Giovanni's brother, Florio.

Vavassore was a member of a painters' guild in 1530, the same year he is listed as a book printer (as Vadagnin Zuan Andrea). From 1537-44, he shared his imprint with his brothers, but from 1544 onward he is the only one listed.

The dates and information on his cartographic works are variable. Woodward says that nine of his nineteen known geographic works are undated, a figure taken from Bagrow. None survive in more than four impressions. The earliest item Woodward cites is a 1515 woodcut of the Battle of Marignano. Vavassore's next dated map is that of Spain (1532), although there are undate works believed to pre-date 1532.

Tooley credits Vavassore with the view of Constantinople used by Braun and Hogenberg (produced circa 1520). Tooley also attributes a curca 1520 map of Central Europe and one of Rhodes (1522, also in Bagrow) to Vavassore. In 1532, he released *Nova descriptio Hispaniae* and, in 1536, a reduced copy of Oronce Fine's *Nova totius Galliae desriptio*. In 1539, Tooley credits him with creating a two-sheet portolan chart of the eastern Mediterranean, Adriatic, and Aegean Seas, supposedly the first printed chart intended for use at sea.

Vavassore's known maps from the 1530s are: France (*Nova totius Galliae descriptio*, reduction of a Fine

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map as already noted, 1536, map 27/3.1, p. 176), Germany (in lower left corner: *Opera di Giouani Andrea Vauassore ditto Vadagnino,* copied in part from Eichstätt map attributed to Cusanus, ca. 1530, 23/1.7, p. 137 (*History of Cartography* dates it to ca. 1538 (vol. II, p. 1821)), Spain (*Nova descriptio Hispaniae*, 1532, p. 444, 606), and Venice (ca. 1535, one source for Pagano's later view of Venice, p. 615).

Rarity

Considered the most important early map engraver working in Italy, Vavassore's works are legendary rarities in the market, this being the first example of any Vavassore map we have seen on the market in more than 20 years. The most recent auction result we could find was a Sothebys 1993 offering of Vavassore's map of Russia (the earliest modern map of Moscovy), which sold for GBP 20,700.

The present map of Tunes was apparently unkown to Bagrow, Tooley and Woodward. To date, we confirm no other surviving examples.

Detailed Condition: