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Brabantiae Belgarum Provinciae Recens Exactaque Descriptio . . . M D LV III

Stock#: 65808
Map Maker: Tramezzino
Date: 1558
Place: Rome
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG
Size: 16 x 21 inches
Price: \$ 5,400.00



Description:

Extremely rare example of the first Lafreri School edition of Jacob van Deventer's groundbreaking survey of Brabant, the earliest surviving example of a map based upon a modern trigonometric survey.

The present map represents the synergy of fine art and advanced scientific inquiry of the Late Renaissance era, representing the earliest example of a modern survey of any part of the world. The map depicts the Duchy of Brabant, a traditional constituent of the Holy Roman Empire, and long one of the wealthiest regions of Europe. Home to the court city of Brussels, the great port of Antwerp and the Low Countries' first university (Louvain), it had for centuries been a leading center of manufacturing, trade and academia.

The map embraces the entire province, extending from the rolling hills south of Brussels to the Maas (Meuse) River in the north and east, the Scheldt (Schelde) Estuary in the west. The quality of the engraving is exceptionally fine, depicting every village, with the main towns rising in pictographic relief,



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and the surrounding topography and forests elegantly distinguished. The upper portion of the map is handsomely adorned with the arms of the Empire, as well as those of the incumbent Spanish regime and the Duchy itself.

The present map represents one of the most important early monuments of scientific surveying in Europe. It was the first of the series of provincial maps of the Netherlands made by Jacob van Deventer (1500/5-75), the first regional maps to be based on systematic triangulated surveys.

Van Deventer studied medicine and philosophy at the University of Louvain, but was soon engaged by the fields of geography and surveying. Upon reading Gemma Frisius's revolutionary work *Libellus de locorum describendorum ratione* (1533), which described trigonometric surveying techniques, Van Deventer set about surveying Brabant. He completed his manuscript map in 1536, and the accuracy and detail of the work so impressed government officials that, in 1540, Emperor Charles V appointed him 'Imperial Cartographer'. He was subsequently commissioned to conduct similar surveys of all of the provinces of the Low Countries.

Van Deventer's map of Brabant was first published in Antwerp in 1546, making it the first map to be printed in the Low Countries. Sadly, the only known example to survive into modern times was destroyed during World War II.

The Rome map publisher Michele Tramezini acquired a copy of Van Deventer's 1546 original issue, likely through an agent attending the Frankfurt Book Fair. Michele Tramezini (fl. 1539-62) was one of the leading figures of the Italian 'Lafreri School' of cartography, which was responsible for many of the finest and most influential maps of the sixteenth-century. In 1555, Tramezini produced a magnificent World map, issued in two separate hemispheres. He also issued editions of Van Deventer's other maps of the provinces of the Low Countries, which subsequently became the basis of Gerard De Jode's fine maps of the region, first issued in the 1570s. Tramezini notably also published Fernando Alvares Seco's survey of Portugal (1561), the first printed map of that country.

Tramezini commissioned Jacob Bos (fl.1549-80), a Dutchman who had become one of the leading fine art engravers in late Renaissance Italy, to produce a new edition of Van Deventer's map of Brabant. The resulting map was first issued in 1556, with a second Tramezini state appearing in 1558. The map remained by far the most accurate and widely-admired survey of Brabant, and the plate was acquired by Giovanni Orlandi, who published the present issue of the map in Rome in 1602.

The Orlandi edition, issued in 1602, appeared at an especially critical time in history, as Brabant was then traversed by the fault-line of the Eighty Years War (1568-1648), which pitted the rebellious Protestant northern provinces of the Netherlands against the forces of Spain, which held power over the southern



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regions. By this time, the Dutch Republic controlled the northern third of Brabant, while the rest remained part of the Spanish Netherlands. This division has remained to this day, as the northern areas comprise the province of Noord-Brabant of the Netherlands, while the remaining areas are made up by the Belgian provinces of Antwerp and Brabant.

Trazzini's map was subsequently copied in Venice by Francesco Camocio (1565), Bolognino Zaltieri (1566) and Girolamo Olgiato (1567). While the maps are very similar, the original Trazzini-Orlandi plate can be quickly distinguished from the Camocio-Zaltieri-Olgiato plate by the inclusion of Bosius's name below the title cartouche of the Trazzini-Orlandi map.

Rarity

The three editions of Van Deventer's map of Brabant produced from Trazzini's plate are very rare on the market.

Detailed Condition: