



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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(The Joyous Entry of Archduke Leopold Wilhelm in Ghent in 1653) Flandria Liberata / Serenissimo Principi Leopoldo Guilielmo Archiduci Austriae etc. Begarum et Burgund Pro Rege Guberneri. Flandriae Vindici hunc arcum Testem Victoriae ex Voto Publico Obsequio Piuvato Communi Cultu ad Veneratione M Praesentium ad Memoriam Euturorum Posuit S.P.W. Gandavensis Ao. MDCLIII.

Stock#: 78795
Map Maker: Quellinus / Bolswert
Date: 1653
Place: Antwerp
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 54 x 38 inches
Price: \$ 9,500.00



Description:

An Exceptional Mid-17th-Century Piece of Flemish Persuasive Cartography. The Joyous Entry of Archduke Leopold Wilhelm into Ghent.

Impressive four-sheet allegorical print showing the triumphant entry of Archduke Leopold Willem, later to become Governor of the Southern Netherlands, into Ghent in 1647. The City of Ghent commissioned this print to be designed by Erasmus Quellinus (one of Rubens' leading students) and engraved by Schelte Bolswert. The print was, at the time, one of the most expensive Flemish wall prints ever made, and cost nearly one-and-a-half times the commission of Peter Paul Rubens's painting *Adoration of the Magi*.

The engraving shows the Archduke riding through a classical gateway on his noble steed. The gateway architecture is replete with symbolism; at the top is a female bust that reads "FLANDRIA LIBERATA" (Flanders Liberated), allegorical sculptures and royal coats of arms cover the rest of it. Following the Archduke are women carrying banners reading "moderation" and "prudence," while Justice is at the Archduke's side. Ghent, a woman with a crown of a castle, is on her knees ready to receive the triumphal Archduke.

From a cartographic perspective, the most interesting feature of this print is the persuasive map that appears at the back of the print. The rest of Belgium is visible from the vantage point of the viewer, over



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the back of the defeated French. Cities are named and rays shining down on them from a sun embellished with the initials "PL" and "LG," the latter being the Latinized name of Leopold Wilhelm. However, only some of the cities are shined down on, including Dunkirk, Ypres, and Gravelines. Others are left in the shade of the parting clouds, including Bruges and Ghent, which represents an unusual stylistic choice in a work meant to celebrate the latter city's liberation.

This piece was a collaboration by some of the leading artists of 17th-century Flanders and commissioned by the city of Ghent. The painter, Erasmus Quellinus the Younger, was one of Peter Paul Rubens's closest collaborators and, following Rubens's death, succeeded him as one of the most important painters in Flanders and a celebrated Classicist. The work was engraved by Schelte van Bolswert, who was chosen for the job (despite his exorbitant fees) for the excellent work he had recently accomplished in his two works based on Rubens' "Destruction of the Idols" and "The Triumph of the Christian Faith." The Jesuit Willem Heese, a noted writer, conceived the work and the layout of the piece, while Michiel Cools executed the print run of 656 copies.

The Print

The print was produced on four sheets due to its monumental size, although a single-sheet example on white satin was reportedly made for the Archduke himself. It was commissioned in 1652 following the reconquest of Gravelines and Dunkirk from the French, and completed in 1653 by the aforementioned artists. The cost of engraving the print was reported at 2500 guilders, and the print was considered an item of utmost luxury at the time it was produced.

Ann Diels, in *The Siren Song of the Graphic Arts*, describes the print as follows:

Another example of a contract on account of an exclusive commission, concerns the Joyous Entry of Archduke Leopold Wilhelm into Ghent in 1653. On that occasion the City decided to publish a large-scale commemorative print. The Jesuit father Hesius who coordinated the project engaged Erasmus Quellinus II to design the print. The painter was also charged with having the plates cut by the best engraver in Antwerp. Hence he asked for bids from two different engravers. During the Old Regime it was common to apply for different offers, especially in the case of expensive tenders (orders).

The plate-cutter Mattheus Borrekens was prepared to engrave the print for an incentive-wage of



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1,500 fl. (a rato of 375 fl. for each of the four plates). Although his offer was the most advantageous, it was nevertheless Schelte a Bolswert who received the commission, asking as many as fl. for the same job. That Bolswert was awarded the job probably had to do with the artistic and technical quality of two other prints he had already engraved. In the contract of the engraver, it was stipulated that the print had to have the same quality as his former prints 'Destruction of the Idols' and 'the Triumph of Christian Faith' after compositions by Rubens.

The amount paid to Bolswert was extremely important. For each of the four plates he received 625 fl. Let's place this figures now in a broader perspective. In 1610 - some 43 years earlier - Peter Paul Rubens received a sum of 1,800 guilders for painting a piece with the 'Adoration of the Magi' (170 x 251 cm) for the City of Antwerp. During the same period, Rubens' fellow artist, Abraham Janssen was paid over 750 guilders for a painting representing 'Scaldis and Antverpia' (174 x 308 cm).¹⁷ Vlieghe has established that an altarpiece, measuring ca. 350 x 250 cm, generally costed 600 guilders around 1630.¹⁸ So, it is obvious that - in certain cases - prints could be real luxury products. These facts seem to confirm that art prints were valued as autonomous art objects.

Numerous documents relating to the creation of this print exist today, and are kept today in the Ghent city archives which has allowed for extensive research on the print despite its relative rarity.

Allegorical Representations

The composition is full of 17th-century engraved symbolism, added by Quellinus and Heels, both of whom had long histories of designing allegorical masterpieces. Quellinus, in particular, as a noted Classicist and engraver of academic thesis prints, would have been particularly influential in the choices of allegories used. Recent research has discussed a number of these allegories, which are described as follows:

- The Virgin of Ghent kneels in the center with a laurel wreath before Leopold Willem.
- Putti holding coats of arms of the recaptured cities surround the Virgin. Two putti with the coats of arms of Ypres and Ostend hold a memorial stone with an inscription.
- Behind the Archduke is a triumphal arch on which a bust of liberated Flanders is being donned a hat of freedom.
- In the niches of this arch are the sea god Neptune and the river god the Leie. They refer on the one hand to the help of the British fleet led by Admiral Robert Blake who had ensured neutrality at sea



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during the siege of Dunkirk and on the other hand to the river god because the entire upper reaches had been liberated from the French by the governor.

- Behind the Archdukewe distinguish the four cardinal virtues Temperance with the bridle in hand, Prudence with a scepter with an eye, Strength with a column, and Justice with the scales.
- In the foreground, the war god Mars, a winged dragon, and the war goddess Bellona are driven out from Flanders.
- As previously mentioned, sunbeams dispel a dark cloud containing symbols of war such as a winged dragon, two harpies, and bats. The sun's rays also shine over the freed Flemish cities and the sea depicted in the background.

Schelte Adamsz Bolswert

Schelte Adamsz Bolswert (1583-1659) was a Dutch painter engraver, born in Bolsward, who worked in Haarlem and in Amsterdam in his early career, before (1612-17) moving on to Brussels and Antwerp. Most of his work was done with Peter Paul Rubens and Anthony Van Dyck.

Two of his particularly notable works completed for Rubens were the "Destruction of the Idols" and "The Triumph of the Christian Faith." For these accomplishments, in 1652, rather late in his life, he engraved this remarkable work on commission for the City of Ghent, *The Entry of Archduke Leopold William into Ghent* (Holl. 291) after Erasmus Quellinus II (1607-1678), using four plates to create a print measuring about 3 feet by 4.5 feet.

Rarity

We have traced examples of the print at the Rijksmuseum and the British Museum. Researchers have traced additional examples in the Ghent City Archives (three examples, noted by André Capiteyn in 2004), the Ghent University Library, the KB in Brussels, the Plantijn Moretus Museum in Antwerp (two copies, inv. 00634; the accompanying Latin dedication was printed by Baltasar Moretus in the Plantin workshop), and the Albertina in Vienna. In addition, Leopold Willem received a special copy printed on white satin.

Detailed Condition:

Four sheets joined as one. Several tears and small areas of loss, closed and replaced in manuscript facsimile. Good to VG.
