



Third Latin edition. Two volumes. Folio (550 by 350mm), engraved title-pages with fine contemporary hand-colour and heightened in gilt, 225 double-page sheets with over 300 maps and views, all with fine contemporary hand-colour, (minor worming in lower gutter of volume II), bookplate of 'Emo Park Library' to upper paste down; contemporary Dutch gold-tooled maroon morocco over heavy pasteboard, the sides paneled with fillets and rolls, large gold-blocked corner-ornaments, crown tool where the silk ties (now gone) were laced into the covers, eight compartments of spines decorated with small floral tools, green morocco lettering pieces, all edges gilt; the center of both covers inlaid by an English restoration binder with a large rectangular piece of scarlet morocco gold-blocked with the Ormonde Arms and tooled with a border roll and small corner-ornaments.

AN EXCEPTIONALLY FINE EXAMPLE OF BLAEU'S GREAT WORK ON THE TOWNS OF THE NETHERLANDS BOUND IN FULL RED MOROCCO WITH THE COATS-OF-ARMS OF JAMES BUTLER, 1ST DUKE OF ORMOND

Nouvum ac magnum theatrum urbium Belgicae

Author

BLAEU, Willem and Johannes BLAEU.

Publication date

[1652].

Publisher

Joan Blaeu,

Publication place

Amsterdam,

Physical description

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Dimensions

550 by 350mm. (21.75 by 13.75 inches).

Notes

Third Latin text edition, and an exceptionally fine wide-margined example with fine contemporary colouring of Blaeu's great work on the towns of the Netherlands.

"Of all the Blaeu atlases, the townbooks of the Netherlands are held in the highest esteem in the Netherlands. This is partly due to the fact that their composition is linked up with the struggle for independence from Spain of the Dutch Republic in the 17th-Century. Bound up, by sentiment, with the most dramatic and heroic period of the shaping of the Dutch State it shows the proud and industrious cities of the North in their full splendour. Before the end of the battle with Spain, Joan Blaeu planned his town books which were to contain ca. 220 maps, evenly distributed over two volumes: the towns of the Republic in Volume I, the towns belonging to Spain in Volume II. In the planning stage of the atlas, some years before 1648, while the text had been printed and also most of the plates, Joan Blaeu could not know how the Peace treaty would turn out. In the last decades of the war, several towns and fortresses in the south had been or were besieged by the army of the Republic and Blaeu had to take a decision as to inclusion of these disputed towns into the two volumes of his atlas. The very first [Latin text] edition of his town atlas reflects the situation during the last years of the war: 26 maps of towns and fortresses are incorporated in the "Spanish" volume, but had to be transferred to the "Spanish" side. Consequently, apart from the very rare first edition, the volumes I and II are uneven in the number of maps, the first volume being the larger. At the end of the Index of the first edition, printed in 1649 after the Treaty of Westphalia, Joan Blaeu [gives a] notice to the reader" explaining the arrangement of the maps (Koeman I, p.295).

The Blaeu family firm was founded by Willem Janzoon Blaeu (1571-1638) in 1596. He was eventually joined by his sons, Cornelius (1616-1648) and Joan (1596-1673). The firm became the most productive cartographic establishment in the Netherlands until it was destroyed by fire in 1672. The elder Blaeu initiated the great series of atlases that culminated in the 'Atlas Maior', in which Joannes Blaeu incorporated much of the geographical knowledge bequeathed him by his father.

Provenance

James Butler (1610-1688), 1st Duke of Ormonde, was a leader of English royal authority in Ireland during the English Civil Wars and the Glorious Revolution.

Having cut his teeth in 1641 by defeating a Roman Catholic rebellion in Ireland, Ormonde was appointed a lieutenant general in the English army. Unfortunately, he was unable to stop Ireland being overrun by the rebels, and was forced to flee in 1647 - leaving the parliamentary anti-royalists in charge of the country. Although he returned a year later, the arrival of Oliver Cromwell

and his subsequent toppling of parliament sent the duke away from Ireland once more, becoming one of Charles II's closest advisors at his Parisian court-in-exile.

Upon the King's return in 1660, Ormonde was appointed commissioner for the treasury and the navy, as well as lord lieutenant of Ireland. His career oscillated frequently after this: from dismissal in 1669, to reinstated royal favour in 1677, to another fall from grace in 1684.

Bibliography

Van der Krogt 43:113

Provenance

Provenance:

1. Both covers with the armorial inlay of James Butler (1610-1688), 1st Duke of Ormonde;
2. With the bookplate of Emo Park Library to upper paste down, previously the seat of the Earls of Portarlington.

Price: £300000

Inventory reference: 21936