

Walnut panel, with carving, and ink, small shelf along the top with supports to the side, some areas of restoration.

CONTEMPORARY WOODEN PANEL DEPICTING THE SIEGE OF CHANIA, AND THE BLOCKADE OF RETHYMNO, DURING THE CRETAN WAR

[Wooden panel depicting the Cretan ports of Chania and Rethymno].

Author
ANONYMOUS

Publication date
c1646].

Publisher

Publication place
[Venice,

Physical description
Walnut panel, with carving, and ink, small shelf along the top with supports to the side, some areas of restoration.

Dimensions
505 by 1390mm. (20 by 54.75 inches).

Notes
The panel, painted at the beginning of the Cretan War (1645-1669), features the siege of Chania to the left and the blockade of Rethymno to the the right, flanking the plans are three Venetian noblemen.

The large central figure is shown in the fashionable European dress of the time. In his left hand, which he rests on his hip, he holds a broad brimmed hat with ostrich feathers, with the other hand he gestures to Rethymno. He is framed by a classical archway with Corinthian columns and a checker board floor. The two gentleman, to the left and right, are about half his size and are shown advancing towards him. The gentleman on the left holds out an apple. They are both framed by columns and an archway but this time the arch is rendered as an acanthus scroll. The whole image is

framed by an acanthus scroll border.

Although none of the figures are named, it is possible that the central figure is Andrea Corner the provveditore generale of Crete in 1645. Andrea Corner played an important role in the defence of Candia in 1645; he died, in 1646, at the battle for Rethymno, when a bullet hit him on his breast. The two figures to the left and right of the panel are probably those of Andrea Corner's sons: one of them, Cattarino, took part in the defence of Candia, where he was wounded by an arrow on his neck.

The plan of Chania bears the inscription "Pianta della Cenea [?assalto di Turchi] l'anno MDCXIV [1614 but 1645]". A rather crude attempt has been made to amend the text, with the second line 'assalto di Turchi' almost illegible, and the date amended, from 1645 (the date of the siege of Chania) to 1614. This crude editing was presumably done to draw the viewers attention away from the loss of Chania to the Ottomans, an act which would eventually lead to the loss of the whole of Crete.

The plan is based on a manuscript of the siege housed in the Biblioteca nationale Marciana, Venice (we are unable to trace any printed plans of the siege). The Ottoman siege works are clearly marked to the upper right, as are the batteries and tents surrounding the town. The Ottoman's would take a mere 56 days to secure the town, with the port falling to them on the 22 August 1645.

The plan of Rethymno to the right, marked 'Citta di Retimo', is closely based on a manuscript survey of 1601, by Angelo Oddi, housed in the Bibliotheca Marciana, Venice. Three large ships surround the town and possibly allude to the blockade of the port by the Ottoman's. A blockade that Giovanni Capello, the commader of the Venetian fleet failed to break in 1646.

We are uncertain what piece of furniture the panel came from, but the most likely explanation is that is was the lid of a large chest.

Bibliography

Biblioteca nazionale Marciana GEO0025614; Portyriou, Heleni, The Cartography of Crete in the first half of the 17th century: a collective work of a generation of engineers.

Provenance

Price:

Inventory reference: 14832

© Daniel Crouch Rare Books Ltd | 2025