


Folio (385 by 280mm), Latin text, six volumes bound in two, engraved title pages and 363 double-page engraved maps, plans, and bird’s-eye views, all with FINE ORIGINAL HAND-COLOUR, contemporary vellum, title in manuscript to spine.

## THE EARLIEST SYSTEMATIC CITY ATLAS

**Civitates Orbis Terrarum.**

**Author**
BRAUN, Georg, HOGENBERG, Franz.

**Publication date**
1585-1617.

**Publisher**
Apud Petrum A Brachel,

**Publication place**
Cologne,

**Physical description**
Folio (385 by 280mm), Latin text, six volumes bound in two, engraved title pages and 363 double-page engraved maps, plans, and bird’s-eye views, all with FINE ORIGINAL HAND-COLOUR, contemporary vellum, title in manuscript to spine.

**Dimensions**

**Notes**
A fine copy of ‘the earliest systematic city atlas’ (Koeman).

Published in Cologne in a series of six volumes between 1572 and 1617, the ‘Civitates’ attempts to present, for the first time, a systematic account of all the major settlements and cities of the then-known World. They appear in a realistic, faithfully represented, and recognisable style, using a combination of two-dimensional plans, three-dimensional views, and bird’s-eye perspectives. The subsequent atlas proved hugely popular with the new urban mercantile elite, who were hungry for information on the far flung cities of the world.

In order to obtain accurate representations of the numerous cities illustrated in the ‘Civitates’, Georg Braun (1541-1622) canon of Cologne Cathedral, established an extensive network of correspondents and artists across Europe who contributed numerous drawings to the project. These included Georg Hoefnagel, Heinrich Rantzau, Jacob van Deventer, and Abraham Ortelius, among others. In fact, Hoefnagel and Ortelius were close friends, travelling extensively throughout Europe, and are often depicted in the foreground of the engraved views. These engraved views were executed by Franz Hogenberg and Simon Novellanus. Hogenberg was a close friend of both Gerard Mercator and Abraham Ortelius, and was employed by Ortelius to engrave maps for his ‘Theatrum’.

The plates, whether two-dimensional plans, three-dimensional views, or bird’s-eye perspectives, come alive with their depiction of the individual citizens in the foreground, from the rich merchants of London, and the wild Cossacks of Moscow, to the refined towns-folk of Maastricht. However, Braun’s motives for adding figures to the views, went further: as stated in his introduction to Book 1, he believed, perhaps optimistically, that his plans would not in consequence be scrutinized for military secrets by the Turks, as their religion forbade them from looking on representations of the human form.

**Bibliography**
Koeman II, 15-23; Phillips, Atlases, 59.

**Provenance**

**Price:**

**Inventory reference:** 1250

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