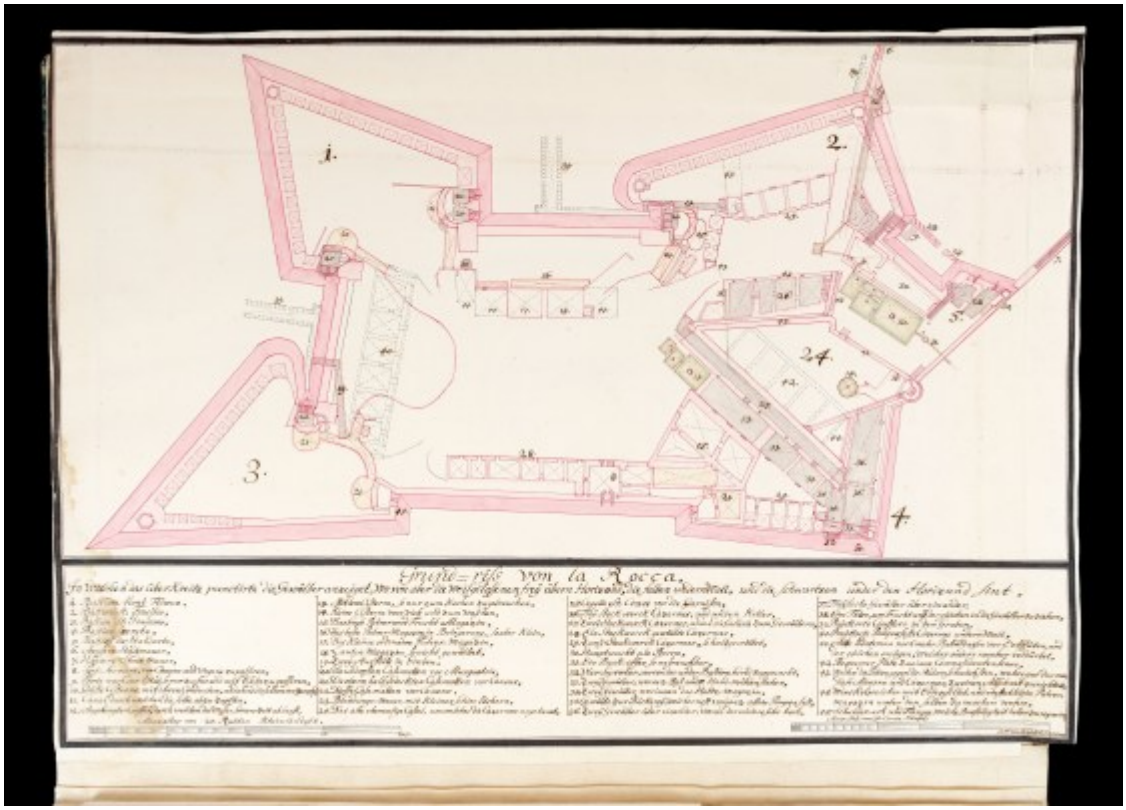

Folio (490 by 380mm), 25 manuscript maps, plans, and profiles, in pen and ink, and wash colour, several folding, quarter vellum over blue marbled paper boards, with label to upper board in manuscript.

AN AUSTRIAN IN TUSCANY

[Manuscript Atlas of the State Presidi, in Tuscany].

Author
OEBSCHELWITZ, Ludwig Wilhelm Friedrich von

Publication date
[c1725].

Publisher

Publication place

Physical description
Folio (490 by 380mm), 25 manuscript maps, plans, and profiles, in pen and ink, and wash colour, several folding, quarter vellum over blue marbled paper boards, with label to upper board in manuscript.

Dimensions

Notes
An important collection of manuscript maps of the State of Presidi in Tuscany, at the time part of the Kingdom of Naples, and primarily produced by Ludwig Wilhelm Friedrich von Oebschelwitz (d1766), an Austrian officer renowned for his contributions to military cartography. This collection likely represents a significant portion of the Austrian army’s topographical campaign under the direction

of Baron Samuel von Schmettau (1684–1751), author of the first “modern” map of Sicily, drawn with advanced astronomical, geodetic, and topographical knowledge.

The volume contains Ludwig Wilhelm Friedrich von Oebschelwitz’s surveying work during the Austrian campaign in Italy. The work principally focuses on the “Stato dei Presidi” with meticulous attention to the fortified citadel of Orbetello. The majority of the plans are signed by the author, including a small text of 18 leaves. During the War of the Spanish Succession (1700–1713), the “Stato dei Presidi” was occupied by the Austrians, to whom it was assigned by the Peace Treaties of Utrecht (1713) and Rastatt (1714). From 1707 to 1733, it was administered by the Habsburgs and ruled by their viceroys, from Naples.

The volume consists of 25 maps, plans, and profiles. The work begins with a general map of Italy, marking the route of the Austrian army, together with the State of Presidi. There follow a further 18 plans, profiles, and maps of towns and fortifications in Presidi. The final six plans comprise: one plan of Pescara, in Abruzzo, on the Adriatic coast, then part of the Kingdom of Naples; two plans of Fort Capua north of Naples; two plans of Castello di Baia, on the Bay of Naples; and one plan of Castel Nuovo, in Naples.

Historical Context

The War of the Quadruple Alliance, which lasted from late 1717 to early 1720, was fought by the Kingdom of Spain against Great Britain, France, Austria, and the Netherlands for dominance of the Mediterranean Sea.

King Philip V of Spain, frustrated by the loss of his Italian possessions after the War of the Spanish Succession, invaded Sardinia, which had become an Austrian possession, in August 1717, and Sicily, which had passed to Victor Amadeus II, Duke of Savoy, in July 1718. The Spanish king took advantage of the power vacuum created in France after the death of Louis XIV and the fact that Austria was engaged in the Austro-Turkish War of 1716–1718. Under the pretext of the Sicilian people’s hostility to the House of Savoy, a Spanish army landed in Sicily, then just recently under Savoy rule, on July 3, 1718. It first conquered Palermo and then occupied the whole of Sicily. The city of Messina was an exception, and it remained under siege until September 1718.

After the Peace of Passarowitz (July 21 1718), between the Austrians and the Ottomans, Austria entered the anti-Spanish alliance, which became the Quadruple Alliance. This was an agreement between states which was intended to ensure a balance of power among the European powers. Emperor Charles VI renounced any claims to the Spanish throne and agreed to an exchange between Sicily (in Savoy hands) and Sardinia, as well as the creation of a Bourbon dynasty in Italy. These decisions now had to be submitted to Spain, and so they were sent to the Spanish court with the threat of a declaration of war if they refused.

On December 17, 1718, Spain definitively rejected the conditions set by the Quadruple Alliance, and war was officially declared. It also spread to Spain’s colonies in South America, where Great Britain attempted to gain advantages, but by the end of the year, only Austria and Great Britain were at war with Spain (France and the Netherlands did not enter the war until 1719).

During 1719, Austria managed to reconquer Sicily: the Austrian army, commanded by Claude Florimond d’Argenteau, Count of Mercy (1666–1734), first attacked the Sicilian city of Francavilla and later succeeded in conquering Milazzo. It then reconquered Messina and established a position opposite Palermo. On February 20, 1720, the Treaty of The Hague was signed, ending the war. Hostilities in Palermo were suspended immediately thereafter with the Convention of Palermo (1720).

Wilhelm Friedrich von Oebschelwitz’s

Ludwig Wilhelm Friedrich von Oebschelwitz, about whom very little biographical information is available — it is known that some of his drawings were engraved by artists such as Jacob van der Schley and published in The Hague by Pieter de Hondt — likely travelled to Sicily, in the late 1710s with the Austrian army, where he undertook surveys of the principal fortified towns, aiming to provide commander Claude Florimond d’Argenteau with a detailed map of the island. Following Austria’s successful capture of Sicily, Oebschelwitz followed the army’s journey through Italy. He would continue to have a long and successful career in the army, with plans being published after his surveys as late as the 1760s.

Contents

1. [?OEBSCHELWITZ, Ludwig Wilhelm Friedrich von] [Map of Italy] [c1725] With key (A-M) to map lower left. The map shows the route taken by the Austrian army through Italy. Dimensions: 355 by 375mm.
2. Text to accompany the maps, 18 leaves, presumably in Oebschelwitz’s own hand (the final two blank).
3. OEBSCHELWITZ, Ludwig Wilhelm Friedrich von. Grund=ris von la Rocca. [c1724] Detailed plan of Fort Rocca on Monte Argentario. Key below. Part of the State of Presidi. Dimensions: 365 by 520mm.
4. [ANONYMOUS] Plan de la Fortification d’Orbitello. [c1724] Orbitello part of the state of Presidi. Dimensions: 335 by 445mm.
5. OEBSCHELWITZ, Ludwig Wilhelm Friedrich von. Carta von der Insul Mont Argentario in Toscanien. 1725. Dimensions: 650 by 550mm.
6. OEBSCHELWITZ, Ludwig Wilhelm Friedrich von. Plan Generale von Port Hercole Mont Philippo und Stella. 1724. Dimensions: 470 by 1400mm.
7. OEBSCHELWITZ, Ludwig Wilhelm Friedrich von. Profile von Port Hercole und la Rocca. [c1725]. Dimensions: 420 by 1520mm.
8. OEBSCHELWITZ, Ludwig Wilhelm Friedrich von. Grund-riss von Mont Philippo. [c1725]. Dimensions: 500 by 710mm.
9. OEBSCHELWITZ, Ludwig Wilhelm Friedrich von. Profile von Porto oder Haven zu Port-Hercole. [c1725]. Dimensions: 1550 by 410mm.
10. OEBSCHELWITZ, Ludwig Wilhelm Friedrich von. Profile von Mont Philippo… [c1725]. Dimensions: 420 by 1580mm.
11. OEBSCHELWITZ, Ludwig Wilhelm Friedrich von. Plan Speciale von Port Hercole und Mont Philippo. 1725. Dimensions: 420 by 1020mm.
12. OEBSCHELWITZ, Ludwig Wilhelm Friedrich von. Profile Lezudem Plan von Orbitello. [c1725]. Dimensions: 520 by 1580mm.
13. [HEMING, F.W.]. Pianta della Piazza di Longone. [c1725]. Dimensions: 540 by 340mm.
14. OEBSCHELWITZ, Ludwig Wilhelm Friedrich von. Profile von Stella bey Port Hercole. [c1725]. Dimensions: 400 by 510mm.
15. OEBSCHELWITZ, Ludwig Wilhelm Friedrich von. Grund-riss von Stella. [c1725]. Dimensions: 230 by 340mm.
16. [ANONYMOUS]. Plan de la Scalefth. [c1725]. Dimensions: 190 by 260mm.
17. OEBSCHELWITZ, Ludwig Wilhelm Friedrich von. Pianta della Piazza di Talamone. [c1725]. Dimensions: 460 by 660mm.
18. [ANONYMOUS]. Plan de Piombine. [c1725]. Plan of Piombino. Dimensions: 270 by 380mm.
19. OEBSCHELWITZ, Ludwig Wilhelm Friedrich von. Pianta della Piazza di Piombino. [c1725]. Dimensions: 300 by 450mm
20. OEBSCHELWITZ, Ludwig Wilhelm Friedrich von. Pianta della Piazza di Pescara. [c1725]. Port on

the Adriatic – but part of the Kingdom of Naples. Dimensions: 500 by 660mm.
21. [ANONYMOUS]. Explication ver Vestung von Capua. [c1725]. Fort north of Naples. Dimensions: 270 by 400mm.
22. [ANONYMOUS]. Explication von Vestung von Capua. [c1725]. Fort north of Naples. Dimensions: 220 by 390mm.
23. [ANONYMOUS]. Plan du Chateau de Baya. [c1725]. Dimensions: 240 by 370mm.
24. OEBSCHELWITZ, Ludwig Wilhelm Friedrich von. Pianta del Castello di Baya. [c1725]. Catello del Baia, on the Bay of Naples. Dimensions: 250 by 340mm.
25. [ANONYMOUS]. Plan du Chateau Nevi Naples. [c1725]. Castel Nuovo Naples. Dimensions: 240 by 360mm.

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