



First edition, first state (before plate numbers), oblong folio (470 by 600mm), engraved allegorical title-page with elaborate rococo ornament and a portrait of the author signed "Anzolo Trivisan Deliniavi | Carlo Orsolini scupis.," 22 etched and engraved plates, all but one signed "Mich.l Marieschi Del.t et Inci.t," with crossbow watermark and "C. F." countermark, large paper copy with generous margins, 18th century full mottled calf, each cover decorated with a border of blind triple filets, spine in seven compartments decorated with gilt velouts, six raised bands, red morocco lettering-piece, all edges stained red (with discrete repairs to the head and tail of the spine).

MICHELE MARIESCHI'S SUITE OF VIEWS OF VENICE FROM THE LIBRARY OF LOUIS XV

Magnificentiores Selectioresque Urbis Venetiarum Prospectus... Quos olim Michael Marieschi Venetus Pictor, et Architectus in Plerisque Tabulis Depinxit. Nunc uero ab ipsomet accurate delineante, incidente, tiispisque, mandante, iterum in sexdeum æreis tabulis in lucem æduntur. Venetiis MDCCXLI cum Excettmi. Senatus permissu ac privil.

Author

MARIESCHI, Michele

Publication date

1741.

Publisher

Venduntur in vico Sancti Lucæ | apud eumdem Auctorem Venetiis,

Publication place

Venice,

Physical description

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Dimensions

470 by 600mm. (18.5 by 23.5 inches).

Notes

A fine, complete copy in the scarce first state of Marieschi's suite of 21 engraved views of Venice.

Michele Marieschi's (1710-1743) began his artistic career as a set painter in the workshop of Francesco Tasso and spent much of the first half of his life living in Germany. However, by the early 1730's Marieschi had returned to his native city, Venice, and by 1735 had begun his career as a painter. He was emboldened by the success of his contemporaries, Canaletto and Guardi, and was inspired by his predecessors, Marco Ricci and Luca Carlevaris. Despite his untimely death at age 33, he enjoyed considerable success as both a painter and an engraver - he was patronized by the wealthy German collector Johann Matthias von der Schulenburg and was married to Angelo Fontana, the daughter of an important Venetian picture-dealer.

Marieschi's suite of engraved view of Venice is the culmination of his artistic career as a vedutista. Creating and publishing these engravings was the ideal way for Marieschi to make his great skill known to a wider audience of collectors both at home and abroad. In 1740 Antonio Visentini had engraved a set of 38 views after Canaletto. It is likely that Canaletto's suite's success encouraged Marieschi to create a similar work of his own. However, unlike Canaletto's suite, Marieschi's engravings are all original compositions rather than copies of paintings. Marieschi's suite enjoyed immediate success, as is evidenced by the many reprints and later editions following its initial publication and continuing on to the end of the century.

Marieschi's artistic style has been characterized as a mixture of Canaletto's detailed and exacting vision combined with Guardi's poetic grace. As such, his works often exhibit features from both of the typically Venetian genres, vedute (views taken from life) and capricci (imagined architectural landscapes). This contradiction can be seen in Marieschi's use of exaggerated perspective in his engraving of the Piazza San Marco, thereby showing us a real site that has been embellished for heightened dramatic effect. In another instance, the engraving of Campo San Rocco, Marieschi created an elaborate cappricco within a view of a real piazza. Since the church had not yet been completed, he took the opportunity to include an imagined, richly decorated façade (which was replaced by Joseph Wagner with the real church in the 1770 second edition).

This copy bears stamps from the Bibliothèque Royale in the Château de Compiègne. Built on the site of an earlier royal palace, the Château de Compiègne was constructed for Louis XV between 1751 and 1788. During the revolution however, the palace's contents were either sold or sent to the Musée Centrale in Paris. In 1807, Napoleon restored the Chateau to its former splendor and began to fill its library with an impressive collection of books. However, based on Bibliothèque Royale stamp, this book apparently entered the library during the reign of Louis-Philippe (1830-1848). In 1895 the book was transferred to the Bibliothèque Nationale's Cabinet des Estampes. It was then deaccessioned from the B.N. in 1976 because they had a second copy of the suite.

Bibliography

Berlin 2697; Cicognara 4040; Millard 59; Toledano, Ralph: Michele Marieschi: catalogo ragionato (Milan, 1995), pp. 39-121; Succi, Dario: Michiel Marieschi: catalogo ragionato dell'opera incisa (Torino, 1987); Succi, Dario: Le incisioni di Michele Marieschi 1710- 1743 (Padova, 1981); Dreyer, Peter (ed.): Vedute architektonisches Capriccio und Landschaft in der venezianischen Graphik des 18. Jahrhunderts (Berlin: Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, 1985), p. 46ff.; Martineau, Jane & Robison, Andrew (eds.): The Glory of Venice (London: Royal Academy of Arts/ Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1995), no. 160; J. G. Links, The Burlington Magazine, Vol. 134, No. 1067 (Feb., 1992), pp. 125-126.

Provenance

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1. Louis XV (1710-1774), black ink library stamp of the Bibliothèque du Roi, Compiègne, on the title-page.
2. Bibliothèque de Compiègne, with their blue oval ink library stamp dated 1875 on the title-page.
3. Bibliothèque Nationale, Cabinet des Estampes, with their acquisition inscription dated 1895 on the title-page, a paper spine-label with alpha-numeric pressmark and the word "double," their discreet red ink library stamp throughout, and deaccession stamp on the verso of plates stating "B.N. éch[ange] 1976."
4. Private Collection.

Price: £120000

Inventory reference: 12733

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