

Woodcut panorama, 4 sheets (each image c255 by 395mm, full margins), German text on verso of last sheet (one or two early repairs to verso, left-hand edge of 3rd sheet a bit frayed, old vertical folds, some minor spotting and staining).

PANORAMA OF VENICE

Civitas Veneciaru.

Author
BREYDENBACH, Bernard von

Publication date
1502.

Publisher
Peter Drach,

Publication place
Speyer,

Physical description
Woodcut panorama, 4 sheets (each image c255 by 395mm, full margins), German text on verso of last sheet (one or two early repairs to verso, left-hand edge of 3rd sheet a bit frayed, old vertical folds, some minor spotting and staining).

Dimensions
c270 by 415mm. (10.75 by 16.25 inches).

Notes
A magnificent panorama of Venice from the third German edition of Breydenbach's "Peregrinatio in terram sanctam", first published in Latin in February 1486.

Breydenbach's account is regarded as the first illustrated travel book, and the illustrations created by Reuwich of Utrecht, who accompanied Breydenbach on his pilgrimage, of which this monumental view of Venice is but one, are the most detailed and accurate of fifteenth-century printed depictions of some of the most important European and Middle Eastern cities, having been drawn from life by the artist. These are also the first folding plates to appear in a printed book, and this comprehensive, minutely detailed panorama of Venice, extending to five feet in length, is the largest of them all. Reuwich, described by the author as a 'skilful painter', is otherwise unknown, and no other specimen of his work has been recorded.

Bernhard von Breydenbach (1440-1497) was made a canon of Mainz Cathedral around 1450 and was appointed Dean in 1484. It does not appear that he was ever ordained. Breydenbach died in 1497 and was buried in the cathedral. When his tomb was opened in 1582, his body was found to be

perfectly preserved, having being embalmed with substances brought back from his journey in the Near and Middle East.

Breydenbach's pilgrimage, which took place from April 1483 to January 1484, was ostensibly undertaken in the hope of obtaining salvation for his soul. He had lived an apparently reckless life in his youth. He and two companions started out from Oppenheim near Mainz, though it seems that the pilgrimage proper did not begin in earnest until they reached Venice two weeks later, where they spent three weeks before bargaining for passage on a galley. They sailed on June 1st and arrived at Jaffa on June 30th. En route to the Holy Land they took in Parenzo, Corfu, Modon, Candia, and Rhodes, all of which are illustrated in the 'Peregrinationes'.

The main holy sites, including Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Mount Sinai, were visited, before the party proceeded to Cairo and down the Nile to Rosetta. They set sail homeward from Alexandria on November 15th. Encountering a storm on the homeward passage, they did not reach Venice until January 8, 1484. Although Breydenbach is generally described as the author of this work, it seems that the Latin text may have been compiled by Martin Roth of the Dominican convent of Pforzheim, who did not make the journey.

As a preparatory guide for pilgrimages to the Holy Land, the 'Peregrinationes' found a wide audience; there were no fewer than eight incunable editions and 12 editions in all between 1486 and 1522. There were also a few reprints of the text only and abridgements in various languages. In spite of the vulnerability of the woodblocks, it appears that they were almost as well travelled as their author, appearing in editions printed in Lyon (1489-90), Speier (1490) and Zaragoza (1498).

Bibliography
Campbell, Maps 65; HC *3956; GW 5075; BMC i 43; Bodleian XVc. B-552; BSB-Ink B909; Davies 1; Goff B1189; Moretto 4; Schreiber V 3628.

Provenance

Price:

Inventory reference: 12729

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