

Engraved map, on eight sheets.

WALL MAP OF LIGURIA

Carta de la Rivera de Genova con sus verdaderos confines y caminos

Author
CHAFRION, J[osé]

Publication date
1685.

Publisher
Marc'Antonio dal Re,

Publication place
Milan,

Physical description
Engraved map, on eight sheets.

Dimensions
540 by 705mm. (21.25 by 27.75 inches). If joined 2.70 by 5.30 meters.

Notes
From 1535 until 1706, the Duchy of Milan was a Spanish possession, with Liguria serving as an important strategic link between the two powers. In 1685, a map of the Ligurian coast was published, commissioned by the Governor and Captain General of Milan, Don Giovanni Tommaso Enriquez de Cabrera e Toledo, Count of Melgar, and executed by the José Chafrion. Born in Valencia but Spanish by heritage, Chafrion worked in Genoa as a mathematician, military cartographer and engraver throughout the late seventeenth century. His 'Carta de la Rivera de Genova' is undoubtedly the greatest of the maps and plans he left.

Along the coast, the map extends from Nice in the west to Versilia in the east, and in the north from Turin to Parma. Towns and cities, routes and roads, castles, churches, mountains, rivers and harbours are all represented on the map, with the symbols for many described in a key in the upper left-hand corner, and monograms used to identify ownership.

The pictorial representation of relief effectively captures the nature of the Ligurian landscape with its narrow valleys, short mountain chains and abrupt rivers, sandwiched as it is between the Apennines and the sea. The road network and territorial boundaries are also delineated with great accuracy, with numerous routes branching off from the main coastal road which runs through the entire length of the region.

At the centre of the lower border is a cartouche housing the scale bars: “Escala de Millas Ginovesas de a 65 par Grado”; “Escala de Millas Comunes Italianas de a 60 por Grado”; “Escala de Millas Piamonte de a 50 por Grado”. This is surmounted and flanked by detailed illustrations of people at work by the sea, winged putti, a crowned lion, and two eagles who stand either side of the map’s dedication’s to the Count of Melgar. The sea is also illustrated with depictions of ships and sea creatures.

Chafrion’s map became an influential depiction of Liguria, and was the basis for many later pieces of cartography across Europe. The first edition, as is the present example, is extremely rare: we have been able to trace only four examples, held at the Bibliothèque nationale de France, the British Library, Harvard University, and the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

Bibliography

Provenance

Price: £15000

Inventory reference: 18194

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