



# Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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## **[Prague] Wahrhaffter und Accurater entworffener Plan und Grund-Riss der Hauptstadt Prag in dem Königreiche Böhmen; wie Solche von dem Kayserlichen Königlichen Preussischen Auxiliär Troupen im Monath September A. 1744 belagert und erobert worden.**

**Stock#:** 37226  
**Map Maker:** Trellund  
**Date:** 1744  
**Place:** Prague  
**Color:** Pen & Ink with Wash Color  
**Condition:** VG  
**Size:** 15.5 x 12 inches  
**Price:** SOLD



### **Description:**

A finely drafted manuscript plan of Prague, depicting Frederick the Great's 1744 siege of the city, executed by the Danish engineer Gregers Daa Trellund.

This magnificent plan shows Prague and its environs as they appeared in 1744, after the Prussian armies of Frederick the Great briefly captured the city. With a population of over 50,000, Prague was then the third largest city in the Austrian Habsburg Empire (after Vienna and Budapest), a major center of commerce, as well as a critical nexus of Germanic, Slavic and Jewish cultures. In spite of its vibrancy, Prague still largely consisted of the Gothic city constructed on the orders of Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV, in the 14th Century. As shown, most of the city was made up by the Staré Mesto, (Old Town), occupying the west bank of the Vltava (Moldau) River, with the fortified hill, the Vyšehrad, located to the south. On the other side of the river, across the magnificent Charles Bridge, is the Malá Strana (Little Town), that sits at the foot of the legendary 'Hradc[any]' (Prague Castle). The outlines of the city walls still followed those constructed on Charles IV's orders, and the city was prevented from expanding outside of these ramparts due to the frequency of military activity.

Prague had long occupied a precarious position near the border of the Slavic and Germanic and the Roman Catholic and Protestant worlds. The Thirty Years War (1618-48) began in Prague, and over the next century, the city was considered to be the favored target of Austria's European enemies. While Prague occupied a very beautiful natural location, it was also exceptionally vulnerable to attack from all



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directions. The Vltava was too narrow to act as an affective barrier to military movement, and the surrounding hills were too short to be the foundations of impregnable fortresses. The rolling countryside surrounding the city allowed armies to approach from all sides.

During the Thirty Years' War, the city was successfully besieged four times (1620, 1632, 1639 and 1648). Following the war, Emperor Ferdinand III commissioned Count Raymond Montecucoli to redesign the fortifications of Prague. The Vyšehrad was to become a citadel, while the city's walls were to be rebuilt in the Italian Baroque military style. The project was initially supervised by Count Innocent de Conti, with construction commencing in 1653, and lasting until the 1720s. Unfortunately, the plan was not updated, along the way, to incorporate the ground-breaking principals of military architecture postulated by Sebastian Le Prestre de Vauban (1633-1707). By the time of its completion, the, albeit grand, Prague defenses were out of date, and were no match for the latest siege canons.

The War of Austrian Succession (1740-8) pitted the newly crowned Austrian Empress, Maria Theresa (reigned 1740-80), against Prussia, led by the aggressive military genius Frederick II, known as Frederick the Great (reigned 1740-86). The war drew in other nations, and embraced a number of smaller conflicts. In 1741, Prague was briefly taken by a combined French, Bavarian and Saxon army.

In 1744, Frederick commenced his campaign to consolidate his conquest of Silesia (now southwestern Poland) from Austria, in what is now known as the Second Silesian War (1744-5). Trellund accompanied the Prussian force, and advised them on how best to place artillery to overcome fortifications. Frederick knew that bringing pressure to bear on Bohemia would compel Maria Theresa to make concessions in Silesia. As shown on the map, which is orientated with the west to the top, the Prussian army closed in on the city in September 1744. Their main force bombarded the walls of the Staré Město from the east and a smaller force fired upon the Hradčany from the north. Prague surrendered on September 16, 1744.

Trellund drafted this plan in Prague shortly after the city was taken, in order to commemorate the siege and to provide a complete record of the state of the city's fortifications, should they be needed for future military planning. The map shows all of the fortifications, delineates each of the Prague's streets, the outlines of major buildings, bridges, as well as farms and gardens. A key identifies 54 points of interest. Trellund employs a very attractive style that transitions between the elaborate Baroque manner of map draftsmanship favored in the 17th Century and the more reserved, yet precise, Enlightenment style which progressively took hold during the 18th Century. The vivid color and borders of red silk are fine artistic embellishments that suggests that this plan was intended for presentation to senior Austrian commanders



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or officials.

Prague was recaptured by an Austrian force under Duke Charles of Lorraine on November 26, 1744. Following another Prussian siege in 1757, the Austrians decided that the approaches to Prague needed to be secured, so lessening the chances of a direct assault on the city itself. This led to the construction of the great fortresses of Terezín and Josefov.

Gregers Daa Trellund (1697-1760) was a Danish military engineer who served his native country in India, before joining Prussian service. He is best known for his magnificent plan, "Kort over Tranquebar med Dansborg", detailing the Danish outpost of Tranquebar (today known as Tharangambadi, Tamil Nadu) and fort of Dansborg. From 1620 to 1845, the Danes held this outpost on India's Coromandel Coast. The plan is executed in the same vibrant style as the present Prague plan.

Upon his return to Europe, Trellund joined the Prussian Army. Frederick the Great was in the process of transforming his army into the finest land force in Europe. The Prussians actively recruited the best engineers from allied Protestant countries, promising them higher pay and better prospects of preferment than were available at home. It was under these circumstances that Trellund left tiny Denmark to become a part of Frederick's grand ambitions.

18th Century manuscript maps of Prague are very rare, and the present plan exhibits exceptionally fine draftsmanship, detail and historical content, executed by an important military engineer.

#### **Detailed Condition:**

Original Manuscript city and battle plan, watercolor, pen and ink and wash, orange silk edges.