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Platte Grondt Der Stadt London Met Nieuw Model En Hoe die Afgebrandt is.

Stock#: 37579
Map Maker: De Wit
Date: 1666 circa
Place: Amsterdam
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG
Size: 21 x 15.5 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Frederick De Wit's rare broadside map depicting London following the Great Fire of 1666.

This fascinating and highly detailed broadside map of London was published in the same year as the Great Fire of 1666. The map covers London from Bunhill to St. George's Southwark, and from St. James's to Redriff. In the lower-right is an inset perspective view of the city, entitled "Londons Brandt", showing the city ablaze with flames towering above the ill-fated medieval St Paul's Cathedral. A Thames oarsman, fighting back tears, leans on the view. The scrolls, adorning both sides of the main view, label 129 key sites throughout London, including churches, streets and major edifices.

There are at least 3 states of the map, with the other editions not including the decorative cherubs in the upper left and right corners, the vignette to the left of the fire inset, and the extension of the roads and fields beyond the city plan proper.

The present example of the map is identical to the established state 3, except that it does not include the bilingual (Dutch and French) letterpress explanation of fire, "London Verbrandt...", which is included in other known examples. Otherwise, the 3 states can be identified as follows (courtesy of Ashley Baynton-Williams):

- State 1: has '... De Aenwysinghe ...' in the title and no inset of the fire
- State 2: has the inset of the fire
- State 3: has '... Nieuw Model ...' in the title, with additions to the outskirts of the map, field boundaries, paths, etc., names added, cherubs, panels, city arms, and other decorative features.



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Frederick de Wit (1630-1706) was already by this time the leading mapmaker in the Dutch cartography scene. De Wit would become famous for his grand wall maps and atlases, and towards the end of the 17th Century was perhaps the world's leading mapmaker.

The Great Fire of London, 1666

The Great Fire of London was one of the most consequential events of the 17th Century. The conflagration started in a bakery on Pudding Lane and raged from September 2-5, 1666 (September 12-15, according to the contemporary 'Old Style' calendar). The city then consisted largely of timber and thatch medieval buildings that, after one of the hottest and driest summers on record, went ablaze as if they were kindling. Almost 90% of the city of London within its old walls was destroyed, 13,200 homes were burnt to the ground and 70,000 of the city's 80,000 residents were left homeless. Many of the head offices of England's major trading companies were destroyed, and the dislocation severely hindered England's economy.

The event could not have occurred at a worse time, for England was then doing battle with both the Netherlands and France, in the midst of the Second Anglo-Dutch War (1665-7). Up to the time of the fire, the English were winning the war, but the calamity curtailed her military capabilities, and this was, in part, responsible for allowing the Dutch Navy to sail up the Medway to burn the Chatham naval shipyard in June 1667, one of the most humiliating defeats in the history of the Royal Navy. This ensured that the war was soon concluded on terms highly favorable to the Dutch.

While several well-conceived plans were proposed for the rebuilding of London on rational geometric patterns, including those by notable figures such as Robert Hooke and John Evelyn, Charles II rejected these designs and ordered London to be rebuilt on its ancient street pattern. That being said, the process of renewal gave rise to the great era of English Baroque architecture, epitomized by Sir Christopher Wren's new St. Paul's Cathedral (completed 1720), which now dominates The City. It also led to improved building standards and fire prevention programs which ensured that a large accidental conflagration would never occur in Britain.

The present map is one of the finest and most detailed depictions of London from the Great Fire period.

Detailed Condition:

Copper-engraved broadside. lacking the text panels, "London Verbrandt", present with other known examples. The map has been remargined.