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Le Vray Pourtrait de la Grande Cite de Temistitan ou Tenuthitlan, chef du royaume, & Province puissante du Mexique.

Stock#: 38685
Map Maker: De Belleforest
Date: 1575
Place: Paris
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 8 x 11 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Rare and important early plan of Mexico City from Francois De Belleforest for his *La Cosmographie Universelle de Tout la Monde*, published in Paris in 1575.

This fascinating 16th-century plan shows Tenochtitlan, the capital of the Aztec Empire, as it appeared to the conquistador Hernan Cortes, when he gained control of the city in 1521. Tenochtitlan was estimated to have a population of over 300,000, making it larger than any city in Europe. As shown on this plan, it was built on man-made islands within Lake Texcoco, centered around a great temple. Cortes remarked that the city market had 60,000 daily visitors. The Europeans were amazed by the grandeur of Tenochtitlan, as observed by Bernal Diaz del Castillo:

"When we saw so many cities and villages built in the water and other great towns on dry land



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we were amazed and said that it was like the enchantments (...) on account of the great towers and cues and buildings rising from the water, and all built of masonry. And some of our soldiers even asked whether the things that we saw were not a dream? (...) I do not know how to describe it, seeing things as we did that had never been heard of or seen before, not even dreamed about."

In spite of his sense of wonderment, Cortes ordered that the temples of Tenochtitlan be dismantled and their remnants be used to build the modern metropolis of Mexico City.

With the exception of the image of Santo Domingo which accompanied Columbus' first letter, the earliest plan of any city in America is the Cortes map of Tenochtitlan (Mexico City), which first appeared in 1524 (on which the present plan is based). The plan first appeared in Bordone's *Isolario*, with later editions issued in Munster's *Cosmographia*, Ramusio's *Navigazione et viaggi* and Antoine du Pinet's *Plantz, pourtraitz et descriptions de plusiueres villes et fortresses* and other important works.

A necessary map for any Mexico City collection or any collections of early plans of New World cities.

Detailed Condition:

Minor dampstain in top left corner. Narrow right margin.