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Novissima, et Accuratissima Leonis Belgici, Seu Septemdecim Regionum Descriptio

Stock#: 40098
Map Maker: Visscher
Date: 1611 circa
Place: Amsterdam
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG
Size: 18.5 x 22.5 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Fine dark impression of Claes Janszoon Visscher's rampant lion, Leo Belgicus, first published in 1611.

Visscher's lion is an early example of peace propaganda, published to celebrate the 12 years of peace in the midst of the 80 years war between the Low Countries and Spain. The allegorical scenes are filled with symbolisms and celebrations of peace, including:

- In the left "t'Vrije Neerlant" and "t'Neerlandt onder d'Aertshartogh Albertus" (i.e. the Northern and Southern Provinces) are trampling "d'oude twist" (old conflict).
- God sends "Zeghen" (blessing) to distribute "Const en Wetenschap" (art and science); "Kennisse Goodts" (theology) and "Rijcdom" (wealth) over the region .
- Inscriptions point at "t'Lants Welvaart" (prosperity of the country), "t Vergrooten der Steden" (growth of the cities), "Coophandel" (trade), "t'Vredich Lantbouwen" (peaceful agriculture), "t'Overvloedich Vee" (overabundance of cattle) and "t Veijlich Reijsen" (safe travel).
- On the bottom right of the lion "Slapende Oorlogh" (sleeping Mars) is seated with his head resting on a gun barrel.
- The sitting lion has his sword sheathed, decorated with two seals, one with the seven arrows for the northern provinces and the other with the Burgundian cross for the southern provinces, and the inscriptions of Duodecim annos and voor twaelf jaren (for twelve years).

The map is also noteworthy as one of the earliest graphic depictions to emphasize the separation of the northern and southern provinces, as is shown in text and presentation. While titled as the Seventeen



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Provinces, there was already a growing separation of identities between north and south.

The map is surrounded by 20 views of important cities in the Low Countries, as well as the coats of arms of each of the 17 provinces. These town views are mostly faithful copies of the larger ones designed by Claes Jansz Visscher for Blaeu's 1608 wall map of the Seventeen Provinces. The map was engraved by an artist in Visscher's workshop, and the allegorical scenes surrounding the map were etched by Visscher himself. The town views were etched by another hand, probably by Pieter van den Keere.

The Low Countries mapped in the shape of a lion began with the Austrian Michael von Aitzinger, who included in is *De Leone Belgico* (first published in 1583) a *Leo Belgicus* map, engraved by Frans Hogenberg. In the preface of this work von Aitzinger explains why he chose this particular title and inserted the lion map. He explains that Caesar mentioned in his "Commentaries" that the 'Belgae' were the strongest tribes, and he therefore decided - partly because of the religious conflicts in the war against Spain - to introduce the Netherlands in the shape of a lion.

The present example is the second state of the map, which no longer includes Visscher's address (inde Calverstraet).

Only two known examples of state 1 of the map survive. The second state, while obtainable, is also rare on the market.

Detailed Condition: