Barry Lawrence Ruderman
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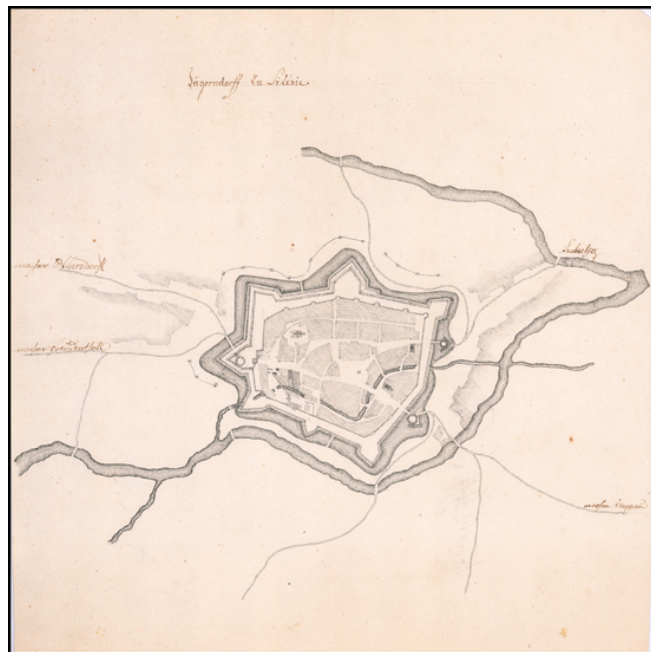
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Jägerndorf en Silesie

Stock#:   59651
Map Maker: Anonymous

Date: 1700 circa
Place: n.p.
Color: Pen & Ink
Condition: VG
Size: 11.5 x 11.5 inches

Price: $ 425.00

Description:

Fine Manuscript Plan of the Walled City of Krnov

Striking, finely drawn map of Old City of Krnov, now in the Czech Republic, and previously a part of Austrian Silesia. It shows the walled portion of the city, which sits at the conjunction of two rivers, and was most likely drawn in the early-eighteenth century.

The map shows the geographic location of the city, at the confluence of the Opava and Opavice rivers, as well as the plan of the city. A moat surrounds the city walls, while three gates with round guard towers allow entry to the settlement within. The main square is dominated by a large church, while two other churches are marked as well. A stream runs through the city, providing it with water.

Roads to other settlements are marked with dotted lines. These include, to the southeast, Troppau, the German name for Opava. Both of the cities were once Silesian duchies, fiefdoms to the Bohemian Crown (among other rulers). The Duchy of Krnov was also known as the Duchy of Jägerndorf, which is written at the top of this manuscript map.

While the map focuses on the medieval city without its expansion, the handwriting on the roads indicates an early eighteenth-century hand and suggests a rough date for the creation of this document. The road

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labels are in German, while the title is in French (albeit using the German designation of Jägerndorf). Additionally, the title is written in a more elegant script, suggesting a later owner marked it after the road labels were initially inscribed.

Krnov and the Duchy of Jägerndorf

Krnov today is located in the Czech Republic, near the border with Poland. It is in the region known as Silesia which was long controlled by hereditary houses whose allegiance shifted along with regional politics. The city was founded in 1221, although the area has been continuously settled since the Stone Age. The town walls shown here were erected during the second half of the thirteenth century.

Until the late fourteenth century, Krnov was one of the main towns in the province, and later the duchy, of Opava (Troppau). In 1377, the Duchy of Opavia was split, making Krnov the seat of its own duchy. The strategic location of Silesia as a central and resource-rich region meant that it was subject to many rulers over time. In 1523, for example, the Duchy of Krnov was purchased by the Hohenzollerns, a German ruling family. During the Thirty Years War, the city was plundered by first the Dutch and then the Swedish. Then, the province passed to the Liechtenstein dynasty.

In the War of Austrian Succession, in the mid-eighteenth century, the Austrian ruler Maria Theresa lost many of her holdings in Silesia, making Krnov the border town it is today. In 1779, almost the entire city was razed in a fire. By the late-eighteenth century, Opava had eclipsed Krnov in importance.

The city experienced a renaissance in the mid-nineteenth century, when it became a center of textile and musical instrument manufacturing. Railroad tracks were laid in 1872. The newly-developed city was hit hard by the Great Depression and then was occupied by German troops in October 1938. At the end of the war, in 1945, the German population of the city was expelled. Although the city's manufacturing center did not revive, the city today is known as a resort town popular with tourists.

This map shows the medieval city as it was, with its traditional city walls. It is a rare survival and an excellent window of insight into the complex politics of Silesia and Central Europe. It would make an original contribution to any collection of Czech, Silesian, or Central European historical maps.

Detailed Condition:
Pen & Ink.