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[Gifted To Cecil B. De Mille by Elmer Bernstein] (Mortier Bible) *Histoire du Vieux et du Nouveau Testament Enrichie de plus de quatre cens Figures En Taille-Douce, &c.* [2 vols in 1]

Stock#: 96625
Map Maker: Mortier
Date: 1700 circa
Place: Amsterdam
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 10.5 x 17 inches (binding)
Price: \$ 4,500.00



Description:

A Note of Thanks From the Composer of the Musical Score of the Ten Commandments

Nice example of Covens & Mortier's *Histoire du Vieux et du Nouveau Testament*, published in Amsterdam in about 1700.

This lavishly illustrated work was gifted by a young Elmer Bernstein to Cecil B. DeMille in December 1955, as thanks for Bernstein's being hired to write the musical score for the *Ten Commandments*, which would be released in 1956 and would launch Bernstein's prolific career as a composer, which would include an Academy Award, an Emmy Award, and two Golden Globe Awards, along with 3 Tony Award nominations, 5 Grammy Award nominations and 14 Academy Award nominations.

The work represented a breakthrough for Bernstein, who had previously faced censure during the McCarthy era of the early 1950s. Bernstein was called by the House Un-American Activities Committee when it was discovered that he had written some music reviews for a Communist newspaper. After he refused to name names, pointing out that he had never attended a Communist Party meeting, he found himself composing music for movies such as *Robot Monster* and *Cat-Women of the Moon*, a step down from his earlier *Sudden Fear* and *Saturday's Hero*. It would be his work on *Ten Commandments* that



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brought him back from his blackballing.

DeMille hired Bernstein, then a relatively unknown film composer, to write and record only the diegetic music required for the film's dance sequences and other onscreen musical passages, with the intention of employing frequent collaborator Victor Young to write the score proper. However, Young turned down the assignment due to his own failing health, causing DeMille to hire Bernstein to write the underscore as well. Bernstein recorded both the diegetic music and the score at the Paramount Studios Recording Stage in sessions from April 1955 to August 1956.

Nice example of the print Bible often referred to as Mortier's Large Bible. Its lavish illustrations highlight the Golden Age Dutch culture's inclination for detailed imagery, superseding any Calvinist reservations about the appropriateness of visuals accompanying sacred texts. The content's inherent value is further heightened by its magnificent morocco binding.

The Bible boasts an engraved plate that typically displays two subjects for nearly every page of text, accumulating to approximately 428 illustrations. Each scene is complemented with both Dutch and French captions. Among the illustrators were esteemed engravers of the time: Jan Luyken, who both drew and engraved his designs, and Bernard Picart.

Notably absent was de Hooghe, who was engaged in illustrating another Bible. Comparing these two concurrently developed, grandly illustrated Bibles might offer valuable insights, especially considering the intricate link between scripture and the era's politics (referenced in Simon Schama's *Embarrassment of Riches*, p. 95 ff). David Martin, a French Protestant theologian living in Holland, penned the introduction and text accompanying each plate, with W. Sewel translating his French prose. Both the French and Dutch versions were released concurrently, using identical plates; they differ only in the introductory content and the condition of the final plate.

A Gift From Elmer Bernstein to Cecile B. DeMille

The note reads as follows:

Christmas - 1955

Dear Mr. De Mille,

I am very happy to be able to take advantage of this season to express my many heartfelt thanks to



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you --

- as a citizen - for your wisdom*
- as a young musician - for your artistry, and for the great opportunity you have afforded me,*
- as a human being for your humanity and understanding --*

All great spiritual qualities - as durable as the philosophy which motivates us and inspired the makers of this book two hundred and fifty years ago.

-- Elmer Bernstein

Detailed Condition:

2 volumes in 1. Extensively illustrated with 428 engraved images and 5 double page maps. Later full pigskin, front cover and spine lettered in gilt, silk endpapers, all edges gilt, full pigskin slipcase decorated likewise. Mixed French and Dutch edition.... From the preliminary material of volume 1 to p.128, the French edition. Dutch edition title page inserted after p.128, with the remainder of volume 1 and entire volume 2 in Dutch. The two editions were produced simultaneously. rovenance: bookplate of Cecil B. DeMille, the American film director. Presentation letter from Elmer Bernstein laid in.