



The first 'Leo Belgicus'

EYTZINGER, Michael.

Ecce, quibus Hispaniar. Rex Philipp. Leonem hunc suum Belgicum administrandum comiserat antequam in Hispaniæ discederet anno. M.D.LIX.

Cologne, 1587. Coloured, with gold highlights. 370 x 445mm.

£14,000

An example of the first map to depict the Low Countries as a rampant lion. Drawn by Michael Eytzinger (or Aitsinger, von Aitzing, 1530-98) and engraved by Franz Hogenberg, it was first published in Eytzinger's 'De Leone Belgico' in 1583, when the Seventeen Provinces were fighting for independence from Spain in the Eighty Years' War (1564-1648). Facing east with the coast of the North Sea forming its back, the lion encompasses the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg, but it does extend outside those borders: the raised front paw covers Cologne in Germany; the front left paw nears Metz; the right hind leg hovers over Reims; the claws of the left hind leg threaten Paris; and the tail loops around East Anglia in England (which also has Eytzinger's monogram) and nearly touches London. Around the map is extensive Latin text: top right is Eytzinger's explanation of his new map; between the lion's legs is a description of the wars between Henry II and Philip II, kings of France and Spain; over Kent is a note about Philip II's marriage to Mary I of England; and in the North Sea is a table listing the Seventeen Provinces, with Stadtholders, coat-of-arms, and the number of towns and villages within each province. 'MARIA' in the table is an acronym for the names of the five governors of the Provinces between



**Altea Gallery Ltd. 35 Saint George St, London W1S 2FN**  
**info@alteagallery.com - www.alteagallery.com**  
**Tel : +44(0) 20 7491 0010**

1559 and 1579. The arms of France and Austria have the names 'Elizabeth' and 'Anna' next to them: these are the two daughters of Holy Roman Emperor Maximillian II, who married Charles IX of France and Philip II of Spain respectively. The 'Leo Belgicus' was an effective propaganda piece, copied by other cartographers (including Claes Janzoon Visscher, Jodocus Hondius and Hendrik Floris van Langeren) in both warlike and peaceful poses.

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