

**Ortelius, Abraham**

Antwerp 1527 – 1598 Antwerp

**Breve compendio dal Theatro Orteliano. Contenendo la delineatione de tutti li Regioni principali, del Mondo, stampate in tauole piccole, & Illustrate con breui declarationi. La postrema editione in molti luoghi emendata & con alcune tauole nuoue augmentata [translated by Giovanni Paulet].**

**Antwerp, Johann Baptist Vrients, 1502 (i.e. 1602)**

OBLONG OCTAVO (112 × 156 mm), (136)ff. signed \*<sup>8</sup> B–R<sup>8</sup> (blanks P6, P7, P8, R7, R8 retained) and foliated (8) 1–106 (7) 1–12 (3), comprising: letterpress title with engraved vignette of the Old World surrounded by legend ‘Contemno, et orno: mente, manu.’ (engraved insignia of Albert & Isabella as Governors of the Spanish Netherlands on verso); dedication to Albert & Isabella by the publisher; letter to the reader from the publisher; map of the celestial hemispheres; map of the world in two hemispheres; Latin verses and view of the Escorial (latter correctly imposed on \*7 recto); world map (\*8 recto); 106 engraved maps (foliated 1–106, map on recto and text printed on verso of preceding map); letter to the reader from Giovanni Paulet; ‘Tavola’ and imprimatur subscribed by the Censor of Antwerp, 12 November 1592 (P2 verso–P5 verso); three blank leaves (P6–P8); ‘L’additamento dal Compendio del Theatro minore’ (Q1 recto); 12 engraved maps (foliated 1–12, map on recto and text printed on verso of preceding map); ‘Indice delli Additamenti’ (R6 recto, verso blank); two blank leaves (R7–R8).

PROVENANCE Federico Cesi (1585–1630), his heraldic insignia on binding and personal ink-stamp on title-page *Ex Biblioth[eca] Lyncaea Federici Caesii L[yncaeorum] P[rincipis] March[ionis] Mont[is] Caelii* (inkstamp repeated on folio O7 verso) — *Pre[ter] Gaspare Maria Gesuita* (18th-century inscription on lower pastedown) — anonymous consignor, Sotheby’s, ‘Catalogue of printed books and a few manuscripts’, London, 14–16 May 1934, lot 755, bought by booksellers Francis Edwards — Frederick Arthur Wadsworth (1871–*circa* 1942), his exlibris on front pastedown — Forum BV Antiquariaat, ‘T Goy-Houten, The Netherlands

CONDITION paper lightly browned, a few ink spots and stains, but generally in very good state of preservation. Upper cover of binding water stained, joints in one compartment of the back repaired with new leather, corners bumped and edges rubbed. Front free-endpaper renewed.

BINDING contemporary Italian maroon morocco binding, covers decorated by gilt border and frame composed of a broken rule between solid rules flanked on either side by three blind rules, stamped in gilt at inner and outer angles of the frame are the heraldic charges of Federico Cesi, in centres the completed insignia is achieved within a block-stamped gilt cartouche (60 × 48 mm) featuring a lion mask and two supporters who hold aloft Cesi’s crown (as duke of

Acquasparta); back divided by raised bands into five compartments, each decorated by a smaller version of one charge; page edges gilt.

**A** ‘POCKET EDITION’ of Ortelius’ *Theatrum* with maps engraved in the studio of Philip Galle and a text translated from Latin into Italian by Giovanni Paulet d’Anversa.

The first owner of this copy was the scientist Federico Cesi (1585–1630), founder in 1603 of the Accademia dei Lincei, the forerunner of all European scientific societies. On its covers appears Cesi’s gilt-stamped heraldic insignia and on its title-page (and once elsewhere) is his emblematic ink stamp. The binding was executed in an anonymous shop which evidently possessed quite old tools: the cartouche employed on the covers was employed in 1561–1563 on bindings for Pope Pius IV.<sup>1</sup> The cartouche has not been observed on other books bound for Cesi.<sup>2</sup>

Our volume is cited in a manuscript catalogue of Cesi’s library (‘Indici della Libreria di Federico Cesi’) compiled for his widow, Isabella Salviati, and afterwards utilised (with valuations added by the bookseller Hermann Scheus) for the sale of the library, concluded on 23 January 1633, to Cassiano dal Pozzo.<sup>3</sup> Dal Pozzo acquired most, but not all the books in Cesi’s library: about twenty were reserved for Cardinal Francesco Barberini (six of these survive in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana),<sup>4</sup> and others were retained by Isabella Salviati in the Palazzo Cesi di Via della Maschera d’Oro. Our atlas was one of the volumes retained by Isabella Salviati.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Legature papali da Eugenio IV a Paolo VI*, catalogue of an exhibition, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana ([Città del Vaticano] 1977), nos. 110, 113.

<sup>2</sup> See *L’Accademia dei Lincei e la cultura europea nel XVII secolo*, catalogue of an exhibition, held at Fondation Dosne-Thiers, Paris, and Accademia nazionale dei Lincei, Rome (Rome 1992), pp. 137, 142, 148, for three bindings bearing Cesi’s insignia.

<sup>3</sup> Rome, Biblioteca dell’Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei e Corsiniana, Archivio Linceo, Codice miscellaneo, XIII, f.96 recto: ‘Breue compendio del Teatro ortel[ian]o Anversa 1502 [sic]’.

<sup>4</sup> *L’Accademia dei Lincei e la cultura europea*, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

<sup>5</sup> Rome, Biblioteca dell’Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei e Corsiniana, Archivio Linceo, Codice miscellaneo XIII, ff. 86–98: ‘Nota d’alcuni libri curiosi della libreria del s.r P[ri]n[ci]pe Fed[erico] Cesi b[uona] m[emoria] che sono app[ress]o la ved.a sua moglie’.

After Isabella's death (*circa* 1642), her daughter Olimpia inherited about 175 books.<sup>6</sup> Since our atlas was not among these, it presumably already had left Cesi family ownership.

The printing history of the *Breve compendio dal Theatro Orteliano* is unusually complicated. The copper matrices had been acquired by the publisher Jan Baptist Vrients from Ortelius's heirs about 1601, together with leftover printed sheets (gatherings B–R) of *Theatro d'Abrahamo Ortelio ridotto in forma piccola... tradotto in lingua Italiana da Giouanni Paulet*, printed at the Plantin press for Philip Galle, in 1593, in an edition of 1000 copies. Plantin machined the letterpress and maps in separate operations and did not print maps on all the sheets at once. Over time, so-called 'new maps' were substituted for 'old maps' (maps printed from matrices first employed in the *Spiegel der Werelt* 'Ghedrukt by Christoffel Plantyn... voor Philips Galle' in 1577), in a continuous effort to improve accuracy and quality. Thus the earliest known issue of the 1593 Plantin-Galle edition featured seventy-five old and thirty-two new maps, while the latest combined forty-five old with sixty-two new maps.

Vrients continued the process of modernisation: in our edition, eleven old maps (8, 16, 19, 22, 25, 30, 33–37 of the numbered series) are retained; all the rest are new. Vrients printed a new gathering (signed \*) to precede Plantin's decade-old letterpress: it presents his dedication to Albert and Isabella (dated February 28, 1601) and letter to the reader, and two world maps (printed on folios \*6 recto and \*8 recto, see R.W. Shirley, *The Mapping of the World*, 2001, nos.231, 161), neither of which had featured in the 1593 Plantin-Galle edition.

For reasons which are unclear, Vrients printed on some left-over sheets of the 1593 Plantin-Galle edition a set of maps which had been engraved in 1601 by Ambrosius and Ferdinand Arsenius for the publisher Jan van Keerbergen. A census undertaken by Peter van der Krogt locates a single copy of the Vrients-Arsenius 1602 atlas (John Carter Brown Library, Providence RI), five copies of Vrients-Galle 1602 atlas (University Library, Amsterdam; University Library, Leiden; Museum Plantin-Moretus, Antwerp; Royal Library, Brussels; and Yale University, New Haven), and five copies of Vrients' 1602 atlas with unspecified maps.

<sup>6</sup> Rome, Archivio di Stato, Trenta Notai Capitolini, ufficio 15, luglio 1642, pp.385–389: 'Inventario della robba dell'Ecc. Sig.ra Isabella Salviati ereditata da Olimpia Cesi' (prepared by the notary Dominicus Petrucciolus). On this inheritance, see Carla Benocci, 'Le opere d'arte e i libri di Olimpia Cesi, nobildonna romana del Seicento' in *Studi romani* 49 (January–June 2001), pp.101–110.

REFERENCES *De Wereld in kaart: Abraham Ortelius (1527–1598) en de eerste atlas*, exhibition catalogue Museum Plantin-Moretus (Antwerp 1998), p.18; *Koeman's Atlantes Neerlandici*, edited by Peter van der Krogt (Utrecht 2003), volume IIIA, pp.322–325, no. 332:22

#### POSTSCRIPT

Since writing this note, an undated inventory of Cesi's library

• **Rome, Biblioteca dell'Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei e Corsiniana, Archivio Linceo, Codice miscellaneo, XXXII**

has been published by Maria Teresa Biagetti,  
*La Biblioteca di Federico Cesi* (Rome: Bulzoni, 2008).

'**Breve compendio del Teatro orteliano in Anuersa 1502 [sic]**'

is entered on f.57 verso (Biagetti p.225, no. 1193),  
among the 'Libbri diversi dell'Heredità suddetta' (ff.11 recto–82 verso).