



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

7407 La Jolla Boulevard
La Jolla, CA 92037

www.raremaps.com

(858) 551-8500
blr@raremaps.com

[The Danube in Roman Times]

Stock#: 74010
Map Maker: Anonymous
Date: 1650 circa
Place: n.p.
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 28.75 x 12 inches



Price: \$ 3,500.00

Description:

Untraced Roman Mapping of Austria, Northern Italy, and Part of Hungary. Known Only as a 1730 Reduction Published in a Genealogy of the House of Wittenberg.

A fantastic map, apparently unknown to scholars, showing Central Europe from the Main River south to the northern part of the Adriatic Sea. This work is of interest because it utilizes Roman place names and toponyms throughout, providing a Renaissance-era look at the region during antiquity and demonstrating what scholars of the 17th-century understood about antiquity. This map is stylistically delicate and reminiscent of early cartography, and the map can be prized as a decorative object.

This map is known only as a much smaller reduction that appeared in the 1730 volume *Vindiciæ arboris genealogicæ gentis Carolino-Boicæ contra systema authoris geneographi*, a book that reiterated the descent of the Bavarian House of Wittenberg from Charlemagne, at a time when this family's genealogy was apparently in doubt. The reduction can be identified as a later map given several typography errors present in that map that are not present in our example.

However, the publication history of the present map remains a mystery. The appearance of numbers scattered throughout the map shows that it was published alongside a legend (as is the case with the later reduction). As such, the map was likely intended to accompany a book. Yet, a number of image searches, looks into books on Bavarian cartography, and keyword searches have elucidated no further information on the map, and we believe there to be no accessible reference or imaging of this map available online. The only clues that we have regarding the map's creation are the relatively primitive and light-handed style of engraving (apparent in the decorative tendencies of the trees and mountains), which both suggest that the map was likely produced during the first half of the seventeenth century. The subject matter suggests that it was produced within Central Europe, possibly published in Vienna or in one of the southern German centers of printing.



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The Latin Cartography

The 1730 reduction of this map is used to illustrate and translate the toponyms that appear in classical and Medieval texts that discuss the region. Gradually, the place names shown on the map would have been replaced by contemporary ones, and it is likely that this earlier map was also produced to fulfill this same function. The map preserves a fantastic early depiction of Central Europe, with the Hercynian Forest still encircling Bohemia, and showing the locations of Roman forts and related villages.

In the north, the map shows the course of the Main River, from its source in the mountains, with the Hercynian Forest further east. The map tracks the Danube River from its sources in Germany to the north of Rhetia Prima, with Augsburg (Augusta) on the Licus (Lech) River shown in the west. Vindobona (Vienna) appears prominently. South of the Danube, the map tracks the course of the Sava River. A tall tower is labeled Augusta in the west of the map, reminiscent of the Lord of the Rings. The map also tracks the Adige River to the area of Vinschgau or Val Venosta in the Italian Southern Tyrol, flowing through Trent on its course to the Gulf of Venice and the Adriatic Sea.

Latin toponyms are almost exclusively used, and the regions are named as they were two thousand years ago. Narisci describes Austria, while Iyricum names Slovenia. This shows the importance that humanist thinkers of the 17th-century placed on understanding Roman times. While the printed 17th-century material covering this subject can be extensive in some cases, there are few maps that reflect Roman times, with the majority coming from Ortelius's *Parergon* or similar atlases. Thus, this map presents a rare example of humanist importance.

The Hercynian and Bohemian Forest

In the upper part of the map is a densely wooded forest that encircles "Bohemia." In the sixteenth century, the "Hercynian" or "Bohemian" forest was shown to delimit the extent of Bohemia (now the Czech Republic). Some particularly fabulous Lafreri School maps encircle the region with vast expanses of forests. The Hercynian Forest had been known since ancient times as a dense forest that stretched from the Carpathian Mountains through southern Germany and was considered one of the northern boundaries of civilized Europe.

Rarity

We were unable to locate any references to the existence of this map with the exception of the aforementioned 1730 genealogical text.



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Detailed Condition:

2-sheets, joined. Evidence of old folds, with some weakening of paper throughout. Minor replacement of paper in some areas, for the vast majority not affecting any printed areas, and one dampstain.