



# Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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## (The True First State) Theatrum Orbis Terrarum

**Stock#:** 1570AOrtelius  
**Map Maker:** Ortelius  
**Date:** 1570  
**Place:** Antwerp  
**Color:** Uncolored  
**Condition:**  
**Size:**  
**Price:** SOLD



### Description:

#### *The State of the First Modern Atlas of the World*

[XX] preliminary text leaves (including engraved title), 53 hand-colored double-page engraved maps, all mounted on original guards.

Antwerp: xxxxx 1570

Folio (1x x x inche

#### *First State of the First Edition of the 'First Atlas' with an Exceptional Contemporary Provenance*

This is the first state of the *Theatrum*, one of the forty copies sold by Ortelius Christoffel Plantijn, one of the most important publishers in the Low Countries, who would later in 1579 become the publisher of Ortelius' *Theatrum*.

Ortelius's *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (or "Theater of the World") is widely considered to be the first true modern atlas. The *Theatrum* was the best available summary of 16th-century cartographic knowledge, covering much of the exploration of the world in the century following the discovery of America.

The atlas was first published in 1570 in Antwerp, and it was published consistently until 1612. Recent research has unearthed examples of the atlas with maps dated to 1640.

Ortelius was the artist of all of the maps; he drew them by hand, and those drawings were interpreted into prints by his engravers Frans Hogenberg, Ambrosius Arsenius, and Ferdinand Arsenius.



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### (The True First State) *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*

The broad appeal of the *Theatrum* saw demand from many consumers who preferred to read the atlas in their local language. Thus, in addition to Latin, the book was published with text in Dutch, French, German, Italian, Spanish, and English.

After Ortelius's death in 1598, the copper plates for his atlas passed to his heirs. They, in turn, sold the collection to Jan Baptist Vrients (1522-1612) in 1601. Vrients added new maps and published the atlas until his death in 1612. Vrients's widow then sold the plates to the Moretus brothers, who were the successors of Christoffel Plantijn.

#### Provenance

As noted by Peter Van der Krogt, "the first copies of the *Theatrum* were ready in June 1570. On 17th June 1570, Ortelius delivered forty copies of the atlas to Plantin . . ." (van der Krogt).

The present example includes a colophon dated 20 May 1570, and is almost certainly one of the 40 copies delivered on June 17, 1570. The title page bears the following inscription, noting that it was thereafter given as a gift by Plantijn to the important Humanist Dominique Lampson (Dominico Lampsonius) :

*Christophorus Plantinus Typographus Anuerpianus Dominico Lampsonio pulcherrimum hoc munus dono misit. xvij Octob. 1570*

*Christopher Plantijn printer Antwerp beautiful gift to Dominique Lampson sent to the Office 18th of October, 1570.*

The record of Plantijn's gift was memorialized by Lampsonius in Lampsonius's letter to Abraham Ortelius of November 2, 1587, where Lampsonius writes that he will always be immensely grateful to Plantijn for two beautiful gifts, " (this copy of Ortelius' *Theatrum* and Vasari's *Vitis Architectorum Sculptorum et Pictorum Italarum*, which currently resides in the KBR Brussels.

*"Alioqui et Plantino me plurimum debere fateor de duobus eius pulc[h]errimis donis, Theatro tuo [sc. Ortelii] primae editionis [the present copy], et Vitis Architectorum Sculptorum et Pictorum Italarum a Georgio Vasari conscriptis, ac recognitis, atque auctis, de quibus nondum ei [sc. Plantino] gratus fui, sed, Deo iuuante, futurus sum"*

*(ed. J.H. Hessels, Abrahami Ortelii ... Epistulae. Cambridge, 1887, p. 354 Letter nr. 154 - Lampsonius' original letter presently in The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, MS 79 C 4 (094),*



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*fols 121-122 [www. <http://emlo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk> ]*

**Detailed Condition:**