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Iaponia Regnum (first regional map to show Korea as a peninsula)

Stock#: 44529
Map Maker: Blaeu
Date: 1655 circa
Place: Amsterdam
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG
Size: 22 x 16.5 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Striking Blaeu Map of Japan, Showing Korea as a Peninsula

Fine, old-color example of Joan Blaeu's map of Japan and Korea from his renowned *Atlas Sinensis*.

While titled as a map of Japan, perhaps the single most noteworthy feature of this map is that it is the first map to show Korea correctly as a peninsula, as opposed to an island as shown on earlier maps.

Japan is at the center of the map, which is surrounded by sea. It is depicted as more horizontal than vertical, a typical map convention of the time. Dotted lines separate political divisions, with each province labeled. Mountains speckle the landscape, suggesting the hilly terrain of the archipelago.

Peeking out of the top of the map is a landmass called "Eso." Eso is a reference to Jesso, a feature included on many seventeenth and eighteenth-century maps. Historically, Eso (Yeco, Jesso, Yedso, Yesso) refers to the island of Hokkaido. It varies on maps from a small island to a near-continent sized mass that stretched from Asia to Alaska.

The *Atlas Sinensis* and Martino Martini

The famous *Atlas Sinensis*, an influential atlas of China in which this map featured, was the work of Martino Martini, an Italian Jesuit. The atlas was first published by Johannes Blaeu in 1655. Blaeu's atlas was the first western atlas of China. It includes sixteen engraved maps of Chinese subjects, and this general map of Japan.



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Martino Martini (瑪丁尼) (1614-1661), was born in Trento, in the Bishopric of Trent. He entered the Society of Jesus in 1631, after finishing his schooling. He had a strong interest in astronomy and math, and he was able to study under Athanasius Kircher. Martini continued his theological studies in Portugal, on his way to Rome, and was ordained in 1639.

He left Portugal for China in 1640, and arrived in Macau in 1642. He settled on the mainland in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, which he used as a base in his traveling around the country. In 1651, Martini left China, taking an adventurous peregrination to Amsterdam by way of the Philippines and Bergen, Norway.

He arrived in Amsterdam in 1653 and took his collection of manuscript surveys to Johannes Blaeu for publication. Martini was a capable cartographer and compiled the maps himself. In fact, he convinced Blaeu to postpone the publication of other volumes in the *Atlas Maior* to work on the Chinese atlas.

Martini's goal was to return to Rome, and he took his time to make many stops along the way. He visited printers in Antwerp, Vienna, and Munich, relaying his discoveries about China, which were in turn published in books that made him famous. On this trip, he also met his ten-year old cousin, Eusebio Kino, who would go on to conclusively prove the falsity of the California as an Island myth.

Martini reached Rome in 1655 and left for China again in 1657. He died in Hangzhou in 1661.

Westerners in Japan

Martini had lived in China but had not visited Japan; however, he was able to compile a report of the country from information supplied to him. The map proved influential and was based on a combination of details from pre-existing charts with the addition, perhaps by Blaeu, of further detail from Dutch East India charts.

Martini was able to compile his map based on information he received from Europeans in Japan and Japanese informants. The first Westerners arrived in Japan in 1543, when three Portuguese travelers arrived via a Chinese ship. Five years later, Francis Xavier, a Jesuit, landed as a missionary from Goa, intent on converting the Japanese to Christianity. Trade, by the Portuguese, English, Dutch, and Spanish, and missionary work, mainly via the Jesuits, continued until the 1630s.

The Dutch were granted favorable trading rights in 1609, thanks to the negotiations of William Adams, an English interlocutor. The Dutch East India Company (VOC) set up a factory in Hirado. In 1637, when Japanese Christians rebelled against the Tokugawa shogunate, the Dutch helped the Shogun to crush the resistance. The Shogun banned Christianity, along with all the Westerners from powers who aided the rebels, leaving the Dutch as the only Westerners allowed to trade with Japan.



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The VOC factory was moved to Dejima in Nagasaki, the former Portuguese trading post on an artificial island. For the next two hundred years, the Dutch were the only Westerners officially allowed to trade and interact with Japan. This also meant that the Dutch became the primary conduit for the transmission of European cartographic knowledge to Japan and this map is proof of that transmission.

Detailed Condition:

Old color.