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Daciarum, Moesiarumque, Vetus Descriptio

Stock#: 50903
Map Maker: Ortelius
Date: 1624
Place: Antwerp
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG+
Size: 18 x 14 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Fine Example of Ortelius' Map of Bulgaria and Romania, bisected by the Danube River

Fine early map of Romania and Bulgaria on the Black Sea, from Ortelius' *Parergon*, the world's first historical atlas. This map shows particular detail on places related to the Roman Empire, and it expresses the cultural mixing of the original inhabitants and Roman rulers.

Oriented northward, this map shows the regions of ancient *Dacia* and *Moesia*, which correspond roughly to modern-day Bulgaria and Romania. The map extends from Germany (*Germaniae pars*) in the west to the Black Sea (*Ponti Euxini*) in the east, and from Eastern Europe (*Sarmatiae Europaeae pars*) in the north down to Greece in the south (*Thraciae pars*). The land is separated into five Roman provinces.

Though the Black Sea only occupies a small part of the map, it is intricately shaded to give the appearance of choppy waters. In one area called *Stethe*, heaps of sand underwater are shown using stippling, which changes the way the tide moves in that area. A small ship sails the sea as well. It is these small details, both geographic and artistic, that make the map so fascinating.

Numerous mountain ranges and rivers cross the land, giving the reader a sense of the physical geography of the area. In particular, the Danube River (*Danubius flu.*) is carefully rendered as it cuts through the center of the map, separating various regions. Cities are drawn as miniature views and are especially emphasized along the Danube, though they are certainly present in other regions as well.

The largest city on the map is *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa* (spelled here *Zarmizogethusa*), the capital of



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the Roman province of Dacia. It sits in the foothills of the Carpathian Mountains (*Carpates mons*). Another notable city is *Romulianum*, which was built by the Roman Emperor Galerius in the fourth century CE and was also the site where he was buried upon his death.

This map is adorned with three strapwork cartouches. The title cartouche contains a list of cities whose locations are unknown in addition to the actual title. This cartouche is the most elaborate, with texture and some small figural elements included. The cartouche in the upper right corner dedicates the map to the Bavarian Duke Johann Georg of Werdenstein, a well-known bibliophile.

The third cartouche contains a passage from Ovid's *Tristia ex Ponto* about the Greek leader Flaccus at the Bosphorus Strait. In addition to Ovid, other well-known ancient scholars are cited, such as Ptolemy, Pliny, and Arrian, who had extensively traveled the Black Sea and written a *Periplus*, a log of the places he traveled.

Parergon

Although best known for his world atlas, the *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, the *Parergon* was a project of personal interest and the work that Ortelius himself considered his greatest achievement. He had a deep curiosity about classical antiquity which spurred him to create the *Parergon* maps, and the amount of time and detail he put into each map is clearly evident. Ortelius hand drew each map of the *Parergon*, which required considerable skill and knowledge of the area's history and geography. It is considered the first historical atlas.

Parergon means supplementary and, accordingly, the first three *Parergon* maps were published as supplements to the 1579 edition of the *Theatrum*, which had already been in print for nine years. Over time, successive editions of the *Theatrum* were supplemented with more *Parergon* maps, and there are 55 known plates overall. The *Parergon* was also published as its own atlas separate from the *Theatrum* on two occasions, once in 1595 and again in 1624.

The *Parergon* was highly successful both as a supplement to the *Theatrum* and on its own. It was variously translated into French, German, Italian, and English and regularly printed until 1612. Further editions were more sporadic but still popular, such as the 1624 edition which was published twenty-six years after Ortelius' death in 1598.

This map first featured in 1595. It was included unchanged until 1624, when several of the place names were re-engraved. For example, "Ruconi|um" at bottom left was changed to "Ruconi:|um". At the middle left top "Zirida:|va" was added. "Zingidava" was changed to "Singidava". At central right "Sextantaprista" was changed to "Sextanta Pristis". At middle right "Bizon" was changed to "Bizona".



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This is an exceptional and focused depiction of Eastern Europe and the Black Sea region. The level of detail in the map speaks to Ortelius' commitment to historical accuracy, and this map would fit well in a collection of Ortelius maps, European maps, or maps of classical antiquity.

Detailed Condition: