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Chinae, olim Sinarum regionis nova descriptio auctore Ludovico Georgio . . . 1584

Stock#: 53217
Map Maker: Ortelius
Date: 1588
Place: Antwerp
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG+
Size: 18.5 x 14.5 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Fine example of the second state of Ortelius' map of China, the first western map of China.

Cartography of China

Ortelius' map of China is taken directly from reports of the Portuguese mapmaker Luis Jorge de Barbuda (Ludovicus Georgius), who made a manuscript map of China which reached Ortelius via Arias Montanus. First published in 1584, Ortelius' map of China is the earliest printed map to focus on China and the first to illustrate the Great Wall of China. Tooley referred to the map as the standard map of the interior of China for over sixty years. With its three lushly designed cartouches and many illustrations of indigenous shelters, modes of transportation and animals, this is one of Ortelius's richest engravings. The Great Wall is shown, but only a relatively small section, its length is significantly underestimated.

Portuguese Jesuits established a mission in China in 1577. Although the map's Portuguese maker, Barbuda, was himself not a Jesuit, his sources for the map were Portuguese Jesuits. The Chinese characters found in the text on the verso of the map were the first introduction to the Chinese language for many educated Europeans of the time.

When this map appeared, it was by far the most accurate representation of China to appear on a printed map.

Additional Cartography



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Japan is shown on a curious curved projection reminiscent of Portuguese charts of the period with Honshu dissected along the line of Lake Biwa. Tartar "yurts" are dotted across the plains and steppes of Central and East Asia. In this, the second state, the Philippines is named and given a rudimentary delineation.

States

The present example is the second of three states of the map.

- State 1: Pre-dates the words "Las Philippinas" above Sinus Magnus
- State 2: "Las Philippinas" added during the publication of the 1587 French edition (second state)
- State 3: Additional cross-hatching in one of the wind wagons, which first appeared on the map during the publication of the 1595 edition

Abraham Ortelius

Abraham Ortelius (1527-1598) was, along with Gerard Mercator, the most important cartographer of the 16th century.

He was born in Antwerp to a family with connections in printing and publishing. Ortelius's uncle, Sir Jacobus van Meteren, took over the role of raising Ortelius after the latter's father had died.

In 1545 at the age of 18, Ortelius began his career as a map colorist. His sister Anna was also an accomplished colorist. He entered the Guild of St. Luke as a colorist two years later, and in 1547, he was registered as a colorist with the publisher Plantin.

In 1564, Ortelius published his first map, a large wall map of the world titled "Typus Orbis Terrarum". Today the map is known in only one example. Between 1564 and 1570, Ortelius made at least six single and multi-sheet maps of his own.

1570 was the year Ortelius first published the book that would become his defining masterwork: the first true modern atlas of the world, *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*.

In 1575, with the recommendation of Arias Montanus, Ortelius was appointed geographer to the King of Spain, Philip II.

Theatrum Orbis Terrarum

The present map comes from Abraham Ortelius's *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (or "*Theater of the World*"), which is widely considered to be the first true modern atlas. The *Theatrum* was the best available



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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.

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 Plantin.

Detailed Condition:

Spanish text on verso. Excellent wide-margined example.