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Daphne (Antiocha)

Stock#: 56391
Map Maker: Ortelius
Date: 1624
Place: Antwerp
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG
Size: 19 x 14 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Unusual Artistic View of the Paradise of Daphne by Famed Cartographer Abraham Ortelius

Decorative bird's-eye view of the paradise of Daphne, near Antioch in Syria. This view appeared in the later editions of Ortelius' *Parergon*, the first modern world atlas. It was one of only two fantasy views ever printed in the *Parergon*, and one of the rarer works from Ortelius' atlases available today.

This fantasy view shows the suburban town of Daphne, a popular resort for the wealthy of the Roman Empire. The town is situated on a hill overlooking the valley behind. Down the Orontes River (*Orontes fluvius*) the city of Antioch (*Antiochia*) can be found amidst trees and farmland. Where the river meets the ocean, the city of *Seleucia* is located. The port of *Seleucia* is active, with many ships entering or sailing in the distance.

Though the valley is broken into farmland, the hill where Daphne sits is wooded. Streams run through the trees before breaking into clearings with fountains, where groups of people lounge and enjoy themselves. Some are eating and drinking, others playing music. Even the sunny skies seem to indicate that this is a place of joy and relaxation.

The town itself contains a handful of buildings and bath houses drawn by Ortelius in Renaissance style, with a central town square where people can gather. In the view, a few groups of people are shown leading cattle in this space. Other individuals, mostly couples, stroll around the town. One ornate building stands out with its walled, manicured garden and two private water fountains.



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A small strapwork cartouche sits at the top of the page, giving the name of the town. There is also, in the bottom left corner, a small note indicating that the view was drawn by Abraham Ortelius based off of a number of classical sources including Ammianus, Strabo, Zozomenus, and Philostratus. It is also possible that Ortelius' friend Ioachimus Axonius, who had travelled in this area, made a sketch which served as an example for Ortelius' drawing.

Daphne and Antioch

Daphne was founded near the end of the fourth century BCE by Seleucus I Nicator, one of Alexander the Great's generals. It was located about four miles west of Antioch, in modern-day Syria. Daphne consisted of a park of woods and waters, with a great temple to the Pythian Apollo (which later became a cult-statue of the god created by the Greek sculptor Bryaxis). A companion sanctuary of Hecate was constructed underground by Diocletian.

Daphne became known as a place of both beauty and few morals. It was named for the nymph Daphne who was pursued by Apollo and turned into a laurel tree by her father, a river god, in order to help her escape. Apollo, who loved Daphne, made the laurel his sacred tree. People who came to the town were often attracted by this myth and the love story they saw in it. Contemporary authors both delighted in and scorned Daphne for this reputation of love and vice.

Antioch, meanwhile, grew to rival Alexandria as the most powerful city of the Near East. It was a cradle of early Christianity and one of the four cities of the Syrian tetrapolis. At its height of power Antioch was a great metropolis of half a million people, and the city and the suburb benefitted from one another. Antioch received water through aqueducts from Daphne's springs, and Daphne's stadium was used when Antioch hosted grand events.

However, Daphne began to decline when Christianity became widespread. A statue of Saint Helena, mother to Constantine the Great, was erected in the temple of Apollo, and the wantonness that Daphne had been known for was no longer tolerated. Eventually, Antioch also declined to insignificance during the Middle Ages due to repeated earthquakes, the slaughter of its inhabitants by a Mameluk army in 1268, and a change in trade routes, following the Mongol conquests.

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



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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 view was first included in 1595. The plate was retouched in 1601, with small alterations. The most visible are in the cloud in the upper left corner, whose hatching has shifted from vertical curves to horizontal.

This decorative view is an exceptionally detailed example of Ortelius' work. Daphne has the perfect blend of myth and history that Ortelius channels in the rest of his *Parergon*, and this view would be a stunning addition to a collection Ortelius' work or fantasy views.

Detailed Condition: