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Prussia Descriptio ante aliquot annos ab Henrico Zellio ab coque D. Ioanni Clur. civi Gedanesi Ded:

Stock#: 61479
Map Maker: Ortelius
Date: 1581
Place: Antwerp
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG+
Size: 7.75 x 12 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Ortelius' Map of Prussia, from the First Modern Atlas

Fine map of Prussia that featured in Ortelius' famous and groundbreaking atlas *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*.

The map shows Prussia and its coastline. Cities of various size are represented with buildings clustered together. A single ship sails the nearby seas, a reference to the rich trade that existed in this area. A simple cartouche in the water frames the title.

Ortelius consulted all available sources when compiling his maps. These included his contemporaries, like Mercator, but also other savants from across Europe. In this case, this map draws on the work of Heinrich



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Zell, a mathematician and cosmographer from Cologne. Zell worked with Nicolas Copernicus from 1539-41 and then traveled in Prussia, producing a four-sheet map of the area that was published in Nuremberg in 1542. This map was then used as the base for other maps of Prussia. Beyond Ortelius, the Zell map was also used by Münster (1550, *Cosmographia*), Casper Henneberger (beginning 1576) and de Jode (1578, *Speculum Orbis terrarium*).

Ortelius' map, which mentions Zell in the title, featured in the first edition of *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*. It continued to feature in the atlas until the 1580s.

Theatrum Orbis Terrarum—the first modern atlas

In 1570, Ortelius published the first modern atlas, *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, or "Theater of the World;" that is, he produced a set of uniform maps with supporting text gathered in book form. Previously, there were other bound map collections, specifically the Italian Lafreri atlases, but these were sets of maps—not necessarily uniform in size and style—selected and bound together on demand.

Ortelius' atlas outperformed competing atlases from other cartographic luminaries like the Mercator family. Between 1570 and 1612, 31 editions of the atlas were published in seven languages. At the time of its publication, it was the most expensive book ever produced.

This is a fine map of Prussia and one of the most attainable of the maps from the first modern atlas.

Detailed Condition: