



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

7407 La Jolla Boulevard
La Jolla, CA 92037

www.raremaps.com

(858) 551-8500
blr@raremaps.com

The Map of China [Huang Ming yitong fang yu bei lan -- Comprehensive view map of the Imperial Ming]

Stock#: 39290hs
Map Maker: Purchas
Date: 1625
Place: London
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG+
Size: 14.5 x 12 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Fine dark impression of the Purchas map of China, which is widely regarded as the first published map of Western China to have been derived directly from Chinese sources.

The Purchas map of China is based upon a Chinese woodblock sheet map, which had been acquired by Captain John Saris in Bantam, sometime between December 1608 and October 1609. Saris, then serving as chief factor in Bantam for the East India Company, had taken it from a Fujianese merchant in partial settlement of a debt owed to Saris. Saris in turn delivered the map to Richard Hakluyt, who in turn gave the map to Purchas during the time period when Purchas was translating Hugo Grotius' *Mare Liberum*. Purchas included the map in his 1625 *Hakluytus Posthumus or, Purchas his Pilgrimes*, a collection of travel writings, based on the work of the famous geographer, Richard Hakluyt (1552-1616). Purchas refers to the map as

The Map of China, taken out of a China Map printed with China characters, etc. gotten in Bantam by Capt. John Saris.

The title transliterates as "Huang Ming yitong fang yu bei lan," meaning Comprehensive view map of the Imperial Ming. The original Saris-Hakluyt-Purchas map was written entirely in Chinese. Because Purchas could not translate the map, he removed the Chinese characters from the body of the map, using symbols to depict the towns, rivers and mountains.



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It is possible that this Chinese map was the 1593 "Cao Map", of which there is now only one recorded example. Squares and circles depict cities and settlements. The provinces of China are marked and boundaries shown, for perhaps the first time on a Western map. Note that Macau and Canton (Guangzhou) are both named. The vignettes in the corners depict Matteo Ricci and a Chinese couple.

This map would serve as a model for the later maps by De Bry and Smedo. The general construction of the map is more accurate than Ortelius' map of China of 1584. 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.

Detailed Condition:

Laid on linen. Narrow upper right margin, as issued.