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[Ascension Island] The True Description of the Island of Ascention lyeing under 8 degrees on ye South syde of ye Equinoctiall lyne.

Stock#: 78964
Map Maker: Wolfe / Linschoten
Date: 1598
Place: London
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG+
Size: 13.5 x 10.5 inches
Price: \$ 875.00



Description:

Rare English view of Ascension Island (now part of the British Overseas Territory of Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha), which appeared in the English edition of Linschoten's *Itinerario*, *Iohn Huighen van Linschoten. His discours of voyages . . .*, published in London in 1598, and engraved by English engraver William Rogers.

Linschoten's maps are styled after Portuguese portolan charts of the 16th Century, upon which the map is based. Even in printed form, these maps retain the lush decorative flourishes of their sources. Linschoten acquired most of the information for the map while serving as the secretary to the Portuguese archbishop in Goa, India from 1583 to 1589. Of particular value were the sailing guides he obtained that not only provided the best sailing routes to the East Indies and its lucrative spice trade but also showed the way from port to port once there. Upon his return to the Netherlands, Linschoten published these documents with accompanying maps and his own descriptions of the area in his monumental *Itinerario*. Few books have had greater influence on historical events.

The extensive details of coastal and other navigational points are likely based on portolan charts of the Portuguese, especially those by Bartolomeu Lasso. Linschoten was "one of the pathfinders for the first Dutch voyages to the East" (Schilder, p. 195). He was in the service of the Portuguese as Secretary to the Portuguese Archbishop of Goa in India from 1583 to 1589. Here, he had access to many Portuguese portolans as well as other valuable commercial information, especially as Goa at this time was the commercial and political center for the Portugal Empire in the East. Van Linschoten left Goa for home in January 1589. On the way to Portugal, his ship was pursued by an English fleet and lost its cargo in a



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storm while anchored off the Azores. After the loss of the cargo, Van Linschoten was persuaded to stay and help recover it; he spent two years on Tercera, working and preparing his notes from Goa. Van Linschoten eventually arrived in Lisbon early in 1592, and then sailed home to The Netherlands. His account of his experiences is one of the most important travel works of the period.

Wolfe, Linschoten, and the *Itinerario*

In 1594, Linschoten set out with Willem Barentsz on an exploratory expedition to find the Northeast Passage. The crew had many adventures, including an encounter with a polar bear, which they killed while attempting to capture it. Eventually, the crews had to turn back because of ice, a situation that also happened with a similar expedition the following year.

Upon his return, Linschoten published his journal from the Barentsz voyages. In 1595, he also published *Reysgheschrift vande navigation der Portugaloyzers in Orienten* (Travel Accounts of Portuguese Navigation in the Orient), based on his research. The work includes sailing directions in addition to descriptions of lands still new to Europeans, like Japan. In 1597, Linschoten published again, this time a description of the African coast.

His most famous work, however, is *Itinerario: Voyage ofte schipvaert van Jan Huyghen van Linschoten naer Oost ofte Portugaels Indien, 1579-1592* (Travel account of the voyage of the sailor Jan Huyghen van Linschoten to the Portuguese East India). It was published in 1596 by Cornelis Claesz in Amsterdam.

Two years later, in 1598, John Wolfe published an English translation, with entirely newly maps engraved in London by Robert Becket, Raynald Elstrak, William Rogers. The 11 maps includes several maps not drawn from the original Linschoten *Itinerario*, including a world map after Ortelius, two maps of Africa drawn from Pigafetta, and an English copy of the first state of the Plancius Spice map.

Rarity

The Wolfe edition of Linschoten's work is very rare on the market, as are the individual maps.

Detailed Condition: