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Tabula XII. Asiae [Title on verso] (Sri Lanka)

Stock#: 33935hs
Map Maker: Fries

Date: 1535
Place: Strassburg
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG+
Size: 14 x 11 inches

Price: SOLD



Description:

Important early modern map of Taprobana, from Fries *Geographia.*

This is an early woodblock map of the island of Taprobana, which depicts the typical misconceptions of Ptolemy showing the island greatly enlarged, surrounded by imaginary islands, and with a small part of India incorrectly drawn in the northeast corner of the map. Taprobana was drawn too large on most early maps due, in part, to its importance to trade between the Europe and Southeast Asia. Also Marco Polo stated that the island had a circumference of 2400 miles and had been even larger in the past. This map is largely based on the 1513 map by Waldseemuller, with the addition of more of the spurious Indian coastline and more small islands to the east of Ceylon. The title is on the verso along with Latin text and elaborate ornamental border, thought to be the work of Hans Holbein and Graf of Basel. The editor of this Latin edition, Michael Villanovus (better known as Servetus), was subsequently tried for heresy and burned at the stake in 1553, ostensibly because of derogatory comments in the atlas about the Holy Land.

Lorenz (Laurent) Fries was born in Alsace in about 1490. He studied medicine, apparently spending time at the universities of Pavia, Piacenza, Montpellier and Vienna. After completing his education, Fries worked as a physician in several places, before settling in Strassburg, in about 1519. While n Strassburg, Fries met the Strasbourg printer and publisher Johann Grüninger, an associate of the St. Die group of scholars formed by, among others, Walter Lud, Martin Ringmann and Martin Waldseemuller.

From 1520 to 1525, Fries worked with Gruninger as a cartographic editor, exploiting the corpus of material that Waldseemuller had created. Fries' first venture into mapmaking was in 1520, when he executed a reduction of Martin Waldseemuller's wall-map of the World, published in 1507. While it would appear that Fries was the editor of the map, credit is actually given in the title to Peter Apian. The map,

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Tipus Orbis Universalis Iuxta Ptolomei Cosmographi Traditionem Et Americ Vespucii Aliorque Lustrationes A Petro Apiano Leysnico Elucubrat. An.o Dni MDXX, and was issued in Caius Julius Solinus' *Enarrationes*, edited by Camers, and published in Vienna in 1520.

Fries next project that Fries was a new edition of the *Geographia* of Claudius Ptolemy, which was published by Johann Koberger in 1522. Fries evidently edited the maps, in most cases simply producing a reduction of the equivalent map from Waldseemuller's 1513 edition of the *Geographie Opus Novissima*, printed by Johann Schott. Fries also prepare three new maps for the *Geographie*: maps of South-East Asia and the East Indies, China and the World, but the geography of these derives from Waldseemuller's world map of 1507.

The 1522 edition of Fries work is very rare, suggesting that the work was not commercially successful. In 1525, an improved edition was issued, with a re-edit of the text by Wilibald Pirkheimer, from the notes of Johannes Regiomontanus. After Grüninger's death in 1531, the business was continued by his son Christoph, who seems to have sold the materials for the Ptolemy to two Lyon publishers, the brothers Melchior and Gaspar Trechsel, who published a joint edition in 1535, before Gaspar Trechsel published an edition in his own right in 1541.

Detailed Condition: