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[Chinese Imperial Mandarins] *Lecturi, et ratio, quibo Chine proceres primarii* (Mandarinos vocant). . .

Stock#: 35024
Map Maker: Van Linschoten
Date: 1596
Place: Amsterdam
Color: Color
Condition: VG
Size: 12.5 x 10 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

One of the earliest engravings of the Mandarins of the Chinese Imperial Court, from Jan van Linschoten's *Itinerario*.

This attractive image depicts the Mandarins of the Imperial Court of the Ming Dynasty of China. The Mandarins were a class of senior civil servants who gained entry into their profession only after passing notoriously difficult exams. They were revered in Chinese society for their wisdom and loyalty to the Emperor. One of the earliest engravings to focus on the Mandarins, the faces are highly stylized in a European form, betraying the fact that the engraver, Baptista van Doetecum, had never laid eyes on the subject matter.

The engraving comes from the Linschoten's epic work *Itinerario, voyage, ofte Ship-vaert* (Amsterdam, 1596), inarguably the most influential book on Asia of its era. Jan Huygen van Linschoten (c.1563 -1611) was a larger than life figure who was instrumental in encouraging the Netherlands to seek an empire in East Asia. Born in Haarlem, he was the son of a notary. While barely a teenager, he moved to Seville and then Lisbon with his brother. He evidently impressed the powers that be in the Portuguese capital, for he was appointed secretary to the Archbishop of Goa, serving in that capacity from 1583 to 1588. He made use of the extensive archives at Goa and interviewed mariners and explorers.

Linschoten returned to the Netherlands and wrote three books relating his knowledge of Asia, the third publication being the *Itinerario*, published in 1596 and translated into English and German two years



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later. Linschoten stole many Portuguese state secrets regarding navigation and trade in the East Indies, intelligence that was critical to the success of early Dutch endeavors in the region.

Detailed Condition:

Repaired tear entering image from lower center.