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Tabula Russiae ex autographo, quod delineandum curavit Foedor filius Tzaris Borois desumta . . . MDCXIII

Stock#: 38643
Map Maker: Gerritsz
Date: 1614
Place: Amsterdam
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG
Size: 21 x 17.5 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Extremely rare example of Hessel Gerritsz's map of Russia, with the large inset of Moscow and view of Archangel, based on the manuscripts of Czar Fyodor II Godunov.

This fine map represents the second state of Hessel Gerritsz's map of Russia, published in 1614, with the first state having been issued in 1613.

The map shows that at the beginning of the 17th Century, Russia was limited to the northern two-thirds of what is now European Russia, sandwiched in between the Polish-Lithuanian and Swedish empires and the Urals and limited on the south by the Ottoman-controlled Ukraine. Moscow appears almost in the center of the map, while much of the country is shown to be dominated by the Volga watershed, which leaves Russian territory at a point just below Samara. The Arctic coast shows the recent discoveries of the Dutch explorer Willem Barentsz in the 1590s, including Novaya Zemlya.

The top left corner features an inset plan of Moscow that is centered on the Kremlin, Belygorod and the Kityagorod and features a 17 point key. This plan first appeared in print on the present map and proved highly influential, being copied for many decades.

To the right of the map is a view of Archangel, the Arctic port that until the foundation of St. Petersburg (1703), on the Baltic Sea, was Russia's only maritime gateway to the world. Three figures in Russian dress stand above, while the title appears within a martial cartouche.



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The map shows Russia as it appeared during the Time of Troubles (1598-1613), an unfortunate and bizarre period of chaos that marked the interregnum between the czars of the Rurik Dynasty and the establishment of the Romanov Dynasty. The period included the 'Dymytirads', the appearance of a succession of individuals fraudulently pretending to be the supposed heir to the Rurik Dynasty, called the 'False Dymytris'. Russia suffered complete political instability, foreign invasion and famine that killed over one-third of the population.

Amazingly, the main map and the inset map of Moscow are attributed to Fyodor II Borisovich Godunov (1589-1605), the ill-fated child genius who was briefly the csar of Russia in 1605. This printed map was compiled from Godunov's manuscript maps brought to Amsterdam by Isaac Abrahamszoon Massa (1586-1643), the Dutch merchant and diplomat who lived in Russia from 1601 to 1609. Massa was an acquaintance of the Fyodor Godunov and perhaps the most reliable eyewitness to the Time of Troubles. He is widely considered to have been the first Western "Kremlinologist".

Hessel Gerritsz (1581-1632) was a prominent Dutch engraver and mapmaker. In addition to his great map of Russia, Gerritsz was known for having produced the earliest published version of Henry Hudson's map of Northern Canada in 1612. He began his career working for Willem Blaeu (1571-1638), although he later became independent, while retaining his association with the Blaeu family.

Following Gerritsz's death in 1632, Willem Blaeu issued an edition of the map that appears with some frequency, although the original Gerritsz edition is extremely rare. The Gerritsz edition is easily distinguished from the Blaeu map by the removal of Gerritsz imprint "Excusum apud Hesselum Gerard sub signo: Tabule Nauticae", which is replaced with Blaeu's name. Blaeu has also noticeably reworked the plate, so that the lower text and embellishments in the title cartouche are slightly different and features alternate shading in the degree markers at the top right corner, on either side of 65 degrees.

Gerritsz's map in its present original edition is exceedingly rare and is one of the most historically important maps of both Russia and Moscow. It is an anchor piece of any serious collection.

Detailed Condition:

Old Color, recently refreshed. Expert restorations along top margin, with some minor facsimile work and to repair some tears and cracks.