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Cyprus Insula laeta choris blandorum et Mater amorum

Stock#: 40589
Map Maker: Jansson
Date: 1650 circa
Place: Amsterdam
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG+
Size: 14 x 18 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Decorative map of Cyprus, published in Amsterdam by Jan Jansson.

Includes two cartouches, sailing ships, sea monster, compass roses and rhumb lines. Locates Mount Olympus, home of the Greek pantheon, numerous cities, etc.

Fine Map of Ancient Cyprus with a Modern Shape

Decorative map of Cyprus, published by the prominent Amsterdam atlas publisher Jan Jansson. It features place names, geographic coordinates, and information gathered from the ancients, yet with a modern outline of the island.

The map is loosely framed on the island, with much of the surrounding waters included. The geographic coordinates have been adapted from the Roman geographer Ptolemy and therefore may seem strange to the modern eye. The seas in each direction are named separately, some with two names. Several ships patrol the open water, while rhumb lines radiate from two compass roses on this north-oriented map. A lone sea monster surfaces north of the island.

On the island, settlements are marked with either a single or a double building symbol. These settlements are focused on the coastal areas, with only a few farther inland to the northeast. Several mountain ranges are marked, with the largest being the range at the center of the island. This range includes Mount Olympus, the highest point on the island. Elsewhere, groves of trees hint at the wooded-nature of the island.



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In the upper left corner is a title cartouche. A decorative frame exclaims, "*Cyprus. Insula laeta choris blandorum et mater amorum.*" This roughly translates to, "Cyprus, the island of happy dancing and motherly love." In the bottom right corner is another cartouche, this one containing a list of place names. These are settlements and geographic features of unknown location, but which were mentioned by the Greek and Roman geographers consulted in the making of this map.

Sources ancient and modern

The seas to the north and south of the island contain two names, each cited. These citations reveal some of Jansson's older sources: Claudius Ptolemy (ca. 100 AD-ca. 170 AD), the central geographical authority in ancient and early modern times; Paulus Orosio (ca. 375 AD-after 418 AD), the Gallaecian priest and author of *Historiae Adversus Paganos*, a famous history of pagan peoples; and Strabo (ca. 64 BC-ca. 24 AD), a Greek geographer and philosopher who lived in Asia Minor and supposedly visited Cyprus. Both Strabo and Ptolemy had enjoyed a renaissance in the fifteenth century and were still consulted avidly by seventeenth-century geographers like Jansson.

The most important source for the map, however, was less ancient. Abraham Ortelius, maker of the first modern atlas, also released an atlas of the ancient world, the *Parergon*, first published in 1584. This atlas included a map of Cyprus with several other Greek islands. Cyprus has the same shape as Ortelius' map of modern Cyprus from 1573. The present Jansson map is an enlarged version of Ortelius' *Parergon* work.

The shape of Cyprus is quite accurate for the time and resembles the outline used by Jacomo Franco (1570). Franco's work influenced Ortelius, who in turn influenced Jansson's contemporary and competitor, the Blaeu family (1635). The Blaeu map of modern Cyprus, "Cyprus Insula," was the combined work of Willem Janszoon and his son, Joan, and first appeared in the second volume of the first German edition of *Novus Atlas, Ander Teil Novi Atlantis...* (Amsterdam, 1635) and in all subsequent editions of the atlas in French, Latin, and Dutch. The Blaeu example is more tightly framed around the island than this map. It has no stands of trees yet includes hundreds more settlements and place names; this is because it was meant to reflect the current situation of the island, not the ancient situation as the present map intends.

Henricus Hondius and his brother-in-law and new business partner in the atlas business, Jansson, faced stiff competition in the atlas market from the Blaeu family. Although Hondius and later Jansson had been publishing new editions of the Mercator atlas since 1606, the Blaeus' new maps were hurting their business. In 1637, they released their own version of the Blaeu Cyprus map on a new copper plate. It was originally included in their *Gerardi Mercatoris et I. Hondii, Appendix Atlantis* and, later in the 1640s, in their *Atlas Novus*.

The present map and the Hondius-Jansson version of the Blaeu map of Cyprus improve considerably on the



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shape recorded in earlier Mercator-Hondius maps of the island, which had a flatter northern coast. This flatter version was printed with six smaller islands in a row below it and was reproduced many times in the early seventeenth century.

States and publication information

This map first appeared in Jansson's *Accuritissima Orbis Antiqui Delineatio Sive Geographia Vetus, scara & Profana* in 1652. Originally, it was published with no text on the verso. Jansson eventually added the *Accuratissima* to his *Atlas Novus*; it made up the sixth and final volume of that work.

In 1653, a Latin edition with text on the verso by Georg Hornius was published, with several more editions before 1664, the year of Jansson's death. Later, Pieter de Hondt published a Latin edition in 1640 and English and French editions in 1741.

This is a striking map of Cyprus that captures seventeenth-century mapping practice and the popularity of antiquarian study. It would be a significant addition to any collection of Cyprus maps and would contrast well with modern maps of the island.

Detailed Condition: