



## Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

7407 La Jolla Boulevard  
La Jolla, CA 92037

[www.raremaps.com](http://www.raremaps.com)

(858) 551-8500  
[blr@raremaps.com](mailto:blr@raremaps.com)

---

### Theatrum orbis terrarum... The Theatre of the Whole World

**Stock#:** 65547  
**Map Maker:** Ortelius  
**Date:** 1606  
**Place:** London  
**Color:** Uncolored  
**Condition:** VG  
**Size:** 12.75 x 19 inches



**Price:** SOLD

#### Description:

***The First and Only English Edition of Ortelius's Magnum Opus. A Fine, Tall Example with Dark Impressions of this Extremely Rare Atlas. The First English-Language Folio Atlas of the World.***

The 1606 edition of Ortelius's *Theatrum* is the both the most important English-language world atlas ever published and the most desirable edition of any of Ortelius's atlases. At 161 engraved maps it is among the largest of Ortelius's atlases, including many of the best Johannes Baptista Vrients plates that were published after Ortelius's death, and exceed the preceding Ortelius maps in their quality of engraving and rarity.

"The book was the largest ever printed and published in England up to that date, measuring at least an inch more than uncut copies of the Bishop's Bibles of 1568, 1572 and 1602, or the Genevan versions in black letter of 1578-83... No surviving copies are known to exist on the European continent [i.e. excluding copies in the British Isles]" (Wardington Catalogue).

The printing history is rather interesting too; the sheets of the entire edition had the copperplates for the maps struck on one side in Antwerp, most likely by the Plantin Press. The sheets were then sent to London, where the text on the reverse, and the additional pages bearing text only, were printed by Bradwood at the Eliot's Court Press.

#### Context

The English Ortelius was published in 1606, during a fascinating and transformative period in the history of the British Isles. The English Renaissance was at its apex, and Elizabeth I's rule had just ended. Shakespeare was at the height of his career, just about to complete *Macbeth*. A new middle class was looking to patronize and consume English art, literature, and scholasticism.



## Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

7407 La Jolla Boulevard  
La Jolla, CA 92037

[www.raremaps.com](http://www.raremaps.com)

(858) 551-8500  
[blr@raremaps.com](mailto:blr@raremaps.com)

---

### Theatrum orbis terrarum... The Theatre of the Whole World

Politically, the ascension of Queen Elizabeth to the throne in 1558 marked the beginning of one of the great eras in British history. After the tumultuous rules of Henry VIII and Queen Mary, the Elizabethan era was marked by relative calm and military success. This allowed for the arts to prosper in Britain, and for the first time in modern history, the perceived height of culture in Britain rivaled that of the Continent. After Elizabeth's death, the rise of English art would continue under the rule of James I, who was himself a learned scholar.

Much like the Renaissance itself, the appearance of works printed in the vernacular was an Italian import. While fiction had been written in Romance and Germanic languages since the 14th century, Latin persisted as the lingua franca of religion and scholarly works. This transition away from Latin had many different causes, including the growing middle class, the rise of Protestantism, and nationalistic tendencies. At the time this work was printed, scholarly use of the vernacular was just starting to be accepted. The King James Bible had been commissioned two years prior to the creation of this work, though there were previous (all illicit to some degree, with few in circulation) English-language Bibles. This edition of Ortelius's work was a prominent early example of a key scholarly text being published in English.

Works such as Ortelius's would have been targeted at a new moneyed middle class, many of whom were not particularly strong in Latin. These consumers were eager for new works on science, history, and geography, but works of interest were of limited availability to them. Ortelius's atlas exploited this gap in the market and helped to further educate this rising bourgeoisie. They, in turn, demanded new and exotic works of art that could satisfy the curiosity that the *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* had instilled in them.

As an example of how common and important atlases like these were, the Shakespeare trust comments on the miniature English Ortelius atlas "Pocket versions of this atlas were popular, so there's every chance that Shakespeare owned one!"

#### Rarity

Van Den Broecke says that 300 copies of the English Ortelius were printed. A large number of these will have been destroyed or broken, and others are now in institutional collections. The most recent auction records are in 2008 for \$158,500 for a disbound copy at Sotheby's, and in 2006 for £102,000 (approximately \$195,000) at the Wardington Sale, in 18th-century calf.

#### Provenance

*Sir Sebastian Harvey* (d.1621), English merchant, Sheriff of London from 1609-1610, and Lord Mayor of London in 1618, early seventeenth-century presentation inscription to title from **Richard Wright to**



## Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

7407 La Jolla Boulevard  
La Jolla, CA 92037

[www.raremaps.com](http://www.raremaps.com)

(858) 551-8500  
[blr@raremaps.com](mailto:blr@raremaps.com)

---

### Theatrum orbis terrarum... The Theatre of the Whole World

**Sebastian Harvey**, "Clarissimo viro Sebastiano Harvey vicecomiti Londinensi dignissimo; Richardus Wright humilleme D.D." (Sir John Jolles, Sheriff of London from 1605 to 1606, and Lord Mayor of London in 1615, was married to Alice son of a Richard Wright, though we cannot establish a connection beyond that).

We note also a seventeenth-century inscription to title, with the name **George Lyle Colonell**. This would seem almost certainly to be Sir George Lisle (died 1648), a Royalist and Colonel in the King's Army. His father Lawrence Lisle was a London publisher and bookseller, trading at the sign of 'The Tigers Head' in St. Paul's Churchyard. An ardent Royalist, He was a leading figure in the English Civil War, who was one of the leaders of the Kent insurrection and was later executed by firing squad in 1648 following the Siege of Colchester.

The atlas include the bookplate of H. Bougoüin Sar. This would appear almost certainly to be Bishop Henri-Louis-Prospér Bougouin, the Bishop of Périgueux and Sarlat (1845 - 1915). Bougouin was one of the four stenographers at the First Vatican Council (1869-70).

#### Detailed Condition:

Folio (483 x 323mm.), contemporary calf, spine gilt in 8 compartments, both covers with ruled border, foliate corner pieces and central gilt tool, few marginal repairs, maps and text re-guarded throughout, the two supplied maps slightly smaller, re-cased. Engraved architectural title with the arms of James I on verso, dedication with the engraved epitaph to Ortelius on verso, full-page portrait of Ortelius within cartouche, separate engraved title to the Parergon (discreet repair to title), small engraving of a globe printed upside down on verso of colophon leaf, 161 engraved double-page maps (2 maps supplied from a Latin text edition, "Pedemontanae" and "Thvsciae"), some numbered in manuscript, new endpapers.