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(Black Sea Region) Pontus Euxinus. Aequor Iasonio pulsatum remgie primum . . . 1590

Stock#: 67480
Map Maker: Ortelius

Date: 1624
Place: Antwerp
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG
Size: 20 x 14 inches

Price: SOLD

Description:

Finely-Colored Example of Ortelius' Map of the Black Sea and Surrounding Regions in Ancient Times

A fine example of Ortelius' map of the Black Sea, published in his 1624 edition of the *Parergon*, an atlas depicting the ancient world. The *Parergon* was generally published as an appendix to Ortelius' magnum opus, the *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, which is considered the first modern atlas. However, the Parergon was also published as a separate atlas on a few occasions, including in 1624.

The map is oriented northward, with the directions carefully noted in the center of each edge of the map. The entirety of the Black Sea is displayed, as well as the surrounding regions, including present-day Turkey and Armenia (*Bithynia*, *Galatia, Cappadocia*, *Armeniae Pars*), Georgia and Russia (*Colchis, Sarmatiae Asiaticae pars*), Ukraine (*Scythiae sive sarmatiae Europaeæpa*), the Crimean peninsula (*Taurica quae et scythica chersonesus*), Moldova, Romania, and Bulgaria (*Getae, Daciae pars, Pontus Moesia*), and Greece (*Thraciae pars*). The smaller water body connected to the Black Sea to the north is *Maeotis Palus* (the Maeotis Swamp or Lake Maeotis), which is today known as the Sea of Azov. The sea is colored an appropriate dark grey while the other regions are differentiated by color, alternating between red, green, and yellow.

This map is characterized by excellent attention to detail. The shape of the coastlines and rivers are carefully rendered, and throughout the map mountain ranges and forests give the land texture. Cities are represented with unique drawings in dark red. Each aspect of the map is labeled, and some labels give additional information about the name or events that occurred there. This indicates the map's use as a

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reference for the region in both geography and history.

The two cartouches, one containing the title and date and the other the map's creator, are sharply rendered and brightly colored in red, blue, and yellow. The ornamented edges curl out and are shaded so as to give them a three-dimensional quality that pops from the page. In particular, the decorative title cartouche takes up a large part of the land on the eastern area of the map. The title of the map, *Pontus Euxinus*, is Latin for "hospitable sea," a euphemism for the earlier name "inhospitable sea," as the Black Sea was known for its stormy weather, harsh currents, and lack of islands to visit. Also found in the cartouche is the phrase "*Aequor Iasonio pulsatum remige primum*," indicating that this was the sea first traveled by Jason, the ancient Greek hero who sailed to find the Golden Fleece. This places the map firmly in the realm of classical mythology.

The map includes many interesting locations important to Greek mythology. Phryxis' temple is located on the Phasis river in Colchis (in the southeast corner of the map), which was the location of the Golden Fleece, the object of Jason's quest. Themiscyra, home to the Amazons and a city visited by Heracles during his Nine Labours, is also present on the southern shore of the Black Sea, between the Iris and Thermodon rivers. There are also numerous cities named for Greek gods and heroes, such as Apollonia Magna on the Thracian coast and Heraclea near the mouth of the Acheron river in Bithynia.

Parergon

Although best known for his world atlas, *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum,* the *Parergon* was a project of personal interest and the work that Ortelius himself considered his greatest achievement. He had a deep interest in classical antiquity which spurred him to create the *Parergon* maps, and the amount of time and detail he put into each map is clearly evident. Rather than copying from existing maps, as he had done for the *Theatrum,* Ortelius hand-drew each map of the *Parergon*, which required considerable skill and knowledge of the area's history and geography. It is considered the first historical atlas.

Parergon means supplementary, and accordingly, the first three *Parergon* maps were published as supplements to the 1579 edition of the *Theatrum*, which had already been in print for nine years. Over time, successive editions of the *Theatrum* were supplemented with more *Parergon* maps, and there are 55 known plates overall. The *Parergon* was also published as its own atlas separate from the *Theatrum* on two occasions, once in 1595 and again in 1624.

The *Parergon* was highly successful both as a supplement to the *Theatrum* and on its own. It was variously translated into French, German, Italian, and English and regularly printed until 1612. Further editions were more sporadic but still popular, such as the 1624 edition which was published twenty-six years after Ortelius' death in 1598.

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This beautifully colored map blends geography, history, and myth, and the level of detail present speaks to Ortelius' skill as a mapmaker and his dedication to his craft. This would be a valuable addition to a collection of Eastern European maps, Ortelius maps, or maps of classical antiquity.

Detailed Condition: