Barry Lawrence Ruderman
Antique Maps Inc.

7407 La Jolla Boulevard
La Jolla, CA 92037

www.raremaps.com

(858) 551-8500
blr@raremaps.com

Italia nam tellus Graecia Maior erat . . .

Stock#: 76029
Map Maker: Ortelius

Date: 1624
Place: Antwerp
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG+
Size: 19 x 13.5 inches

Price: SOLD



Description:

Decorative Ortelius Map of Ancient Southern Italy as part of Greater Greece, Referencing Myths and Ancient Writings

Detailed map of southern Italy as part of Greater Greece, from Ortelius' *Parergon*, the first historical atlas. With its multiple cartouches and decorative ships, this map is one of the more ornate of the *Parergon* maps.

Oriented with east at the top, this map displays the various ancient regions of the southern tip of Italy. It extends from the region of *Apulia* in the north to *Locri* in the south, at the tip of the "boot" of Italy. Part of Sicily (*Trinacriae sive Siciliae pars*) is also depicted on the lower righthand side of the map, and Mount Etna (*Aetna mons*) is just visible at the edge of the map, complete with a fiery eruption.

Throughout the map mountain ranges and carefully-rendered forests give the land texture. In particular, the Apennine Mountains (*Apenninus mons*) cutting through the center of the landform are prominent. Cities are represented with precise drawings of buildings, which is characteristic of Ortelius maps. The seas surrounding the land, including the Adriatic (*Maris Hadriatici*) and Tyrrhenian (*Maris Tyrrheni*) are filled in with simple stippling but decorated with a number of ships, large and small.

Four strapwork cartouches adorn this map. The cartouche in the bottom left of the map identifies the cartographer, Abraham Ortelius, as well as the year the map was originally drawn, 1595.

The title cartouche identifies the land as Italy, once part of Greater Greece. Also known as *Magna*

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Graecia, these are the Hellenic colonies and settlements that were located in the southern parts of the Italian peninsula. Archimedes, one of the brightest minds of the ancient world, was born and spent his entire life in *Magna Graecia*, (in Syracuse, Sicily), where he also made all of his groundbreaking scientific discoveries.

The two other cartouches are more elaborate, containing fruits, leaves, and figures along with the strapwork. The cartouche in the upper right corner dedicates the map to one of Ortelius' close friends, the physician Ioachim Camerarius of Nuremberg. Also known as Joachim Camerarius the Elder (1500-1574), he had been a well-known German humanist and classical scholar.

The final cartouche, located in the upper left corner of the map, is a beautiful inset map of the Tremiti Islands (*Diomedeae insulae*). These islands are not visible on the main map, and they would be placed just out of the neatline on the north (left) side of the map near Mount Gargano (*Garganus mons*).

This map contains locations from many ancient myths as well as classical sources like Pliny, Strabo, and Ptolemy. Particular attention is given to places in Homer's *Odyssey*, such as the magical island of *Ogygia* in the Ionian Sea (*Maris Siculi*), where the nymph Calypso lived. Calypso enchants Odysseus and keeps him on Ogygia as her husband for seven years, until she is forced by the gods to let him go.

Other locations and figures from the *Odyssey* include the monsters *Scylla* and *Charybdis* (who takes the form of a giant whirlpool) guarding either side of the Strait of Sicily (*Fretum Mamertium*), and Odysseus' home island of Ithaca (*Ithacesiae insule*). There are also more general locations related to myth, such as Athena's temple at the very top of the map and Hephaestus' island at the very bottom.

Parergon

Although best known for his world atlas, the *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 curiosity about 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. 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.

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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.

This beautiful map and indeed the entire *Parergon* blends geography, history, and myth, and the level of detail present speaks to Ortelius' skill as a mapmaker and interest in the ancient world. This would be a valuable addition to a collection of Mediterranean maps, Ortelius maps, or maps of classical antiquity.

Detailed Condition: