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Daciarum, Moesiarumque, Vetus Descriptio

Stock#: 81939
Map Maker: Ortelius
Date: 1595
Place: Antwerp
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG+
Size: 18 x 14 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Fine Example of Ortelius' Map of Bulgaria and Romania

Admirable early map of Romania and Bulgaria on the Black Sea, from Ortelius' *Parergon*, the world's first historical atlas.

Oriented northward, this map shows the regions of ancient Dacia and Moesia, which correspond roughly to modern-day Bulgaria and Romania. The map extends from Germany in the west to the Black Sea (*Ponti Euxini*) in the east, and from Eastern Europe in the north to Greece in the south. The land is separated into five Roman provinces: Sarmatia, Germania, Pannonia, Dalmatia, and Thracia.

Though the Black Sea only occupies a small part of the map, it is intricately shaded to give the appearance of choppy waters. In one area, *Stethe*, sandbars would cause considerable problems for navigators.

Numerous mountain ranges and rivers cross the land, giving the reader a sense of the physical geography of the area. In particular, the Danube River (*Danubius flu.*) is carefully rendered as it cuts through the center of the map, separating various regions. Cities are drawn as miniature views and are especially emphasized along the Danube, though they are certainly present in other regions as well.

This map is adorned with three strapwork cartouches. The title cartouche contains a list of cities whose locations remain uncertain. This cartouche is the most elaborate, with texture and some small figural elements included. The cartouche in the upper right corner dedicates the map to the Bavarian Duke Johann Georg of Werdenstein, a well-known bibliophile.



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The third cartouche contains a passage from Ovid's *Tristia ex Ponto* about the Greek leader Flaccus at the Bosphorus Strait. In addition to Ovid, other well-known ancient scholars are cited, such as Ptolemy, Pliny, and Arrian, who had extensively traveled the Black Sea and written a *Periplus*, or a log of the places he traveled.

This map first featured in the 1595 edition of the *Parergon*. It was included unchanged until 1624, when several of the place names were re-engraved. For example, "*Ruconi|um*" at bottom left was changed to "*Ruconi:|um*". At the middle left top "*Zirida:|va*" was added. "*Zingidava*" was changed to "*Singidava*". At central right "*Sextantaprista*" was changed to "*Sextanta Pristis*". At middle right "*Bizon*" was changed to "*Bizona*".

The Roman provinces of Dacia and Moesia

The largest city on the map is *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa* (spelled here *Zarmizogethusa*), the capital of the Roman province of Dacia. Dacia was a Roman province from 106 CE, entering the empire after Trajan conquered its predecessor, the Dacian kingdom ruled by Decebalus. The Romans heavily colonized the area and used it as a major stage for operations in the Balkans. However, Roman rule was always contested there and Emperor Aurelian formally relinquished the province by 275 CE.

Another notable Dacian city is *Romulianum*, which, as a note on the map states, was built by the Roman Emperor Galerius in the fourth century CE. It was also the site where he was buried.

Moesia, also mentioned in the title, experienced a period of political upheaval in the first century BCE. The Romans began to take over during this time, although Moesia did not become a Roman province until around 6 CE, under the Emperor Augustus. After an attack from Dacia, the Romans consolidated their power, reorganized the province, and split it in two along the Cebrus River, here the *Ciabrus*. It is from Moesia that Dacia was conquered. After the fall of Roman Dacia, Moesia was reorganized several times. It was also invaded several times, most notably by the Goths, who eventually seized control.

Detailed Condition: