



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

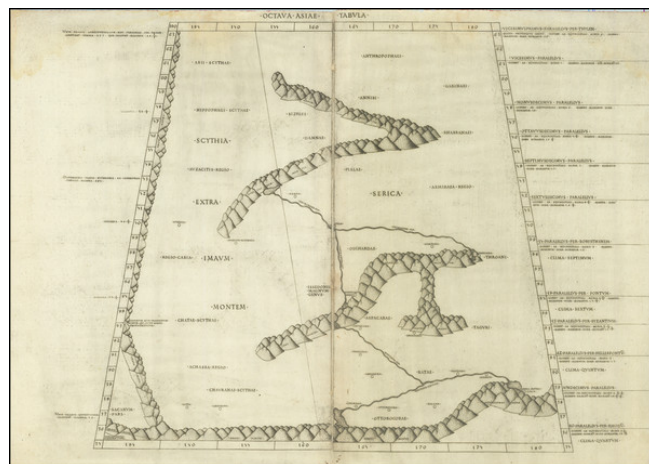
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(The Scythian Lands of Central Asia) Octava Asiae Tabula

Stock#: 82672
Map Maker: Swenheym / Ptolemy
Date: 1490
Place: Rome
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG+
Size: 21 x 15 inches
Price: \$ 2,500.00



Description:

From the Earliest Set of Obtainable Maps.

The 1490 issue of the Rome Ptolemy's map of the Central Asia region. First printed in 1478 as part of the first obtainable set of maps, this marvelous work shows the classical interpretation of far eastern geography.

The detail on the map is beautiful, with nice, rounded mountains suggestive of the early Lafreri School style. Cities are shown, as are lines of longitude. Detail on the map is all but mythical, having been transmitted by word of mouth and traveler reports thousands of miles back to the Ptolemaic sources of Ancient Greeks.

The 1478 Rome Ptolemy

In the early 1470s, Conrad Swenheym set out to produce the first illustrated printed edition of Ptolemy's *Cosmographia*. He is widely thought to have been present at the birth of printing while an apprentice of Johann Guttenberg in Mainz. Swenheym and Arnold Pannartz are famous for introducing the first printing press to Italy in 1464-5.

Pope Paul II became so enthusiastic about the new medium that he lavishly sponsored Swenheym and Pannartz's work, setting them up at the Massimi Palace in Rome. Unfortunately, when the pope died in 1471, the new pontiff, Sixtus IV, disavowed the project, so delaying its progress. However, by 1474, Swenheym is recorded as having trained "mathematicians" to engrave maps on copper. Swenheym's edition of Ptolemy was eventually published by Arnold Buckinck in 1478, one year after Swenheym's



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death.

The 1478 Rome edition of Ptolemy's work is of tremendous importance to the history of printing as the first set of maps to employ the "punched letter" printing process. They are also an early record of the Ptolemaic cartographies that influenced the Medieval World's geographical understanding of the world. The earliest surviving examples of such manuscript maps date to the beginning of the 14th Century. Ultimately these maps and Ptolemy's text would be compiled to form the most influential treatise on Geography in the 15th Century, concurrently with the advent of the printing press, resulting in its widespread distribution in Europe, which ironically eclipsed the work of other Greek Geographers of the period, such as Strabo, whose work was probably more accurate than Ptolemy's calculations.

Despite being beaten out by one year (for the honor of the earliest printed edition of Ptolemy's work) by Taddeo Crivelli, who published his edition in Bologna in 1477, the copper plates produced under Swenheym's close supervision, and finally printed just after his death in 1478, are considered vastly superior. The plates were then purchased by Petrus de Turre in 1490, who published the second edition, in which this map appeared. The only difference in the maps are the watermarks in the paper. A third edition was issued in 1507.

Detailed Condition:

15th-century laid paper with watermark of a French Lily. Very scant damp staining and wear, but overall a Very Good + example of this map.