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Tabula Asiae XI [Southeast Asia]

Stock#: 87838
Map Maker: Gastaldi

Date: 1548
Place: Venice
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 7 x 5 inches

Price: SOLD



Description:

***Striking Ptolemaic Map of Southeast Asia from Gastaldi's Important Edition of* Geographia**

Fine example of Gastaldi's important map of Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean, based upon the cartography of Claudius Ptolemy. It was one of twelve Ptolemaic maps of Asia in Gastaldi's influential edition of the *Geographia*, published in 1548.

The map shows Southeast Asia as a large peninsula, a depiction common to Ptolemaic geography. It includes what is today Thailand, Myanmar, Vietnam and some of the islands to the south. The island of Bazacata likely refers to the Nicobar Islands. The Gulf of Ganges is to the west, with the *Magnus Sinus*, or the South China Sea, to the east. India is to the west as well, with the Ganges River labeled. Mountain ranges, the Himalayas, create a natural northern border that separate this region from Scythia, a Central Eurasian area known to the Greeks and encompassing land north and east of Europe.

To the east is a strip of land running north-south. It is a reference to the insularity of the Indian Ocean in Ptolemy's understanding of the world. By Gastaldi's time, this insularity had been proven a false hypothesis, but mapmakers instead separated the strip of land from Asia and transported it across the southern oceans, suggesting it was actually a large continent.

The map also contains several decorative elements. Outside the projection are lines of latitude labeled to the right. To the left is a leopard and an exotic bird in the forest, a reference to some of the animals thought to roam the jungles of southeast Asia. Within the frame of the projection is a merman. The sea has fine, wavy engraved lines that are characteristic of Gastladi's style.

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Gastaldi's *Geographia*

Gastaldi's maps for the 1548 edition of his version of Ptolemy's *Geographia* are among the earliest examples of his work. They marked him as talented and paved the way to a long and successful career. The *Geographia* is a landmark in the history of cartography and is thought to the be the most comprehensive atlas published between Martin Waldseemüller's *Geographiae* of 1513 and the first entirely modern atlas, Abraham Ortelius' *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* of 1570.

Gastaldi's edition of Ptolemy, with 26 Ptolemaic maps (no Ptolemaic world map) and 34 modern maps, was the first pocket-sized edition available on the market. Although published in 1548, Gastaldi had been working on the project since at least 1542, which is the date on the map of Germany included in the volume. His was also the first edition of Ptolemy prepared in the vernacular, making it available to a wider audience.

Despite being prepared on a small format, the maps are original and detailed, as well as clearly and attractively engraved. They are also engraved in copper; Gastaldi's work marked a decisive shift toward the use of this medium in map publication. In this work, Gastaldi devised a new method whereby four copper plates were locked into a frame, speeding the printing process considerably.

Gastaldi was also the first to add regional maps of the American continent, with important maps of the eastern seaboard, a map of what is now the southern United States, of South America, and separate maps of Cuba and Hispaniola. Gastaldi himself published only a single edition, but his maps were copied by Girolomo Ruscelli for over 50 years.

This is a fine example of a map from an important atlas in the history of cartography. It would make a fine addition to any collection of Southeast Asia, of Gastaldi maps, or of early atlas maps.

Detailed Condition: