

First edition in English. Folio (450 by 320mm), engraved architectural title with the arms of James I to verso, dedication with engraved epitaph to Ortelius on verso, full-page portrait of Ortelius within cartouche, separate engraved title to the Parergon, small engraving of a globe printed upside down on verso of colophon leaf, 161 double-page engraved maps (including five double-page engraved plates showing views of the Escurial, the Temple of Delphi, and the costume
of the Holy Roman Empire), title-page inlaid and mounted, title page of Parergon misbound after map xi, eighteenth century panelled calf, with foliate corner pieces, spine rebacked, in eight compartments
separated by raised bands, gilt, with red morocco label lettered in gilt.

ORTELIUS'S 'THEATRUM' IN ENGLISH

Theatrum Orbis Terrarum. The Theatre of the Whole World: Set Fourth by That Excellent Geographer Abraham Ortelius.

Author
ORTELIUS, Abraham

Publication date
1606

Publisher
Printed by John Norton; Printer to the Kings most excellent Maisetie in Hewbrew, Greeke, and Latine,

Publication place
London,

Physical description
First edition in English. Folio (450 by 320mm), engraved architectural title with the arms of James I

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Dimensions

Notes
The scarce and only edition of Ortelius's Theatrum in English.

The 'Theatrum' was the first 'proper' world atlas to be printed and
published in England with English text. Ortelius' 'Epitome' was the earliest world atlas to be published with English text accompanying it, with the editions of Pieter Heyns and Michiel Coignet in 1601 and 1603 respectively. It had more maps than any other edition of Ortelius, whether before or after. The book was the largest ever printed and published in England up to that date, measuring at least an inch more than uncut copies of the Bishop's Bibles of 1568, 1572 and 1602, or the Genevan versions in black letter of 1578-83.
It was a particularly small edition [i.e. print run] and not sold through the house of Christopher Plantin; no surviving copies are known to exist on the European continent (i.e. excluding copies in the British Isles)" (Wardington).

The English edition was based upon the 1603 Latin edition
published by Vrients. Although the pause in printing of the Antwerp
edition between 1603 and 1608 might suggest that all the plates were
used in London for printing; the maps were in fact printed in Antwerp,
most probably at the Plantin press, and then shipped to London where
the text was added, and the work bound.
Abraham Ortelius (1527-1598) took an active interest in
cartography from an early age. He began his career as a "kaarten afzetter" (illuminator of maps) purchasing single (generally wall) maps from booksellers and colouring them for resale. He travelled extensively in his search for new material and was a well-known face at the Frankfurt bookfairs. It was whilst travelling that Ortelius built up his unrivalled web of contacts, which included many of the leading historians, scientists, and cartographers of the day.

These contacts would prove invaluable in the compiling andcompletion of his 'Theatrum Orbis Terrarum', first published in 1570. The work was "the first true atlas" (van der Broecke): all the maps were of a uniform size and style, with an engraved title, accompanying text, and – hitherto unheard of in cartographic publications – a list of the source material. With its comprehensive scope, the atlas was a huge step forward compared with the contemporary 'Lafreri' atlases, which were bound up to order and so reflected the whims of the customer. Even though it was the most expensive work published at the time, it proved an instant success with four versions of the first edition being printed in 1570 alone. The work would go on to be published for 42 years, with some 31 editions being produced.

Bibliography
Koeman III Ort.37; van der Krogt 31:551; Shirley T.ORT-1jj; The Library of Lord Wardington: Important Atlases and Geographies, Part Two, sale catalogue (Sotheby's: London, 2006), 360.

Provenance
1. Bookplate of Lord Hopetoun.
2. Hopetoun House Sale, Sotheby’s, London, 21 October 1957, lot 233.
3. Charles W. Traylen, Guildford.
4. Wardington Collection.
5. Wardington Sale, Sotheby’s, London, 10 October 2006, lot 360.
6. Private collection.

Price:

Inventory reference: 11883

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