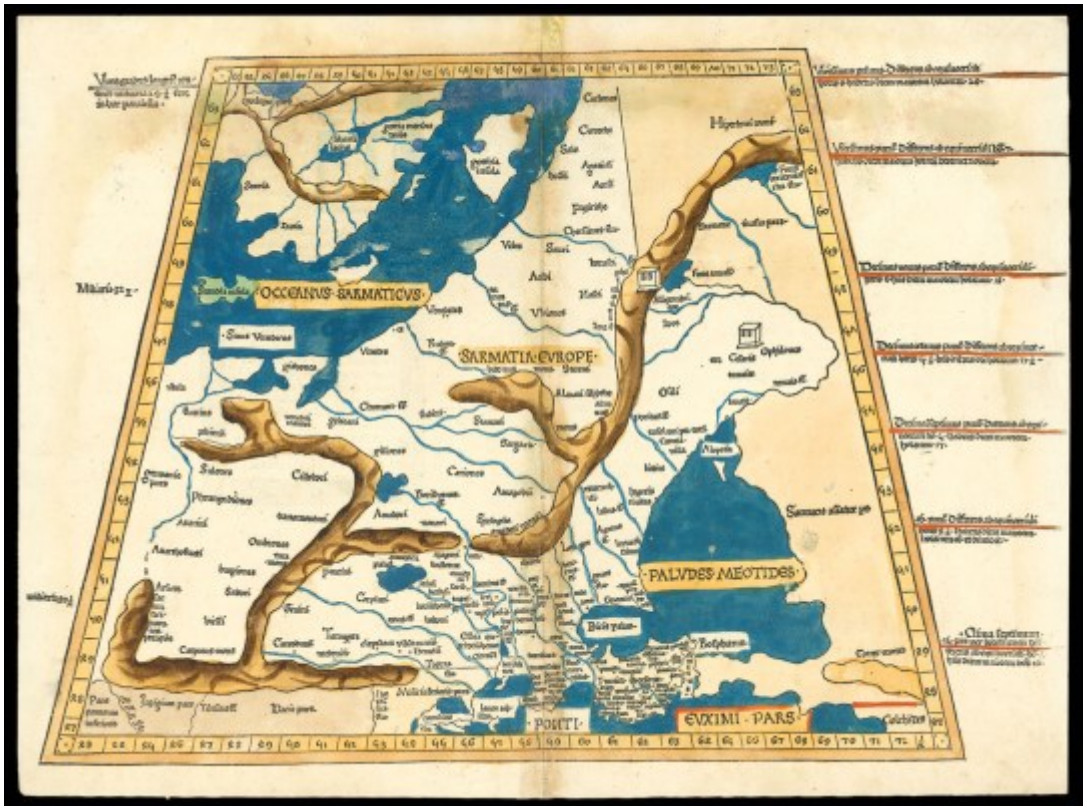

Double-page woodcut map, fine original hand-colour, slight damp staining to upper margin slightly affecting image.

RUSSIA AND EASTERN EUROPE

Octavia Europe Tabula.

Author
PTOLEMAEUS, Claudius [translated by ANGELUS, Jacobus, edited by GERMANUS, Nicolaus]

Publication date
16 July 1482.

Publisher
Lienhart Holle,

Publication place
Ulm,

Physical description
Double-page woodcut map, fine original hand-colour, slight damp staining to upper margin slightly affecting image.

Dimensions
420 by 565mm. (16.5 by 22.25 inches).

Notes
This striking map depicts Russia and Eastern Europe as envisaged by the second century A.D, cartographer Claudius Ptolemaeus, and is one of the earliest obtainable printed maps of the area. The map extends from the Baltic Sea in the north to the Crimea and the Black Sea. To the west is the

Vistula river (“istula fluvius”), with a distended Azov Sea in the east. The majority of the map is marked “Sarmatia Europe” – the Sarmatian kingdom ruled a great swathe of central Asia between the fifth century BC and the fourth century AD. At its highly around the first century B.C. the empire stretched to the banks of the river Vistula.

The map was published in the first atlas printed outside Italy and the first atlas illustrated with woodcut maps.

In 1482 Lienhart Holle in Ulm published a revised edition of Ptolemy’s Geographia with the reworking of the Ptolemaic corpus by the cartographer Nicolaus Germanus Donis. The atlas included five additional “modern” maps: Italy, Spain, France, Scandinavia, and the Holy Land. The atlas would be the first book printed by Lienhart Holle, however, it would appear that the venture proved ruinously expensive and his business would go bankrupt shortly after publication. The remaining sheets, the woodblocks and the types passed to Johann Reger in Ulm, who reissued the work in 1486.

As well as the modern maps the atlas bears some other notable first. It was the first time that maps were signed by the artist responsible for the woodcutting; in this case Johannes of Armsheim, who signed the world map, and incorporated a backwards N into the woodcut text on each map. It is also the first to print the accompanying text on the verso of the map to which it refers. Another important feature of the Ulm editions is the introduction of the publisher’s colouring upon the maps. Maps from 1482 usually have a rich blue colour in the sea which was replaced with a soft brown colour in 1486.

Bibliography

Camptell, T., ‘Earliest Printed Maps’, p. 179-210; Schreiber 5032; Skelton, R.A., Bibliographical note prefixed to the facsimile of the 1482 Ulm Ptolemy

Provenance

Price:

Inventory reference: 2092

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