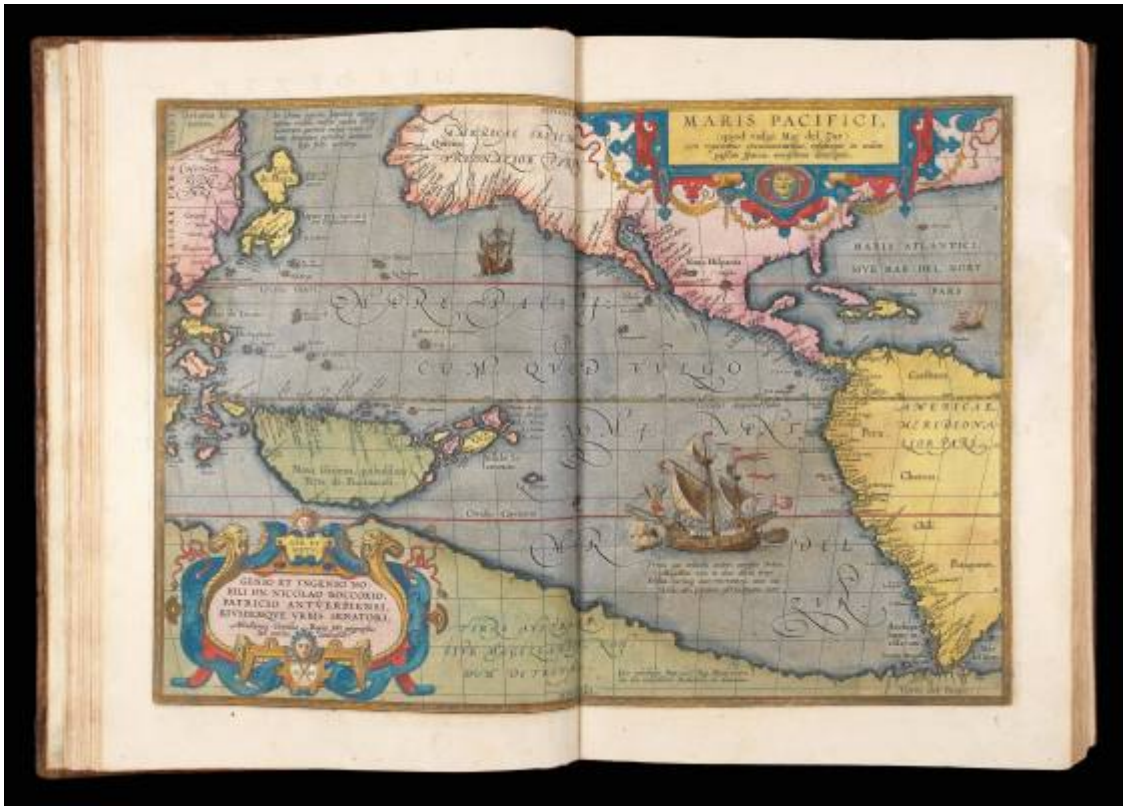


Folio (443 by 290 mm). Text in French. Engraved allegorical title-page, with magnificent contemporary hand-colour in full, heightened with gold, portrait of Ortelius, 169 maps by Frans Hogenberg and others on 122 copper-plates and printed on 119 map-sheets, including a World Map and maps of each of the four Continents, each map richly embellished with figural cartouches, arms, sailing ships, sea monsters, and deities, all with superb contemporary hand-colour in full, mounted on guards, contemporary full calf.

THE LAST ‘THEATRUM’ PUBLISHED IN FRENCH

Theatre de l’Univers, contenant les cartes de tout le Monde. Avec une brieve declaration d’icelles.

Author
ORTELIUS, Abraham

Publication date
1598.

Publisher
Christopher Plantin for the author,

Publication place
Antwerp,

Physical description
Folio (443 by 290 mm). Text in French. Engraved allegorical title-page, with magnificent contemporary hand-colour in full, heightened with gold, portrait of Ortelius, 169 maps by Frans Hogenberg and others on 122 copper-plates and printed on 119 map-sheets, including a World Map and maps of each of the four Continents, each map richly embellished with figural cartouches, arms, sailing ships, sea monsters, and deities, all with superb contemporary hand-colour in full, mounted

on guards, contemporary full calf.

Dimensions
443 by 290mm. (17.5 by 11.5 inches).

Notes
The last edition of Ortelius' 'Theatrum' to be published in French, first published in that language in 1572 with only 70 maps on 53 map-sheets. The world map used in this edition is printed from Ortelius's third and final 'Typus orbis terrarium' plate (Shirley 122:3-1), which more accurately charts the southwest coastline of South America and shows the Solomon Islands for the first time.

"All the elements of the modern atlas were brought to publication in Abraham Ortelius' 'Theatrum Orbis Terrarum'. This substantial undertaking assembled… the best available maps of the world by the most renowned and up-to-date geographers… each of Ortelius' maps was engraved specifically for his atlas according to uniform formats" (Shirley).

Ortelius (1527-15980 first published his 'Theatrum…' in 1570, although he had already been selling maps and charts for more than twenty years. An astute businessman native to Antwerp, Ortelius sourced the best current maps, re-engraved them in a uniform format, and published them together with explanatory text in one volume. Embarking on his chosen career at an early age, Ortelius was 19 when he joined the Guild of St. Luke as an 'afsetter', "or colourist of maps and prints. He seems to have reached a very advanced level of skill in this craft, as some customers continued to insist on buying atlases coloured by him personally at a time when he had already developed into a publisher and cartographer/merchant… Ortelius [also] became a trader in books, prints and maps. Much of this trading had to do with the house of Plantin [subsequently publisher of the 'Theatrum']…Soon he was attending the book fair in Frankfurt to buy and sell books, maps and prints for others as well as for himself. He first met Gerard Mercator there in 1554, which marked the state of a life-long professional relationship and personal friendship… " (van den Broecke page 14).

Ortelius is known to have travelled extensively through France, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Hungary, Italy, England and Ireland, and command of several languages, which no doubt inspired him to publish his 'Theatrum' in Latin, German, Flemish, French, Spanish, English and Italian, bringing it to the widest possible audience. The publication of his atlas brought him great wealth and success. In 1574 Ortelius retained the position of Royal Cosmographer to Phillip II and was given a fine gold necklace, worth 1000 ducats. Between 1570 and 1612 the atlas was published in 42 editions.

Bibliography
Alden & Landis 598/75. Burden 39 and 64; JCB (3) I:365; Koeman Ort 32; see PMM 91 (1570 edition); Sabin 57693; Shirley 122; Tooley Maps and Map-Makers p.30.

Provenance
Provenance: 1. Seventeenth-century engraved armorial bookplate on the verso of the title-page above an early woodcut portrait of Ortelius, and inscribed "Sophistus est Hic Abrahamius Ortelius Antverpia in temple St. Michaelis conspienio per ipsius offigiem epitaphio", referring to Ortelius' epitaph on his tombstone in Antwerp; early 20th-century engraved numismatic bookplate in Greek on the front paste-down

Price:

Inventory reference: 13905

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