

Folio (410 by 290mm), first edition first issue, Latin text, title, “Catalogus auctorum” with 87 names, 53 double-page engraved maps 53 maps, bound together with 18 engraved maps from the Additamentum of 1573, contemporary vellum over boards.

“THE FIRST TRUE ATLAS”

Theatrum Orbis Terrarum.

Author
ORTELIUS, Abraham

Publication date
1570 [and 1573 for the Additamentum].

Publisher
Gielis Coppens van Diest,

Publication place
Antwerp,

Physical description
Folio (410 by 290mm), first edition first issue, Latin text, title, “Catalogus auctorum” with 87 names, 53 double-page engraved maps 53 maps, bound together with 18 engraved maps from the Additamentum of 1573, contemporary vellum over boards.

Dimensions

Notes
A fine example of the first edition, first state of “the first true atlas”.

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 re-sale. 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 and completion 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.

The present first edition is bound with the 18 maps from Ortelius’s ‘Additamentum’ published in 1573. These new maps were intended to be inserted into the previous editions of the atlas, and as such bear numbers referring to their placement within the atlas i.e.: 6A, 6B, etc.

Rare Van der Krogt records only 13 institutional examples of the first edition, first state of the Theatrum.

Bibliography
Van der Krogt 31:001A; 31:010.

Provenance
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William Adlington Cadbury (1867-1957), second son of Richard Cadbury, one of the two brothers who started the manufacture of chocolate under the Cadbury name.

Price:

Inventory reference: 11868

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