



Ortelius's two-sheet map of the British Isles in classical times

ORTELIUS, Abraham.  
 Britannicarum Insularum Vetus Descriptio.

Antwerp, 1592, Latin text edition. Coloured with gold highlights. Two sheets conjoined, total 730 x 485mm.

£3,750

An uncommon map of the British Isles in classical times, published in the Parergon, Ortelius's atlas of the ancient world. The map first appeared in 1590 and was replaced by a one-sheet map in 1595, although offprints were used as late as 1602. Van den Broecke estimates that only 710 examples were printed. Although the detail of the map is classical, with British tribes and Roman town names, the coastline is more up-to-date than Ortelius' 'modern' map, as it is based on Saxton. The engraver is believed to be Jan Wierex, and this map certainly gave him a chance to show his skills: the sea has been filled with three cartouches, a large sea-battle and five ships.

VAN DEN BROECKE: 190/191; SHIRLEY: British Isles 1477-1650, 170 (160 for full description)

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