

Basic Detail Report



00000918

Title

Indiae Orientalis, Insularumque Adiacentium Typus

Date

c 1590

Primary Maker

Abraham Ortelius

Medium

Ink on paper

Dimensions

Overall: 350 × 495 mm Mount / Matt size (C Fini Mount): 522 × 717 mm

Name

Map

History

In 1570, Flemish cartographer Abraham Ortelius (1527-1598), often called the 'father of modern geography', compiled what has been called 'first modern atlas', the *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*. This compilation of 53 maps of regions around the world, included this map, the *Indiae Orientalis*. The *Indiae Orientalis* is a brightly hand-coloured example, quite possibly produced for a particular client. Much of the information in the *Indiae Orientalis* is drawn from Gerhard Mercator's 1561 world map and from Portuguese maps. Despite being compiled from many sources, quite general in detail and initially with many errors, the Atlas was a popular publication and continued to be in demand in the early 1600s. It is unclear which year and edition this map is from. At the bottom of the map a land mass described as 'BEACH, pars continentis Australis' is shown emerging below Java. This is reportedly based on Marco Polo's writings, which suggested the existence of a land below Java, and it has been argued that the word 'beach' is Polo's translation of a Chinese word. The reverse side of the map has text in Latin headed 'India'. The publication of the *Theatrum* 'marked an epoch in the history of cartography'. As Tooley suggests, it was 'the first uniformly sized, systematic collection of maps of the countries of the world, based only on contemporary knowledge, since the days of Ptolemy.' Revised editions of the *Theatrum* expanded as new information about the world gathered by explorers and traders reached Holland. See: Koeman, *Atlantes Neerlandici*, Volume III, Ort 11; Tooley, *Maps and Mapmakers*, pp. 29 & 106-108.