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(World map signed by Ortelius!) Pomponius Mela | De situ orbis Libri Tres

Stock#: 89846
Map Maker: Ortelius & Plantin
Date: 1582
Place: Antwerp
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 5.5 x 8.25 inches
Price: \$ 4,500.00



Description:

The Only Full Latin Text on Geography to Have Survived From Antiquity, Illustrated by the Most Famous 16th-Century Mapmaker.

Rare 1582 edition of Pomponius Mela's *De Situ Orbis*, published in Antwerp by the important Plantin publishing house.

This edition of Mela's work is notable for including a world map executed and (unusually) signed by Abraham Ortelius. The map purports to show the world as described by Mela, but Ortelius couldn't quite bring himself to make a map so inaccurate. He shows the southern tip of Africa but includes an apology to the reader stating that the region was, of course, unknown to the ancients. Elsewhere, the regions are roughly correct to 16th-century geography, but the toponyms used are predominantly classical.

Shirley (145) says of the map:

This is one of the few maps signed by Ortelius. It reflects his classical interests and shows the ancient world supposedly according to the writings of Pomponius Mela. As well as Europe and Asia, Ortelius has included the whole of Africa with a note of apology for the anachronistic addition of the southern part.

Pomponius Mela

Pomponius Mela was a distinguished Roman geographer who lived around the time of Emperor Claudius. While very little is known about his personal life, his work, *De Situ Orbis*, also known as the *Chorographia*, was one of the most important texts in Latin ever published. The title translates to "On the Situation of the World" and is considered the earliest surviving geographical work from ancient Rome.



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De Situ Orbis is a compact but comprehensive geographical description of the world as it was known to the Romans at the time of its composition. The work is divided into three books, which describe the world from the perspective of its different regions. Mela's account goes beyond the mere cataloging of places and populations; it includes references to historical, mythological, and cultural aspects. Despite the limitations of ancient geographical understanding, Mela's work was notably accurate for its time. It contributed significantly to contemporary knowledge of the earth's size and shape, offering a unique blend of real geography and ancient mythology. While certain aspects of the text are rooted in the misunderstandings and misconceptions of ancient geography, others are quite precise and reflect the sophistication of Roman exploratory and trading activities. Even so, it is important to note that the geographer's primary source of information were sailors' accounts, which could be prone to exaggeration or misunderstanding.

Collation

[1]-64; [16]; 1-80; [Engraved folding map]; 1-70; [Blank]; 1-28.

Detailed Condition:

Quarto. Later stiff velum with morocco pastedown to spine reading "POMPONII | MELAI | DE SITU | ORBIS." Complete with engraved folding map signed by Ortelius. (Minor worming to title, partially restored with tissue. Minor internal toning. Small fold split to base of map. Small chip in right margin, repaired with tissue.)