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Figura observationum Cometicarum Vienne Austrice factar, ad Communicat. CL. Viri Dni, Ioan Mulleri, in Gynmasi Hamburg

Stock#: 60549
Map Maker: Lubieniecki
Date: 1668
Place: Amsterdam
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG+
Size: 10.5 x 6.5 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Observing The Great Comet of 1664

Rare celestial map showing figural representations of the constellations and the stars of which they are composed. The progress of the Great Comet of 1664 through this area of the sky is demarcated. The transit begins below Capricorn and ending to the right of Aries.

The present plate references the work of two 15th Century astronomers. In 1456, the Viennese astronomer Georg von Peurbach (1423 - 1461) tried to determine the parallax of a comet. Some years later, Johannes Muller (1436 - 1476), known by his Latin name of Regiomontanus, attempted to measure the parallax of the great comet observed in 1472. The most important legacy of Regiomontanus was to encourage scientific observations of comets with the aim to determine their distances to the Earth, their diameters and lengths of their tails.

The Great Comet of 1664 was first discovered 18 days before perihelion. The comet followed and unusual path through the winter constellations, coming closest to Earth in late December 1664. Toward the end of December, it was in Corvus in the morning sky. At its closest to earth on December 29, the comet was south of Sirius in Canes Major. At the beginning of January, the comet moved out of Lepus, past Rigel and by the middle of the month crossed the eastern area of Cetus (the Monster's mouth). It was last observed in the constellation of Aries.

The map from Lubienicki's *Theatrum Cometicum* are rare on the market.

Lubieniecki's encyclopedic treatise gathered together the observations of dozens of his contemporaries



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including Bayer and Hevelius, covering all known comets up to the year 1665. The fine engravings consist of celestial maps showing the paths of comets and the figures of the constellations traversed. "Since each map represents the observations of a different astronomer, taken together they illustrate the variety of cartographic traditions popular during the seventeenth century." (Warner, *The Sky Explored*, p. 164). The second part provides a chronology of 415 comet sightings from the flood (the first report is dated to 2312 BC) to 1665, with commentaries, drawn from a range of historical sources.

Rarity

Lubieniecki's book is rarely encountered in anything near a complete state. Only two complete copies of the first edition are recorded at auction since 1975 by ABPC: the Honeyman and Dunham copies. Of the three copies held by the British Library, two are substantially defective.

Detailed Condition: