



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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[Cosmographia]

Stock#: 73583
Map Maker: Reger
Date: 1482 (1486)
Place: Ulm
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG+
Size:
Price: SOLD



Description:

A Superlative Example of the Ulm Ptolemy.

A prototype 1486 Ulm Ptolemy with provenance to the Library of Marcus Fugger, the foremost bibliophile of the 16th century, in a contemporary Augsburg blind-tooled calf binding, and exemplary original hand-color in the style of the vellum 1482 Ptolemys.

The book's exceptional qualities can be summed up in four points:

1. The book is in fantastic original hand-coloring the likes of which is known in only one other example of this edition (at Harvard);
2. It is in a contemporary (likely Augsburg) calf binding;
3. It is very likely to be one of the first Ulm Ptolemys produced by Johann Reger;
4. The book's provenance can be traced back to the 16th-century Library of Marcus Fugger through the sale of his books in 1933.

Variations in the Hand-Coloring of Ulm Ptolemys

The book's most apparent quality is its extremely fine hand-coloring, far surpassing the drab brown usually encountered in a Reger Ptolemy.

The definitive analysis of the hand-coloring of the Ulm Ptolemys was written by Samir Murty under the supervision of David Woodward in 1999. Murty surveyed dozens of 1482 and 1486 Ptolemys, specifically focussing on their hand-coloring schemes and publication history. His work shows that the hand-coloring within the 1482 edition varies considerably, and with one notable exception, the coloring stabilizes



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considerably in the 1486 edition.

Murty identified only one example of the 1486 Ptolemy (at Harvard), which has lapis lazuli blue washes akin to what can be seen in the 1482s; he said of this book:

This particular Harvard copy of the 1486 re-issue is found with blue (7.5 B 4/6/) water. As is later suggested, I think that this copy is one of the earliest, if not the earliest, 1486 copies. This might explain why large bodies of water are found in 1482 blue rather than 1486 brown wash.

Our book is the same kind of color variant. The hand-coloring is unquestionably contemporary to the printing of the book itself, and yet despite being from 1486, it follows a scheme that surpasses most extant 1482s in terms of richness and quality of execution. Indeed, the closest matches for color, aside from the Harvard book, are the 1482 books printed on vellum, which have long been understood to be the very best of the Ulm Ptolemys.

Printing History

Murty also identified verso text differences among the 1486 books. On some copies (this being one), the large woodcut initial letters for the *Prima Europa* and *Secunda Europa* are lacking. Murty does not propose a reason for this in his paper, but, from the 1486s that we have been able to analyze, the existence of the printed initials on all maps matches the use of the brownish coloring in the oceans. Perhaps this means that those books without the first two initials were printed before those with the initials.

The lore of the 1486 Ptolemy has long suggested that Reger, finding the lapis lazuli pigments far too expensive, opted for a cheaper blueish pigment which quickly oxidized and turned brown.

The present volume lacks the text which Johann Reger prepared for the regular 1486, including the *Registrum alphabeticum* and *De locis ac mirabilibus mundi*. About this lack of text, the only relatively certain thing we can say is that it was not present in the 18th century when the verso of the first extant leaf, the world map, was used to scribble some ink notes about the book.

In the Bernardo Mendel Collection at the Lilly Library, there is a copy of the 1486 with no printed text, but with the text supplied in manuscript by Reger himself.

Dr. Margriet Hoogvliet concluded in her 2001 *Imago Mundi* article "The Medieval Texts of the 1486 Ptolemy Edition by Johann Reger of Ulm", that the text sections and maps were printed separately:



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Reger reprinted the 1482 edition and added the elaborate Registrum alphabeticum before the Geography and its maps, and the treatise De locis ac mirabilibus mundi immediately after. The quire numbering indicates that the three works were printed separately: the Registrum has quire marks in capital letters, Ptolemy's Geographia has them in lower case letters, and then the beginning of the De locis starts anew with a lower case 'a'.

The existence of the Bernardo Mendel Ptolemy, which shows that Reger definitely printed at least one example without the text sections, conforming with Hoogvliet's conclusions, suggests that the present book may have been printed before the text was complete as an early prototype of the book.

Binding

Of the 35 Ulm Ptolemys examined and described by Murty, only 8 are in contemporary bindings, 2 of which were Koberger bindings. Thus the existence of this book in a contemporary binding is noteworthy.

The book is bound in contemporary German (probably Augsburg) calf over wooden boards (wood renewed), ruled and tooled in blind, upper cover lettered: "Ptholomeus" at the top. Upper cover with a design of concentric rules emanating from a central column of *Kopfstempel* tools. These headstamp tools are most similar to Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin *Einbanddatenbank* s013719 from the Augsburg workshop Jagd-Rolle III [Jagdrolle (K 87)], active from 1481 to 1525. The first compartment from the center with a *Fletchwerk* roll tool. The second compartment with six-petaled rosettes. The third compartment from the center with elaborate roll tool depicting a stag hunt over a woven fence (not matching any *Jagd* tools in *Einbanddatenbank*, but reasonably similar to r000696 from the aforementioned Jagd-Rolle III workshop.) Original corner and clasp metalwork removed. Clasps replaced, with cover metalwork present but leather bands and metal hooks lacking. Rebacked and recased, preserving the original calf covers over new wooden boards.

Provenance

Augsburg is roughly 50 miles from Ulm, where Reger published the book, and based on our analysis of the binding, it seems that the book was in the former city in the 15th century.

By the 18th century at the latest (and probably much earlier), the book was in the library of Augsburg's Monastery of SS. Ulrich and Afra.

In 1788, the book had left SS. Ulrich and Afra and was in the library of St. Mang's Abbey in Füssen, about 70 miles up the Lech River from Augsburg. This is supported by a pen notation on the v1 of the second map. Following the Treaty of Lunéville, the Abbey was secularized and it was awarded to the princes of



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Oettingen-Wallerstein. The contents of the library were then shipped back down the Lech to Augsburg.

The most intriguing and complicating piece of evidence in the book's history is its appearance, in 1933, in the sale of a substantial group of books from the Library of Marcus Fugger. The sale was held in Munich by Karl & Faber over several sessions totaling hundreds of lots. As the introduction to the sale catalog notes, Marcus Fugger (1529-1597) was the scion of Augsburg's foremost merchant clan, the Fuggers, and at a relatively early age, he began building one of the most refined and creative book collections ever assembled. Marcus was a patron of the finest Parisian binders and German colorists, and many of the 16th-century books he bought were specially bound and colored specifically for him. However, as the catalog notes, he tended to leave incunabula in their original bindings, explaining the state of the present book, which miraculously still has its original binding:

Most of the works from the 15th century (and this is where he [Marcus Fugger] shows himself to be a real bibliophile!) have been left in the bindings of the time.

Detailed Condition: