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Opusculum Geographicum Rarum [with map:] Universalis Orbis Descriptio, Cogimur e Tabula Pictos Ediscere Mundos.

Stock#: 95970
Map Maker: Myritius
Date: 1590
Place: Ingolstadt
Color: Uncolored
Condition: Good
Size: 8.25 x 13 inches
Price: \$ 6,500.00



Description:

16th-Century World Map

With Numerous Volvelles

Rare early geographical and astronomical work with numerous woodcuts in the text, and several volvelles and a nice folding woodcut world map. This work is an interesting example of early paper engineering, for having five separate movable devices or volvelles. This volvelles are on B3r, B4r, F2v, G3r, and windvane consisting of paper flap with attached tassel on D4v. There is no volvelle on F1r, as in some copies. Some of the volvelles may incorporate later supplied elements, though very expertly done.

Myritius, a Maltese Hospitaller residing at Regensburg, includes an introduction to astronomy and a survey of world geography. Chapters 20 and 21 contain references to the New World: "De America, Spagnolla, Isabella, & alijs insulis ab Hispanis inuentis" (pages 116-124), includes information on the the islands of the West Indies and descriptions of native peoples, including mention of cannibalism, and a reference to Ferdinand Magellan.

"De meridionali parte Africae ab Alberico Vesputio inuenta, Noua Guinea, Brasilia, Terra ignis, Madagascar, & quibusdam alijs insulis" (pages 124-125), includes information on Brazil, Tierra del Fuego and Amerigo Vespucci.

In spite of the currency given in nearly all other contemporary maps to the separation of Asia and America by the strait of Anian, Myritius still follows the early Gastaldi-type world maps in showing both continents solidly joined as one land mass. Sixteen cherubic windheads encircle the world and there is a heavy decorative outer border. The choice of place names and other features also point to



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reliance on an Italian rather than an Ortelian source - Shirley.

The world map shows an immense unexplored southern continent over the South Pole.

The author was a Maltese by birth, but resided at Ratisbon as a commander of the order of St. John. He seems to have been one of the latest geographers who, in order to reconcile the new discoveries (of Columbus et al.) with the original theories, calls the northwestern portion of America, India Orientalis, and places no ocean between the continents of Asia and America - Sabin.

Universalis Orbis Description

The folding woodcut map of the world is present here in very nice example, clean and crisp and with good margins (with only a 1-inch tear along one of the folds, which does not affect the printed image). The map appears to be based on one of Gastaldi's small maps of the world, perhaps from one of the various editions of the Venetian Ptolemy. This would seem to be corroborated by Shirley, who calls Myritius conservative in his geography.

Also of note in the map is the imaginary continent in the southern polar region:

...in the extreme south on the map, we now see something new -- an imaginary continent stretching across the pole. Mercator believed a continent would be found there and his theory was blindly accepted and duplicated on maps for over 100 years - Portraits of The World.

Rarity

This book is very scarce in the market, especially with the map and all of the movable parts intact. Only three copies sold in the last fifty years per RBH. Not in Church despite the American-related content.

Detailed Condition:

Folio. Early vellum binding made from a 15th-century manuscript missal. Lacking ties. Inner hinges starting, but covers holding by cords. Some worming to lower corner area of back cover. Slight soiling to binding. [2], 130 (of 136) pages. Woodcut printer's vignette of armillary sphere on title page; head and tail pieces; initials; and other woodcuts in the text. Lacks 5 leaves and final blank, viz. A2 and A3 with dedicatory epistles and full-page heraldic woodcut, and S1-S4 (pages 131-136), portrait, another full-page heraldic woodcut, the penultimate leaf with colophon and printer's device. Also lacking the final blank). Else complete, with volvelles and folding map present.