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A New Mapp of America Meridionale . . . 1669

Stock#: 45388
Map Maker: Blome
Date: 1669
Place: London
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG
Size: 21 x 15 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Fine original color example of Richard Blome's scarce map of South America, the earliest folio sized map of South America to be engraved in England.

This attractive map features all of South America, and features relatively progressive geography. That being said, the continent takes on an exaggeratively bulbous form, and includes a number of cartographic misconceptions, such as the "Lake of Parime", a supposed large body of water in the interior of Guyana that was bordered by a 'City of Gold', the unsuccessful search for which proved to be the undoing of Sir Walter Raleigh earlier in the century. The mouths of the Amazon and Rio de la Plata are well placed, as are certain features such as Lake Titicaca. While the Tierra del Fuego features the 'Streights of [Le] Maire', its southwestern portion is left undefined.

The continent is divided up into various Spanish and Portuguese colonial provinces, each beautifully distinguished by their own color. However, much of the interior of the continent remains enigmatic, and is artistically adorned with a variety of wild creatures, while the seas are inhabited by sea monsters and ships. Blome based his work on the map by Nicolas Sanson, the Geographer to Louis XIV, entitled *Amerique Meridionale* (Paris, 1650).

Importantly, Blome's map is the first folio-sized map of South America to be published in Britain. While John Speed's 1626 atlas was published prior to Blome, the plates were engraved and printed in Amsterdam.

Blome's map demonstrates the naïve engraving style characteristic of 17th Century English map



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publishers, and features 2 elaborate cartouches and a dedication, "*To ye Right noble George Duke of Albemarle, Earle of Torrington, . . .*," a patron of Blome's work.

Richard Blome (1635-1705) was a preeminent force in the great resurgence of English cartography and publishing that accompanied the Caroline Restoration. A highly enterprising businessman, he continually sought out the latest geographical intelligence and employed London's leading engravers to execute his publications. Blome conceived of a grand multi-volume atlas project as early as 1663, and began to engrave plates as early as 1667. However, it was not until 1669 that Blome received a royal privilege of patent protection.

Ambitious in its scope, the atlas project endeavoured to draw on the most authoritative textual sources and the most progressive available cartography. The earliest issue was *A Geographical Description of the Four Parts of the World* (1670). The completed volume was in small folio, and contained 24 maps (plus one duplicated), engraved by Francis Lamb, Thomas Burnford and Wenceslas Hollar. The world atlas portion was later renamed *Cosmography and Geography In Two Parts* (1682).

In devising his atlas, Blome's principal handicap was the lack of a domestic mapmaking environment comparable with that in Europe. Cleverly, in order to finance his work, he solicited subscribers, often dedicating individual maps to wealthy patrons, adding their coat of arms to the maps. In later editions, if the renewal fee was not paid, Blome added a different subscriber's coat of arms, leading to multiple images on various editions of the same map. In an era when most of the English atlas projects failed and ended in bankruptcy (ex. John Seller and Moses Pitt), Blome had the distinction of creating the first financially successful folio atlas of the second half of the 17th Century.

Beyond the world atlas section, Blome notably published the *Britannia* (1673), the third part of the atlas, detailing the 'Sceptred Isle'. He also issued an important work on England's growing New World Empire, *The Present State of His Majesties Isles and Territories in America* (1687).

Blome's maps, due to their rarity and their importance in the history of English cartography, are essential for regional collectors.

Detailed Condition:

Old Color. Minor fold splits, expertly repaired on the verso.