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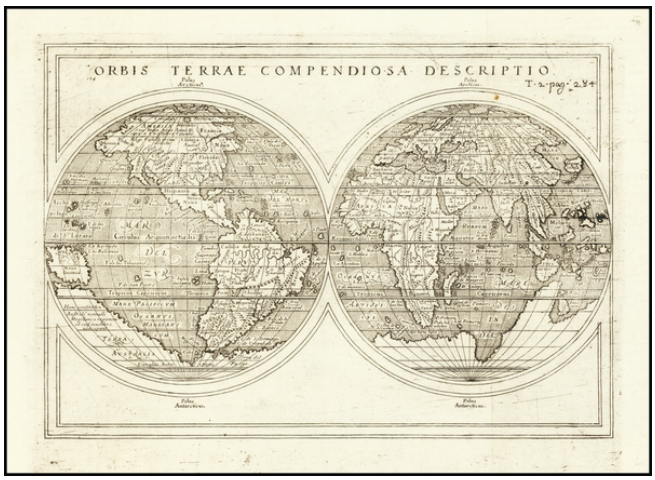
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Orbis Terrae Compendiosa Descriptio

Stock#: 64759
Map Maker: Rosaccio

Date: 1598
Place: Venice
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 10 x 7 inches

Price: SOLD



Description:

Fine Sixteenth-Century World Map

Interesting and striking early world map, which first appeared in Rosaccio's 1598 edition of *Ptolemy's Geographia.*

The map is based loosely on Rumold Mercator's map of 1587, but with parallel latitude lines, which stretch the landmasses north to south.

The projection of North America is similar to the Zaltieri/Lafreri maps of North America, with a dynamic projection of the Northwest Coast. One of the place names there is Anian, which derives from Ania, a Chinese province on a large gulf mentioned in Marco Polo’s travels (ch. 5, book 3). The gulf Polo described was actually the Gulf of Tonkin, but the province’s description was transposed from Vietnam to the northwest coast of North America. The first map to do was Giacomo Gastaldi’s world map of 1562, followed by Zaltieri and Mercator in 1567. The Strait then became shorthand for a passage to China, i.e. a Northwest Passage. It appeared on maps until the mid-eighteenth century.

Also mentioned in western North America is Quivira, which refers to the Seven Cities of Gold sought by the Spanish explorer Francisco Vasquez de Coronado in 1541. In 1539, Coronado wandered over what today is Arizona and New Mexico, eventually heading to what is now Kansas to find the supposedly rich city of Quivira. Although he never found the cities or the gold, the name stuck on maps of southwest North America, wandering from east to west. Here it is used to describe the entire southwest of the North America.

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There is a curious shape to Florida, whose extent and shape was still largely unknown to Europeans at this time, and New France is labeled. The French had started their North American colonies in 1534, when Jacques Chartier explored the Saint Lawrence River and claimed the land for France. The coastal areas were rich in fish, and inland merchants discovered the lucrative trade that could be derived from furs.

In the Pacific, the Straits of Magellan separate South America from a massive Tierra del Fuego, which is attached to Terra Australis. This map was made a quarter century before the Dutch expedition led by Schouten and Le Maire bypassed the Straits and made their way into the Pacific via Cape Horn. Instead, there is a massive southern continent shown here, a reflection of the assumption of European geographers that there must be a large southern continent to balance out the northern landmasses.

New Guinea lacks definition, while there are two Java Minors labeled south of southeast Asia. This is a result of a misunderstanding introduced by a reprinting of Marco Polo’s travels. Additionally, Japan is shown as a round island with some attendant islets. These details show how much interest Europeans had about the edges of the Pacific, but also how little they knew of its geography.

Detailed Condition: