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La Descrittione Di Tutto Il Peru

Stock#: 83948
Map Maker: Forlani
Date: 1562
Place: Venice
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 15 x 20.5 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Forlani's Map of South America—The Only Lafreri School Map of The Continent

Rare map of South America by Paolo Forlani. It was the first map of South America to show the interior in considerable detail and is the only map of the continent produced by the Lafreri School.

The map, one of the earliest continental maps of South America to be printed, features South America and much of the West Indies. Central America and a truncated Florida are included.

The continent is shown in a stout, diamond form, with the Straits of Magellan separating the mainland from a large Tierra del Fuego. As this map was made before Schouten and Lemaire rounded Cape Horn during their 1615-1617 circumnavigation, it shows Tierra del Fuego as continuing into the map's southern edge—it was thought to be one of the only known shores of a great southern continent.



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Unlike Forlani's world maps—he released four in the 1560s—this map shows the Amazon with an east-west orientation, as opposed to north-south. Earlier manuscript maps had also shown a north-south flowing stream, a misunderstanding of the location of the mouth of the river, which was detectable far out to sea due to the presence of freshwater. Here, the mighty river branches into several more in the interior, which is also filled with mountains. The Rio de la Plata delta is exaggeratedly wide and dotted with islands.

A glance over the toponyms offers many familiar names, although their placement reflects the still uncertain geographic knowledge about South America that was circulating in Europe in the mid-sixteenth century. Quito is in the center of the continent, with Cartagena far inland too. Lake Titicaca, here written as Titicacha, is also nestled deep into the central area of the landmass.

The continent itself is labeled Peru, rumored to be rich in rare metals and jewels. The Spanish invasion and conquest of the Inca Empire was ongoing while the map was made—the Viceroyalty of Peru was established in 1542 and the final Inca stronghold fell in 1572. The new encounters and experiences of conquistadores and imperial officials fueled these rumors of abundant natural resources.

In the upper right corner is a fine strapwork cartouche with the title and a dedication. This dedication is to Giovanni Pietro Contarini, Forlani's patron and a history writer. In the stippled waters of the South Seas is an embellished compass rose.

One source for this map was the work of Giacomo Gastaldi, who, like Forlani, worked in Venice. A near contemporary of this map is the 1562 wall map of the Americas by Diego Gutierrez. However, Forlani's work sharply diverges from Gutierrez's interpretation. Gutierrez's continent is less stretched east-west and has very different river configurations, especially of the Amazon and Rio de la Plata.

The map is a fine example of the Lafreri School's output and of Forlani's distinctive style. It is a treasure in elite institutional collections and is rare on the market.

Detailed Condition:

Some foxing and staining.