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Universale Novo

Stock#: 84905
Map Maker: Gastaldi
Date: 1548
Place: Venice
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG+
Size: 7 x 5 inches
Price: Not Available



Description:

Earliest Obtainable Italian World Map to Show the Continent of America by Italy's Premier Sixteenth-Century Mapmaker

This is a fine example of Giacomo Gastaldi's map of the world, published in Venice in 1548. It is a reduced version of his first world map of 1546, with the addition of six windheads around the oval projection.

As in his first world map, North America and Asia are connected as one land mass, revealing a lingering hope of connecting the Americas to the China trade. There is little detail along the east coast of North America, although the treatment of the Florida coastline is significantly improved from the 1546 map. California is shown as a peninsula.

The Amazon River is a prominent feature in South America, yet it is shown flowing north-south, not east-west. A small continent surrounds the South Pole and stretches to make one side of the Straits of Magellan. At the North Pole, Gastaldi has omitted the *Mare Congelatum* that he included on his previous world map.

Italy's leading sixteenth-century mapmaker

Giacomo Gastaldi (1500-1566) is considered the foremost Italian cartographer of the sixteenth century, alongside Paolo Forlani. Gastaldi was born in Villafranca, Piedmont, but had established himself in Venice by 1539. He originally worked as an engineer, but turned to mapmaking from the 1540s onward. It was in Venice where he made his reputation as an engraver, geographer, and cosmographer; for example, he was



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asked to fresco maps of Asia and Africa in the Palace of the Doge, or the Council of Ten, Venice's governmental body. He even had his own distinct style of copper engraving that made a pioneer in his day and makes his works iconic today.

His contemporaries also recognized his skill, as he was named cosmographer to the Republic of Venice and was a major source for other geographers and mapmakers including Cock, Luchini, and Ortelius. Gastaldi enjoyed an especially productive relationship with Giovanni Ramusio, Secretary of the Venetian Senate, who used Gastaldi's maps for his famous travel account collection, *Navigazioni et Viaggi*.

The world maps of Giacomo Gastaldi and their rarity

Gastaldi's first world map, upon which this map is patterned, is the first in a series of world maps by Italian engravers in the mid-sixteenth century. Like the 1548 map, the 1546 is an oval projection. This map was the model not only for Gastaldi's own later maps, but also for competitors' works, including in a woodcut by Matteo Pagano (1550), Gerard de Jode's first world map (1555), and, later in the century, derivatives by Forlani, Camocio, and Bertelli. The 1546 world map has become extremely rare on the market.

This example is Gastaldi's second world map. It was one of two world maps made for his 1548 edition of Ptolemy's *Geographia* which, intriguingly, did not include a Ptolemaic world map. The other is a navigational chart, *Carta Marina Nova Tabula*. According to Nordenskiöld, both were engraved by Gastaldi himself. The 1548 atlas was of particular importance because, as Burden explains, it "was the most comprehensive atlas produced between Martin Waldseemüller's *Geographia* of 1513, and the Abraham Ortelius *Theatrum* of 1570" due to its regional maps of the Americas. In addition, the reduced size of the atlas makes it the first "pocket" atlas, a notable development in the history of cartography.

Later remarkable Gastaldi-influenced world maps include the double-sheet woodcut by Pagano, ca. 1550. Only one copy is extant in the British Library. Another example is the De Jode world map of 1555, which survives in only two copies in the University of Utrecht and the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris.

Therefore, this 1548 world map is the earliest and practically only of Gastaldi's and Gastaldi-derived world maps obtainable on the market. It is also the earliest obtainable Italian world map to show the Americas in their entirety, making it an important addition to any collection.

Detailed Condition: