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[Holy Land, Cyprus, Syria & Middle East] Asiae IIII Tab

Stock#: 89175
Map Maker: Mercator

Date: 1584 circa
Place: Cologne
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG+
Size: 18.5 x 13.5 inches

Price: Not Available



Description:

Gerardus Mercator is a name synonymous with modern cartography. His pioneering approach to navigation charts and the projection that carries his name have made him a titan in the history of map-making. However, an intriguing aspect of his work, often overshadowed by his innovative contributions, was his deep fascination with the ancient geographer, Claudius Ptolemy. This admiration led him to publish his own version of Ptolemy's Geographia, which included a remarkable Ptolemaic map of the Holy Land, Cyprus, Syria, and surrounding regions.

Gerardus Mercator, born in 1512 in the Duchy of Jülich (modern-day Belgium), was a cartographer, philosopher, and mathematician. His greatest contribution to cartography was the Mercator Projection, a navigational tool that revolutionized sea travel during the Age of Exploration. It represents the globe as a flat surface while maintaining true compass bearings, enabling sailors to plot straight-line courses despite the distortion of size towards the poles.

Claudius Ptolemy, a Greco-Roman mathematician, astronomer, and geographer of the 2nd Century CE, authored the Geographia, a treatise providing the theoretical basis for cartography and including detailed instructions for drawing maps of the entire known world. Despite its inaccuracies by modern standards, it held immense value for the Renaissance thinkers who rediscovered it in the 14th century. Ptolemy's work sparked a renewed interest in geography and initiated an era of intense map-making in Europe.

Mercator was one of the Renaissance scholars deeply influenced by Ptolemy's Geographia. His interest in Ptolemy's work was twofold. Firstly, he acknowledged Ptolemy as the foundational figure in geography, whose systematic approach to mapping the known world had been unmatched for over a thousand years.

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Secondly, Mercator viewed Ptolemy’s work as a window into the knowledge of the ancient world, which he believed needed preservation.

In 1578, Mercator published his own version of Ptolemy's Geographia. This edition was an amalgamation of ancient wisdom and Renaissance craftsmanship, which displayed not only Ptolemy's original 2nd-century world view but also showcased the advanced engraving techniques and meticulous details that Mercator was known for.

The map of the Holy Land, Cyprus, and Syria is an exemplar of this synergy. Mercator recreated Ptolemy's conception of these regions while introducing the finesse and precision of his own cartographic style. The map features the regions as they were understood in the ancient world, with the Jordan River, Dead Sea, Mediterranean coast, and prominent cities like Jerusalem and Antioch clearly depicted. Similarly, the island of Cyprus, an important location in ancient Mediterranean trade routes, and Syria, the crossroads of several ancient civilizations, are also intricately detailed.

While faithful to Ptolemy's representation, the map is unmistakably a Mercator artifact. It boasts intricate details, clear engravings, and a systematic grid, all hallmarks of Mercator's work. Furthermore, the map includes his own modifications based on more recent geographical discoveries, subtly integrating Ptolemaic tradition and modern knowledge.

Detailed Condition: