



First edition, quarto (197 by 152mm), title with large woodcut globe, arms of the Cardinal Archbishop of Salzburg on verso, full-page woodcut on p. [viii], the first quire printed in red and black, the title coloured by a contemporary hand, profusely illustrated with woodcuts depicting globes, scientific instruments, astronomical and geographical maps and diagrams, etc., the illustrations on pages (Cols.) 17, 24, 50, 63 and lv with well-preserved volvelles; two unused volvelles are attached to the final printed leaf, being parts of the illustration of Apianus's 'Instrumentum syderale', title slightly soiled and with wormhole in upper margin, contemporary South German binding of limp vellum, blind-stamped calf spine, worn, 'Maria' stamped catches, broken.

Collation: [pi]4^r; A-M4; 4: 56 leaves, 4 blank; with many mis-signings. A lv-M4v paginated (as "Col.") 2-104.

APIANUS' RARE WORK ON COSMOLOGY

Cosmographicus liber.

Author

APIANUS, Petrus

Publication date

1524

Publisher

Johann Weyssenburger,

Publication place

Landshut,

Physical description

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Archbishop of Salzburg on verso, full-page woodcut on p. [viii], the first quire printed in red and black, the title coloured by a contemporary hand, profusely illustrated with woodcuts depicting globes, scientific instruments, astronomical and geographical maps and diagrams, etc., the illustrations on pages (Cols.) 17, 24, 50, 63 and lv with well-preserved volvelles; two unused volvelles are attached to the final printed leaf, being parts of the illustration of Apianus's 'Instrumentum syderale', title slightly soiled and with wormhole in upper margin, contemporary South German binding of limp vellum, blind-stamped calf spine, worn, 'Maria' stamped catches, broken.

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Dimensions

Notes

Petrus Apianus (1495-1552) was born in Saxony as Peter Bienewitz. He studied at the University of Leipzig from 1516 to 1519, where he took a Latinised version of his German name: Petrus Apianus. In 1520 he moved to Vienna, where he was part of the second Vienna school of cartography, and produced his first world map there. He then moved again to Landshut, where he produced the 'Cosmographicus liber' in 1524, his first major work.

Based on the theories of Ptolemy, it contains paper instruments called volvelles, which Apianus would use so effectively in his work that they are sometimes known as Apian wheels. It covers "the division of the earth into climatic zones, the uses of parallels and meridians, the determination of latitude, several methods for determining longitude including that of lunar distance, the use of trigonometry to determine distances, several types of map projections, and many other topics" (Karrow). America is depicted on the globes on pp. 2 and 63 and described on p. 69.

The 'Cosmographicus liber' is one of the most popular books on cosmography ever published. It went through no fewer than 45 editions, was published in four languages, and was manufactured in seven cities by at least 18 printers. Its popularity derived principally from its maps and discussion of the New World, but also for its ingenious use of volvelles.

Copies are very rarely found with the full complement of volvelles: the British Library copy, for instance, lacks the volvelle on p. 50. The book is uncommon. We have been able to trace five examples of the first edition selling at auction since World War II, with only one, the present example, in contemporary hand colour (1999, Sotheby's NY; 1978, Sotheby's London (this copy); 1965, Sotheby's NY (two examples); 1951 William Schab).

Bibliography

Harrisse 127; Robert Karrow, *Mapmakers of the sixteenth century and their maps* (Chicago: Speculum Orbis Press for The Newberry Library, 1993), 53; Fernand van Ortroy, *Bibliographie de l'Oeuvre de Pierre Apian* (Amsterdam: Meridian, 1963), 22; Sabin 1738; Margaret Bingham Stillwell, *The Awakening Interest in Science during the First Century of Printing, 1450-1550* (New York: Bibliographical Society of America, 1970), 136; *Bibliotheca Americana: Catalogue of the John Carter Brown Library*, vol.1 (Providence: Brown University Press), 89.

Provenance

Provenance:

1. In Latin, 1555, gift of the book by a Prior Erasmus, ownership inscriptions on front paste-down.
2. In Latin, c. 1600, monastery of Chemnitz (now Karl-Marx-Stadt), ownership inscriptions on front paste-down.

3. In German, signed by Christof Halla recording purchase of the book in 1653 from a named friend, ownership inscriptions to title.
4. Honeyman sale (Sotheby's London, 30 October 1978, lot 99, £2,600).
5. Otto Schäfer Stiftung, Schweinfurt, Germany.

Price:

Inventory reference: 11837