



Double-page woodcut, paginated "8" and "9" in respective upper corners, German text to verso.

PRE-EMPTYING THE DISCOVERY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Die eigentliche und warhafftige gestalt der Erden und des Meers - Cosmographia Universalis.

Author

BUNTING, Heinrich

Publication date

1581.

Publisher

Heinrich Bunting,

Publication place

Magdeburg,

Physical description

Double-page woodcut, paginated "8" and "9" in respective upper corners, German text to verso.

Dimensions

288 by 372mm (11.25 by 14.75 inches).

Notes

Only the second published map to hint at early Portuguese discoveries of "Terra Australis", the other being Benito Arias Montanus's 'Pars Orbis' (1571).

Published in Heinrich Bunting's 'Itinerarium Sacrae Scriptura', and when compared to Bunting's

world map on a clover-leaf projection from the same book, his 'Die eigentliche...', it seems far more realistic view of the world, even pre-empting the discovery of Australia. By incorporating a landmass lower right, that conforms to coastline of Western Australia, as we now understand it, the map gives rise to "speculation that it reflects knowledge of an early discovery, perhaps by Portuguese navigators. The placement of Africa and India Meridionalis on the same parallel is remarkably accurate... [but] India Meridionalis is better explained as a survival from Ptolemy's 'Geography'" (Mawer).

The mapmaker

Having been twice dismissed from his ecclesiastic posts, German pastor Heinrich Bünting (1545-1606) was far more successful as a cartographer than a priest. His religious geography, the 'Itinerarium Sacrae Scripturae', was an exceedingly popular work, running to ten editions in seven languages during the decades following its publication in 1581.

Bibliography

Literature: Clancy, 'The Mapping of Terra Australis', 5.8; National Library of Australia, Mawer for 'Mapping our World: Terra Incognita to Australia', page 87; Shirley, 'The mapping of the world: early printed world maps, 1472-1700', 143.

Provenance

Price: £2500

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