



Engraved chart on vellum, original hand-colour in outline, slightly age-toned as usual, some finger soiling and staining to lower left, a few nicks and tears to margins.

THE EARLIEST WORKING CHART TO DEPICT MAGNETIC VARIATION

Pascaarte van alle de Zee-custen van Europa. Nieulijcx beschreven door Anthony Jacobszen.

Author

JACOBSZ, Anthonie

Publication date

[1655]

Publisher

op't Water in den Jacobszen,

Publication place

Amsterdam,

Physical description

Engraved chart on vellum, original hand-colour in outline, slightly age-toned as usual, some finger soiling and staining to lower left, a few nicks and tears to margins.

Dimensions

890 by 735mm. (35 by 29 inches).

Notes

Antonie Jacobsz exceedingly rare, separately issued, large-format plane chart of Europe. Oriented to the west, it extends from the Azores in the west to Novaya Zemla in the east, and from the northern

coast of Spitzbergen to the Canary Islands in the south. The eastern portion of the Mediterranean is depicted within the interior of North Africa.

Jacobsz chart captures the entire coastlines of Europe and the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. The coverage of the main part of the chart commences in the northeast at Novaya Zemlya, then follows the intricate European coastline past Norway, into the Baltic Sea, then down through the North Sea and the Atlantic, through the Pillars of Hercules to take all of the Mediterranean Sea west of Corfu, along with the adjacent coastlines of North Africa. It also extends deep into the North Atlantic to feature Iceland, Greenland, Spitsbergen and the Azores. The latter is important as the location of the Prime Meridian of Longitude (before it was changed later in the century to 'Pico' in Tenerife, and then to Greenwich in the nineteenth century), and an important marker for ships sailing to the West Indies and South America. A beautiful inset in the lower left of the chart details the shorelines of the Eastern Mediterranean.

The chart is oriented with the west towards the top and assumes a Portolan-style appearance, with sparing geographic detail in the interior, but neat and tightly clustered place names along the littoral, while the seas are traversed by rhumb lines, emanating from compass roses. The interior areas are adorned with the elaborate national coats of arms of various nations, including those of Russia, Sweden, Denmark-Norway, the Holy Roman Empire, England, France, Spain and the Ottoman Empire. Four scale cartouches adorn the corners, while a magnificent title cartouche, topped by Blaeu's symbol of an armillary sphere and with his motto 'Indefessus Agendo' ('Act Steadily') graces the lower-center of the chart, flanked by two sailors holding a cross-staff and plumb line respectively. The seas are further embellished with sailing ships and seals, while on the land roam Inuit hunters, goats, bears and elephants.

The chart is almost a direct copy Willem Blaeu's chart of Europe, of the same name, first published in the early 1620s. The present chart includes all Blaeu's ground-breaking cartography, including the most detailed rendering of the Davis Strait and Greenland's west coast to date; the omitting of the mythical island of 'Friesland'; and the most advanced representation of Russia's Arctic coastline, most notably the western coasts of Novaya Zemlya, discovered by Willem Barentsz in the 1590s, although he is cautiously silent on whether or not the land-form is an island.

The one piece of extra geographical information that Jacobsz adds is to the east coastline of Greenland, where the sightings of skipper Gaal Hamkes: 't Lant door Gaal Hamkes opgedaen in Jaer 1654, is marked. Jacobsz also populates the chart with numerous small compass roses marking magnetic variation in the Mediterranean, North, Arctic, and Baltic Seas. An examination of Günther Schilder's 'Sailing Across the World's Oceans' a cartobibliography of Dutch printed charts on vellum, marks this as the earliest chart to record magnetic variation.

The Lootsman Family

The Lootsman family (a surname adopted by the founder of the firm Anthonie, or Theunis, Jacobsz) are one of the less well-known firms of chart makers and publishers working in Amsterdam, specialising in pilot books of European coastal waters, but who also published a sea atlas of the world. Their output of charts and chart-books deserves to be better known, as much of their work was original, rather than the slavish copies some of their better-known rivals produced.

Rarity

Like all working charts of the seventeenth century the chart is very rare' with Schilder recording two institutional examples: Het Scheepvaartmuseum, Amsterdam; Maritime Museum, Rotterdam; and one in private hands.

Bibliography

Denucé, p.8; 'Catalogue des cartes nautiques' (1963), p.313; Ristow, 'A la Cart', pp. 63-75; Schilder, 'Monumenta Cartographica Neerlandica', IV, 45.1; Schilder, 'Sailing Across the World's Oceans', Jacobsz 1; Stopp & Langel, p.33 and plate VI.

Provenance

Price: £75000

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