



Oblong folio atlas (323 by 470mm), letterpress title, dedication and contents leaf, and 11 numbered leaves of explanatory text, engraved title, engraved key to star sizes and 30 engraved star charts (29 of which are printed in gold on a black background, the final, black and white chart depicts the magnitudes of the stars), the plates with stars of the first four magnitudes punched out in different sizes and with slivers of India paper pasted on verso to cover the holes), red paper boards, rebacked preserving original roll-tooled diced russia upper cover.

Collation: [8], 40, [6] p., [1], XXX [plates].

THE FIRST RUSSIAN CELESTIAL ATLAS, PRINTED IN GOLD

Sozvezdiia predstavlenyia na XXX tablitsakh... [Presentation of constellations in 30 tables with description and guide to finding them comfortably in the sky: composed for educational institutions and amateur astronomers].

Author

REISSIG, Kornelius Khristianovich

Publication date

1829.

Publisher

Tipografiia Kh. Gintsa,

Publication place

St Petersburg,

Physical description

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Collation: [8], 40, [6] p., [1], XXX [plates].

Dimensions

Notes

The first edition of the first printed Russian celestial atlas.

The chart titles are in cyrillic, but the geocentric format and design of the figures are based upon Bode's atlas of 1806, which in turn took its inspiration from Fortin's French edition of Flamsteed's 'Atlas Coelestis' of 1776. The work contains a number of constellations that are now obsolete, including Custos Messium, named in honour of the astronomer Charles Messier.

The use of a dark background in celestial atlases was not an innovation. Reissig's immediate precursor was Goldbach, who taught in Moscow and who used the technique in his atlas of 1799. The sumptuous printing of Reissig's atlas is, however, of a different order, and what the maps lack in originality they more than make up for by their sheer visual impact. Each chart was first printed in black, and then a second plate was used to add the gold. The holes backed with Japan paper allow the stars to shine when held up to the light. This, combined with the dark printed backgrounds, make Reissig's atlas particularly striking

Kornelius Reissig (1781-1860) was an associate member of the Russian Academy of Sciences and director of the military academy in St Petersburg. He published a variety of works on mechanics, statics, and barometrics, as well as a manual on painting.

Uncommon. No example recorded on NUC, and OCLC only notes two examples in the US; those of Pennsylvania State University and the Linda Hall Library of Science, Engineering and Technology.

Bibliography

Nick Kanas, 'Das kartografische Vermächtnis von John Flamsteed', in 'Astronomie Heute', July-August 2007, S. 29; Lavrov, 'Bibliografiya Russkoi astronomicheskoi literatur, Moscow, 1968, p42f; Not in Warner.

Provenance

Price:

Inventory reference: 1138