

First state. Engraved map, with contemporary hand-colour in full, Latin text on verso.

THE FIRST STATE OF THE FIRST MAP TO BE TO BE “DEVOTED EXCLUSIVELY TO THE [SOUTH] POLAR REGIONS” (TOOLEY)

Polus Antarcticus

Author
HONDIUS, Henricus

Publication date
1637.

Publisher
Henricus Hondius,

Publication place
Amsterdam,

Physical description

First state. Engraved map, with contemporary hand-colour in full, Latin text on verso.

Dimensions
440 by 498mm (17.25 by 19.5 inches).

Notes

Hondius’s circular map of the Southern Hemisphere showing parts of South America, Africa and

southern Australia along with the supposed coastline of the unknown southern continent. Predating the first appearance of New Zealand and Van Dieman's Land. The detail around Western Australia shows t' Lant van P. Nuyts discovered in January 1627, Edel's Lant discovered in 1619, Eendrachts discoveries in 1616, as well as notes mentioning Williams Renier and Dirck Hertogs Ree, and several other place names and early contacts prior to the discoveries of Tasman in 1642 and 1643-44.

'Polus Antarcticus' was first issued in 1637 by Dutch cartographer and engraver Henricus Hondius, with Dutch text on verso. The map is bordered by elaborate representations of native figures, sailing ships, penguins and "sea lions" frolicking in the water, and is before the addition of New Zealand and Tasmania, but showing the discoveries of Hartog in the Eendracht (1616), Houtman with the Dordrecht and Amsterdam (1619), the Leeuwin (1622), Nuyts in the Gulden Zeepaard (1627) and de Witt in the Vianen (1628).

The "first map to be devoted exclusively to the [south] Polar Regions and named as such is the Polus Antarcticus of H. Hondius. It depicts a string of islands in a practically straight line, north and south, from Magellanica to New Guinea with a hypothetical wavy line curving round towards the coast of West Australia. The map of Hondius was reissued by Janson at various dates and again as late as 1700 by Peter Schenk, thus having an effective life of over 50 years" (Tooley).

The mapmakers
Faced with increasing competition from the large cartographic house of Blaeu, Johannes Janssonius and his business partner Henricus Hondius set about revising the Mercator – Hondius atlas. After Jodocus Hondius I's death in 1612, his widow, Jodocus Hondius II and his brother, Henricus Hondius II (1597–1651), had continued publishing atlases under his name until 1620. Unfortunately, in 1621 Jodocus Hondius II split with his brother, creating a rival publishing house. Henricus continued his father's business with his brother-in-law, Joannes Janssonius (1588–1664), who had married twenty-four-year-old Elizabeth Hondius in 1612. After 1619, the 'Atlas' was published under the name of Henricus Hondius, Jodocus Hondius's son, but by 1629, the Blaeu family were becoming serious rivals to the publishing partnership of Janssonius and Hondius.

Bibliography

Literature: Clancy, 'Mapping Antarctica', 10.3; Clancy, 'So Came They South', 6.8; Clancy, 'The Mapping of Terra Australis', 6.8; Spence, 'Antarctic Miscellany', 3013; Tooley, 'The Mapping of Australia', 727; see Tooley, 'Early Antarctica', 20 (later state).

Provenance

Price: £4000

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