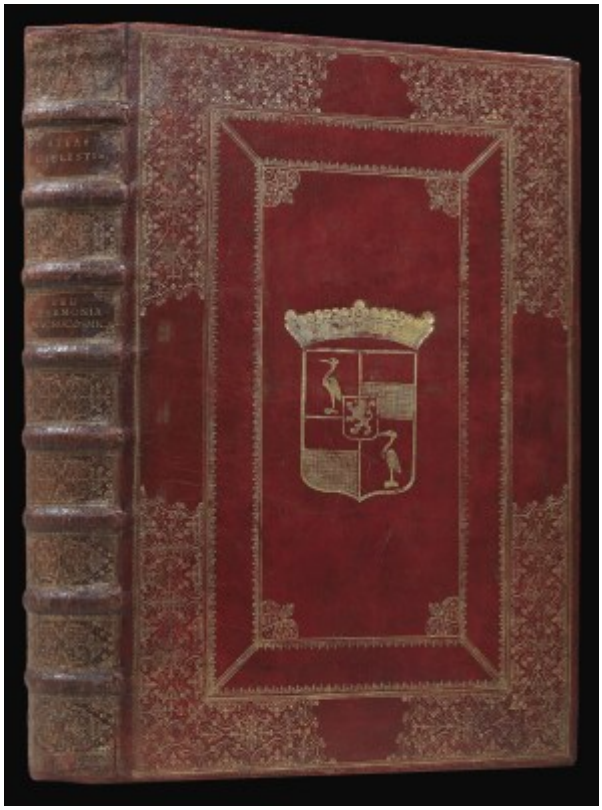


First edition, second issue. Folio (508 by 335mm), engraved allegorical title by F.H. van Hoven and 29 double-page astronomical maps, all finely coloured by a contemporary hand, title heightened in gold and silver, charts heightened in gold, title with areas of oxidisation, contemporary armorial red morocco gilt, gilt panelled sides with gilt fleurons in corners of central panel and gilt decorations composed of drawer handle and other tools filling the broad outer frame at the four corners, spine gilt with eight raised bands.

THE ONLY CELESTIAL ATLAS PUBLISHED DURING THE GOLDEN AGE OF DUTCH CARTOGRAPHY

Harmonia Macrocosmica sev atlas universalis et novus, totius universi creati cosmographiam generalem, et novam exhibens.

Author
CELLARIUS, Andreas.

Publication date
1661

Publisher
Johannes Janssonius,

Publication place
Harmonia Macrocosmica

Physical description
First edition, second issue. Folio (508 by 335mm), engraved allegorical title by F.H. van Hoven and 29 double-page astronomical maps, all finely coloured by a contemporary hand, title heightened in gold and silver, charts heightened in gold, title with areas of oxidisation, contemporary armorial red

morocco gilt, gilt panelled sides with gilt fleurons in corners of central panel and gilt decorations composed of drawer handle and other tools filling the broad outer frame at the four corners, spine gilt with eight raised bands.

Dimensions

Notes
The finest celestial atlas ever realized.

The first 21 sumptuous Baroque style charts beautifully represent the three competing astronomical models of the day: the Ptolemaic, Copernican and the Tychonic. The Ptolemaic was the oldest of the celestial theories, and, until the beginning of the sixteenth century, was the accepted doctrine on planetary motion. Ptolemy proposed a geocentric solar system with the sun, planets, and fixed stars borne on concentric spherical shells orbiting a stationary earth. The theory was endorsed by the church, who saw it as reinforcing man's position at the centre of God's universe, and approved of the dichotomy between the ever-changing sinful earth and the immutable motion of the heavens. The theory was given some scientific credence by the 'father of physics': Aristotle. By the turn of the sixteenth century and the dawn of the Age of Discovery, however, the model was beginning to show signs of age. The star charts and tables used for navigation on the high seas were soon found wanting. This led scholars to seek new and more accurate observations of the heavens.

One such person was Nicholas Copernicus (1473-1543), whose observations led him to publish 'De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium' ('On the Revolutions of the Celestial Orbs') in Nuremberg in 1543. In it he placed the sun at the centre of the solar system, with the planets orbiting it in perfect circular motion. It would, however, take a century and a half to develop the physics, led by Galileo Galilei, to underpin Copernicus's heliocentric theory.

Tycho Brahe (1546-1601) offered a rather inelegant third theory, which attempted to keep faith with the old Ptolemaic model, whilst embracing aspects of the new Copernican system. His theory kept the earth in the centre of the universe, so as to retain Aristotelian physics. The moon and sun revolved about the earth, and the shell of the fixed stars was centred on the earth. But Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn revolved around the sun. This Tychonic world system became popular early in the seventeenth century among those who felt forced to reject the Ptolemaic arrangement of the planets (in which the earth was the centre of all motions) but who, for reasons of faith, could not accept the Copernican alternative.
The last eight plates represent celestial hemispheres and planispheres depicting the constellations: they are the most ornate of all, and their level of artistic detail has made these plates very popular.

Andreas Cellarius was born in Neuhausen, a small town near Worms in Germany. From 1625 to 1637 he worked as a schoolmaster in Amsterdam and later The Hague, and in 1637 moved to Hoorn, where he was appointed rector of the Latin School.
The coloured maps of the present copy are particularly attractive, with the opulence of the colours lending the maps pictorial significance.

Of the various engravers and authors who worked on the plates of the atlas, only two have signed their work: Frederik Hendrik van den Hove, author of the frontispiece, and Johannes van Loon, who engraved ten plates. All the designs of the classical constellations were taken from the ones created by Jan Pieterszoon Saenredam.

Bibliography
Brown Astronomical Atlases, pp. 40-41. Biblioteca Civica Bertoliana, Vicenza, Teatro del cielo e della

terra, p. 33-34; 36. Brown, Astronomical atlases, pp. 40-42. Honeyman Coll. II, 658; Lalande, p. 248; Lister, p. 48. Poggendorf, I, 409 Koeman, Atlantes Neerlandici, IV, Cel I

Provenance
1. Arms of the Van Reigersberg's of Zeland, to upper cover (J.B. Rietstap, Armorial Général, vol.II, p.543). The Van Reigersberg's had close associations with the leading Dutch intellectual and political circles of the day; Maria van Reigersberg was married to Hugo Grotius.
2. Ex Libris of Hans Dedi (1918-2016) German businessman and bibliophile.

Price:

Inventory reference: 14158

© Daniel Crouch Rare Books Ltd | 2025