

Small quarto (165 by 135mm). Vignette title-page printed in red and black, sectional vignette title-page, and 39 woodcut vignettes in the text; modern tan morocco backed tan cloth, gilt.

A SENSATIONAL TALE OF CANNIBALISM IN THE NEW WORLD

Warhafftig Historia vnnd Beschreibung einer Landtschafft der wilden, nacketen, grimmigen Menschfresser Leuthen, in der Newen Welt America gelegen.

Author
STADEN, Johann von

Publication date
1557 [dedication, page 14, 1556].

Publisher
Durch Weygandt Han, in der Schnurgassen zum Krug,

Publication place
Gedruckt zu Franckfurt am Mayn,

Physical description
Small quarto (165 by 135mm). Vignette title-page printed in red and black, sectional vignette title-page, and 39 woodcut vignettes in the text; modern tan morocco backed tan cloth, gilt.

Dimensions

Notes
An exceptionally rare contemporary piracy of Staden’s tale (probably tall) of cannibal captivity in South America. The work is illustrated throughout with woodcuts by Jörg Breu, previously published in the German edition of Varthema’s travels. Staden was captured by the Tupinambá people while on

his second expedition to Brazil. When he published a sensational account of his trials in Marburg, in 1557, it was an instant best-seller, which was reprinted many times, in translation, and imitation. This undated Frankfurt edition, printed the same year, replaced Staden's woodcuts with some of Breu's, and without the map present in the legitimate publication.

Hans Staden (1525-1576) a German soldier and explorer, whose account of his experiences in South America, principally Brazil, would become one of the most popular travel books of the sixteenth century.

Staden made two voyages to South America, the first under the Portuguese lasted from April 29, 1547 to October 8, 1548; the second in a Spanish vessel from the 4th day after Easter, 1549 to Feb. 20, 1555. It was during this second voyage that he he was taken prisoner by the Tupi people in Brazil and spent nine months in captivity until rescued by a French vessel. Upon his return wrote an account of his time among the Tupi. The work, first published in 1557, is divided into two sections, the first giving an account of his life among the Indians; the second being devoted to a description of the customs of the indigenous peoples.

The work's popularity rested in no small measure on the fact that it shaped European stereotypes about wild men eating savages, fuelling popular fantasies about the New World peoples that could justify a sense of European superiority. It also became popular in Protestant states because it served as a morality tale about God's grace and the value of true faith. Claims of cannibalism were fabricated to portray them as other and barbarous. This may be exaggerated to sell his work but it did not mean that there wasn't cannibalism, and much of the description in the second book is of great ethnographic importance.

Rarity: Only one North American institutional example known, at Yale; only two examples offered at auction since 2005.

Bibliography

Provenance
Provenance: 1. Contemporary ownership inscription of "P. Smidt Vor 27" on the title-page; 2. with ?Worser, February 1970, acquired by.

Price: £50000

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