Double-page woodcut map, fine original hand-colour, slight damp staining to upper margin slightly affecting image.

EGYPT AND LIBYA

Tertia Affrice Tabula.

Author
PTOLEMAEUS, Claudius [translated by ANGELUS, Jacobus, edited by GERMANUS, Nicolaus]

Publication date
16 July 1482.

Publisher
Lienhart Holle,

Publication place
Ulm,

Physical description
Double-page woodcut map, fine original hand-colour, slight damp staining to upper margin slightly affecting image.

Dimensions
420 by 565mm. (16.5 by 22.25 inches).

Notes
This striking map depicts North Africa from Egypt to eastern Libya, as envisaged by the second century A.D, cartographer Claudius Ptolemaeus, and is one of the earliest obtainable prints maps of the area. To the east of Egypt the Red Sea has been misnamed the Arabian Gulf (“Sinus Arabicus”).

To her west is the Roman province of Cyrenaica, modern day eastern Libya and named after one of the great classical cities of the ancient world Cyrene, the “Athens of Africa”.

The map was published in the first atlas printed outside Italy and the first atlas illustrated with woodcut maps.

In 1482 Lienhart Holle in Ulm published a revised edition of Ptolemy’s Geographia with the reworking of the Ptolemaic corpus by the cartographer Nicolaus Germanus Donis. The atlas included five additional “modern” maps: Italy, Spain, France, Scandinavia, and the Holy Land. The atlas would be the first book printed by Lienhart Holle, however, it would appear that the venture proved ruinously expensive and his business would go bankrupt shortly after publication. The remaining sheets, the woodblocks and the types passed to Johann Reger in Ulm, who reissued the work in 1486.

As well as the modern maps the atlas bears some other notable first. It was the first time that maps were signed by the artist responsible for the woodcutting; in this case Johannes of Armsheim, who signed the world map, and incorporated a backwards N into the woodcut text on each map. It is also the first to print the accompanying text on the verso of the map to which it refers. Another important feature of the Ulm editions is the introduction of the publisher’s colouring upon the maps. Maps from 1482 usually have a rich blue colour in the sea which was replaced with a soft brown colour in 1486.

Bibliography

Camptell, T., ‘Earliest Printed Maps’, p. 179-210; Schreiber 5032; Skelton, R.A., Bibliographical note prefixed to the facsimile of the 1482 Ulm Ptolemy

Provenance

Price:

Inventory reference: 2103

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