Folio (338 by 234mm). First edition, second issue (the first issue is dated 1567 on the title but is otherwise identical to the second). No cancel slip on verso of *3, r3v and x2r with ink eradications over plate descriptions incorrectly printed as in the Harvard copy described by Mortimer. Letterpress title within elaborate woodcut border, woodcut head-piece and initial to dedication, 60 engraved plates attributed to Léon Davent (French, active 1540–56) after Nicolay. Contemporary Lyonaise calf, decorated in blind and gilt with roll tool borders with a central arabesque lozenge to both covers, spine in eight compartments with seven raised bands, decorated in six.

THE “FINEST AND MOST INFLUENTIAL PICTORIAL INTRODUCTION OF TURKISH CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES” IN CONTEMPORARY COLOUR AND A CONTEMPORARY LYONAISE BINDING

Les Quatre Premiers Livres des Navigations et Peregrinations Orientales.

Author
NICOLAY, Nicolas de, seigneur d’Arfeville.

Publication date
1568

Publisher
Guillaume Roville,

Publication place
Lyons,

Physical description
Folio (338 by 234mm). First edition, second issue (the first issue is dated 1567 on the title but is otherwise identical to the second). No cancel slip on verso of *3, r3v and x2r with ink eradications

over plate descriptions incorrectly printed as in the Harvard copy described by Mortimer. Letterpress title within elaborate woodcut border, woodcut head-piece and initial to dedication, 60 engraved plates attributed to Léon Davent (French, active 1540–56) after Nicolay. Contemporary Lyonaise calf, decorated in blind and gilt with roll tool borders with a central arabesque lozenge to both covers, spine in eight compartments with seven raised bands, decorated in six.

Dimensions

Notes
Nicolay was the royal geographer sent by Henri II to Constantinople to join d'Aramont's embassy in 1551. The illustrations are claimed by Nicolay as his own work. Baudrier assigns them to Louis Danet of whom nothing else is known, whereas the Metropolitan Museum of Art attributes them to Léon Davent. This series of engravings has been described as the finest and most influential pictorial introduction of Turkish characters and costumes. Mortimer notes that in the Harvard copy the engravings are variously bound, some mounted on the blank versos, and others pasted back-to-back as plates. In the present copy, all of the engravings are bound separately.

Nicolay accompanied Gabriel d'Aramont, French diplomat and ambassador, on a mission to Constantionople in 1551. While there he wrote this account and sketched the remarkable figures of Levantine men and women in costume. The figures depict Greeks and Arabs, Turks and Armenians, Malteses and Moors, and the plate after p. 105 depicts a Jewish physician. The plate following p.113 of a Qalandrite, member of a dervish fraternity, is often mutilated by readers objecting to its obscenity. This French edition was reprinted and translated into Italian, German, Dutch and English, but only this edition contains the engravings by Danet/Davent. This edition also includes the first printing of the 3-page "Elégie" by Pierre Ronsard, dedicated to Nicolay, and not recorded by Seymour de Ricci in his catalogue of Ronsard's writings.

Bibliography
Zerner LD 96-88; Baudrier ix 318-319; Herbet i.88.96-156 and v.79 (Master L.D.) I.64-65; Colas 2200 (pls. by L. Thiry called L. Daven); Brun 269-270 and 128, note 2; Graesse iv.671; Brunet iv.67 (L. Danet); Mortimer French 386 (with the additional plate facing p.144).

Provenance

Price:

Inventory reference: 10818

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