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The most decorative Ptolemaic world map

MERCATOR, Gerard.
Universalis Tabula Iuxta Ptolemaeum.

Amsterdam: Jodocus Hondius Jnr, 1618. Coloured. 350 x 490mm, with wide margins.

£4,500

A beautiful map of the world according to Claudius Ptolemy of Alexandria, showing the world as known to the ancients, with the semi-mythical island of Taprobana but no America or Cape of Good Hope. However Mercator has dropped the land-locked Indian Ocean shown on earlier Ptolemaic maps. The map was engraved by Mercator himself for his 1578 edition of Ptolemy's 'Geography'; however this example comes from an edition of Petrus Bertius's 'Theatrum geographiae veteris'. The flamboyance of the strapwork-and-windhead borders makes this map the most decorative of the Ptolemaic world maps.

SHIRLEY: World 139, plate 118, 'His general Ptolemaic map is one of the finest available... elegantly engraved'.

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