



A rare 16th century world map depicting the aftermath of the Deluge

ARIAS MONTANUS, Benedictus.

Benedict Arias Montanus Sacrae Geographiae Tabulam ex Antiquissimorum Cultor... 1571.

Antwerp: Christopher Plantin, 1571, RARE FIRST STATE. 320 x 530mm.

£12,500

An important religious map of the world, depicting the repopulation of the world by the sons of Noah after the Great Flood. It shows the world in two hemispheres, each with four windheads, sea monsters and ships. There are no names on the map other than the names of some of the wind, only letters and numbers for keys written in Latin, Greek and Hebrew scripts. The cartography follows Gastaldi. America and Asia are joined by a land-bridge, across which Noah's descendants crossed to populate the New World. There is no Great Southern Continent, leaving Tierra del Fuego as an island and an triangular landmass near in south-east Asia, leading to a theory that it is a serious attempt to represent Australia before its official 'discovery'. The map was published in the eighth and last volume of Plantin's 'Biblia sacra hebraice chaldaice' (or Polyglot Bible), overseen by Arias Montanus (or Benito Arias Montano, 1527-98) on behalf of Philip II of Spain, who was funding the publication. It was important for Philip to recognise the peoples of America as descendants of Noah, not only to validate the scripture but to give him the authority to bring them back into the Catholic fold. The first state of this map is particularly rare: most of the first edition of the Polyglot Bible was lost at sea en route to Spain. As this example has the text on the reverse, 'Orbis Tabula Ben Aria Montano Auctore', printed upside-down it was



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probably a rejected impression. A second state of 1572 has 'gentes' added next to 'Jecktan' in the lower left box. A second plate was engraved c.1572, with the windhead at the top of the Western Hemisphere glancing left. A third plate was engraved c.1660.

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