



ATLANTE UNIVERSALE: EUROPE

Description: The charts by Diogo Homem – the most productive Portuguese cartographer – are the most emblematic and priceless example of the navigation charts produced in Portugal in the 16th century. Diogo Homem's beautiful atlas, dated circa 1565, will always be deemed to be one of the most brilliant examples of this cartography.

In the 19th century the term “*portolan*” sea charts was introduced as a specific design type. These sea charts were concerned with nautical resources, which were to serve seafarers for the circumnavigation of dangerous zones of the seas and oceans. These sea charts were steadily expanded in the course of time and were corrected with the help of more and more geographic tools. Portuguese cartographers were the forerunners in the realm of cartography. Diogo Homem, one of the most gifted cartographers of all time, produced a true masterpiece of nautical geography with his *Universal Atlas*.

Diogo Homem was the son of the famous cartographer Lopo Homem, who produced one of the most important sea charts of the Middle Ages. Diogo reached a completely new level of medieval cartography with his work. He depicted not only known seaways, seas, and oceans, but also all of the regions of the main land, in which Portuguese explorers had penetrated. These findings decisively influenced our modern geography. Portugal was the forerunner in the field of discovery in the Renaissance. Since the beginning of the 16th century, Portuguese seafarers set out in all the seven seas, they toured the Indian Ocean, America, and China, Brasil and Japan, Africa and Indonesia. The world was known to them in the same measure as it is to us today.

The Portuguese discoveries were represented by Diogo Homem in a beautiful and colorful manner. His world atlas contains maps of America, Europe, Africa, Asia, and also depictions of the globe as a whole. He employed the most varied and valuable colors that were placed at his disposal for the particular geographic characteristics of the lands depicted. An astrological representation of the various spheres of the Earth and the zodiac signs indicate the great influence attributed to the stars in the Renaissance. The valuable atlas is an outstanding example of the scientific achievements of the European Renaissance. It is found today in the Russian National Library in St. Petersburg. A facsimile version is available from M. Moleiro.

Date: 1565

Size: 29.4 x 45.1 cm, 40 pages 19 maps on double pages -