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# **Mercator: A Monograph on the Letting of Maps, Etc. In the 16th Century Netherlands with a Facsimile and Translation of His Treatise on the Italic Hand and a Translation of Ghim's Vita Mercatoris**

*A.S. Osley*

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**A.S. Osley : Mercator: A Monograph on the Letting of Maps, Etc. In the 16th Century Netherlands with a Facsimile and Translation of His Treatise on the Italic Hand and a Translation of Ghim's Vita Mercatoris** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Mercator: A Monograph on the Letting of Maps, Etc. In the 16th Century Netherlands with a Facsimile and Translation of His Treatise on the Italic Hand and a Translation of Ghim's Vita Mercatoris:

Gerard Mercator is generally conceded to be the greatest geographer of the 16th century. Every schoolboy knows "Mercator's Projection". His skill as an engraver and letterer is, perhaps, less widely known, though professional calligraphers have long admired his little treatise on the italic script (with wood-blocks cut by himself), which was

published in 1540. Dr. A.S. Osley has examined the origins of the italic hand in the Netherlands as well as Mercator's own practice. He demonstrates the revolutionary influence which Mercator's example exercised in the Low Countries not only on the lettering of maps and globes, but also on book production, scientific instruments and picture engraving. This monograph casts a new and unsuspected light on Mercator. Also included is a facsimile of the first edition of Mercator's treatise on lettering *Literarum Latinarum...scribendi ratio*. This edition is very rare and is the only complete one. The text is accompanied by an English translation made by Dr Osley. This is followed by his translation of Walter Ghim's contemporary biography of Mercator, the *Vita Mercatoris*, which is both a primary source for the geographer's life and an affectionate portrait of a gentle and lovable humanist. There are 60 pages of illustrations, the majority not hitherto shown, and the book concludes with a census of the editions of Mercator's treatise.