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India Extrema XXIII Nova Tabula (1st Printed Map of Asia)

Stock#: 50077
Map Maker:
Date: 1552
Place: Basle
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG
Size: 14.5 x 11.5 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

First Printed Map of Asia

Nice example of the first printed map of the continent of Asia, by Sebastian Munster, which first appeared in the 1540 edition of Munster's *Geographia*.

The map shows Asia from the Caspian Sea and Persian Gulf to the Pacific. The Pacific Ocean shows an archipelago of 7448 islands, a forerunner to the better understanding of Southeast Asia, which is largely unrecognizable, although Java Minor and Major, Porne (Borneo), Molucca and several other islands are named. The map does not include Japan, which appears on the map of America. The northeastern coast of Asia is also omitted. The map also includes a large sea monster and mermaid type creature.

Although largely based on Ptolemy's work, the map incorporates some of the more recent Portuguese discoveries. The outlines of the Indian subcontinent, between the Indus and the Ganges rivers are now in a more recognizable form, with "Zaylon" (Sri Lanka) correctly shown as an island. The Portuguese outpost of Goa and Calicut, the first place where Vasco da Gama landed in 1497, are depicted. Further to the east "Taprobana" is also designated as "Sumatra". The Portuguese trading port of "Malaqua" is shown. Java is depicted as two separate islands. "Moloca," center of the spice island trade and the object of considerable conflict between Spain and Portugal is shown. The resolution of the dispute was the official purpose of Magellan's epic circumnavigation. The treatment of "Cathay" (China) is consistent with the writings of Marco Polo and other Venetian travellers.

Munster's *Geographia* was a cartographic landmark, including not only Ptolemaic maps, but also a number



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of landmark modern maps, including the first separate maps of the 4 continents, the first map of England and the earliest obtainable map of Scandinavia. Munster dominated cartographic publication during the mid-16th Century. Munster is generally regarded as one of the most important map makers of the 16th Century.

Sebastien Munster was a linguist and mathematician, who initially taught Hebrew in Heidelberg. He issued his first mapping of Germany in 1529, after which he issued a call for geographical information about Germany to scholars throughout the country. The response was better than hoped for, and included substantial foreign material, which supplied him with up to date, if not necessarily accurate maps, for the issuance of his *Geographia* in 1540.

The present example is the 1552 edition of the map, with a revised title (changing the number from XIX to XXIII) and adding gradient numbers, the only edition in which Munster added these numbers.

Detailed Condition: