



# Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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## Deliniatio cartae trium navigationum per Batavos ad Septentrionalem plagem Norvegia, Moscovia et Nova Zembla . . .

**Stock#:** 53286  
**Map Maker:** De Bry  
**Date:** 1599  
**Place:** Frankfurt  
**Color:** Hand Colored  
**Condition:** VG+  
**Size:** 14 x 11 inches  
**Price:** SOLD



### Description:

#### *Nice Example of De Bry's Map of the North Pole, Based on the Barentsz Voyages*

Theodore De Bry's edition of the William Barentsz map of the Polar Region. The map is a major landmark in Arctic cartography, depicting the details of Barentsz's third voyage to this region in 1596-7.

While stuck in the Arctic ice for a winter, Barentsz used the time to delineate an elaborate and highly decorative manuscript map of his explorations. His map contains 33 illustrations of sea monsters, ships, and whales, as well as an island named "Polus Magnetis." This is a reduced copy by De Bry, which retains all the details and illustrations.

The map is striking with its polar projection and rich decoration. The *Polus Arcticus* is slightly higher than the page's center, with lines of longitude radiating from it. Circles of latitude ring the pole. The title, in a framed cartouche in the top center, translates from Latin as follows:

*Map outlining the third voyage by the Dutch, to the Northern regions, Norway, Moscow, and New Semble, and through the Weygates strait, and also parts of Greenland, below 80 degrees, and the adjacent parts of Tartary, Tabin promontories, strait of Anian and Bargi regions and America towards the east, author Willem Barentsz Amsterdam expert captain (translation from Oshermaps.org).*

The geography of the polar region appears fantastic to modern viewers, but it represented a leap forward in the information known about northern waters, particularly with regard to Nova Zembla. The influence



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of the Zeno Map is apparent, as Estotiland (roughly in the location of Labrador) and the mythical Frisland (separate and south of Iceland) are marked. Greenland's northern shores remain uncharted. To the east, the northern territories of Russia are also unfinished.

In the upper right corner is the Strait of Anian. It was to this Strait that Barentsz sought to sail. Derived from the word for a Chinese province used in Marco Polo's travels, Anian was meant to be a Northeast, or Northwest, Passage. Finding the ever elusive Strait would mean discovering a navigable passage to Asia's rich ports and resources, a Holy Grail sought by all early modern European empires.

The fantastic geography of the map is matched by the marvelous beasts that roam its waters. At first glance they may appear bizarre, but a closer look reveals walruses, baleen and toothed whales, and seals. As will be seen, some of these animals were inspired by events that transpired on the voyages themselves.

#### **The three voyages of William Barentsz**

William Barentsz (ca. 1550-1598) was a Dutch map maker and navigator. His first major work was an atlas of the Mediterranean, which he co-published with Petrus Plancius. The Mediterranean was not his main geographic interest, however.

Barentsz believed that the North Polar regions concealed a Northeast Passage to the Pacific. He thought that the Arctic Ocean was open water north of Siberia because the sun, which shown 24 hours a day, would melt it. Eager to test his theories, in the last decade of the sixteenth century Barentsz made three voyages to the North.

Underwritten by Dutch merchants and luminaries, including Plancius, Barentsz first set sail in June 1594 with four ships in two fleets. One fleet was under the command of Barentsz and included the carpenter Gerrit de Veer. The other was commanded by Cornelis Hay and included the merchant Jan Huyghen van Linschoten. Barentsz's ships sailed to Nova Zembla and then turned north, naming the Orange Islands in honor of the Prince of Orange. Blocked by ice, Barentsz reunited with Hay and sailed home in September 1594.

On this voyage, Barentsz's men encountered a polar bear, the first Europeans to record having done so. The bear was shot while trying to climb the ship's side. The sailors managed to capture the animal and bring it on board. Unsurprisingly, the bear was less than pleased and went on a rampage. The men killed it, but named the place where they found the animal Bear Island; it is marked on the map as *Veere Ins*. The men also found nearly 200 walruses near the Orange Islands. They set out to kill them for their tusks, but found the animals more resilient to clubbing than seals.



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The second voyage enjoyed support from Prince Maurice of Orange; naming island for him seems to have done the trick. Barentsz was pilot in a seven-ship fleet charged with trading holds filled with textiles and other goods upon reaching China. Barentsz and his men, who included Nay and Linschoten, set sail in early July 1595 and reached Nova Zembla in August. They were turned back by ice and landed on the northern Russian coast. The ice was too much for them and they returned to Holland in late September with little to show for the effort. They had, however, met a group of Samoyed men, with whom they communicated successfully via a bilingual sailor, and a polar bear, with whom they communicated less successfully, as the bear killed two sailors.

Barentsz's third and final voyage was not a state-sponsored affair. Rather than fund voyages, the States General decided to offer a reward to the expedition that successfully reached China via a Northeast Passage. Barentsz again served as pilot on a ship commanded by Jacob van Heemskerck and ice again hindered his progress. Another repeat was the presence of Gerrit de Veer, the carpenter. Unable to escape its cold grip, the 16 men and a cabin boy had to winter in the ice, during which time Barentsz drew this map. Upon attempting to return in a small boat, the ice having encased their larger vessel, Barentsz sickened and died. Only 12 of the sailors managed to return alive.

#### **The publications of the Barentsz voyages and this map**

Accounts of the three voyages came from Jan Huyghen van Linschoten and Gerrit de Veer. De Veer's journal was first published in Amsterdam in 1598 by Cornelis Claesz and was quickly translated into Latin, French, Italian, and German. It contained six maps engraved by Baptista von Doetecum.

Linschoten had also traveled extensively in the East Indies and he published account of his travels there in the 1590s. The 1599 Latin abridged edition of his work entitled *Itinerario*, also published by Claesz, included the first state of this map, along with a short supplement on the Arctic voyages.

The first state of the map is extremely rare. For this second edition, De Bry has faithfully reproduced the map on a reduced scale, but has retained all of the geographical and decorative features, including the tracks of the third voyage. It featured in his review of travels to *India Orientalis*, first published in Frankfurt in 1599. Theodor de Bry (1528-1598) was an engraver and editor most famous for his engravings showing Native American peoples. After his death, his work was continued by his son, Johann Theodor de Bry (1561-1623).

Barentsz's voyages have not faded in fame. In 1853, the Barentsz Sea replaced the Murmean Sea as a geographic feature. In 1871, the seal hunter Elling Carlsen found the intact winter quarters of Barentsz and his companions; now the location is a hotspot for disaster tourism. In 1875, another Norwegian, M.



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Gunderson returned to the site and collected several artifacts, including two maps and a handwritten translation of the Pet and Jackman voyages of 1580. The artifacts recovered from the wintering hut are now national treasures displayed in museums in the Netherlands, Norway, and Russia. Several ships, from whalers to Arctic exploration vessels, have borne his name. Finally, there is the Maritime Institute Williem Barents, named in his honor. This map is an important testament to his voyages and to this continuing legacy.

**Detailed Condition:**