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(Singapore, Sumatra, Malaysia, Straits of Malacca) Sumatra Ein Grosse Insel / So Von Den alten Geographen Taprobana . . .

Stock#: 91284
Map Maker: Munster
Date: 1579 circa
Place: Basle
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG
Size: 14 x 12.5 inches
Price: \$ 750.00



Description:

An interesting map of Sumatra and the southern part of Malaysia. A city at the southern tip of the Malaysian peninsula named Cing may represent Singapore. Despite surprising accuracy in the rest of the map, the Straits of Malacca lack some detail. Pulau Ujong (Singapore Island) is not shown, and several other major islands including Batam, Bintan, and Rupat are hard to identify. Batam and the Straits of Singapore may be guessed at, but it is hard to tell if this was by chance or design. Lingga is shown, along with a cluster of islands that could be interpreted in several ways. Sumatra is slightly compressed, though its shape and positioning are roughly accurate. Upper Java is labeled, and off the coast of Sumatra are islands roughly aligning with the Mentawais. However, many of the islands on this map do not correspond to any on modern maps, somewhat typical of the time.

This area would have been of particular interest in the 16th century. The first Dutch trading ship would sail to Indonesia in 1595-'97, seven years after the publication of this map. The 400% profit they generated on return to the Netherlands would lead to many further trading expeditions from both the Netherlands and all of Europe and the establishment of East India companies.

The map includes a large cartouche of a man riding an elephant.

Sumatra was associated with the mythical island of Taprobana at the time, as suggested in this map. This island was described by the Greeks from very on, with *De Mundo* (supposedly by Aristotle) describing it as



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the size of Great Britain. By tracing the name for the island through to the maps of the Islamic Golden Age, it appears more likely that Taprobana was really meant to represent Sri Lanka rather than Sumatra, as shown here.

Detailed Condition:

Minor discoloration along centerfold and right side of image. Stained in lower center margin.