



# Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

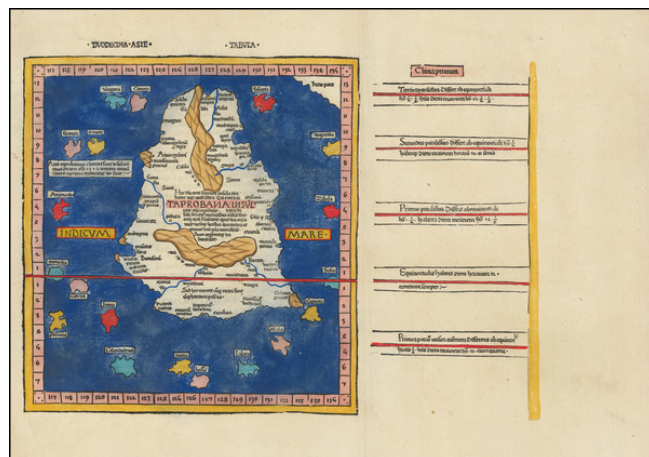
7407 La Jolla Boulevard  
La Jolla, CA 92037

www.raremaps.com

(858) 551-8500  
blr@raremaps.com

## [ Taprobana / Sri Lanka ] Duodecima Asie Tabula

**Stock#:** 101258  
**Map Maker:** Ptolemy / Reger  
**Date:** 1486  
**Place:** Ulm  
**Color:** Hand Colored  
**Condition:** VG+  
**Size:** 16.25 x 11.5 inches including text  
**Price:** \$ 8,500.00



### Description:

#### *Sri Lanka, As Known To The Greeks -- Taprobana*

Fantastic woodcut map of Tabrobana (Sri Lanka) published in Ulm, Germany in 1486, showing the Classical cartography of the 2nd-century polymath Claudius Ptolemy.

The map was initially issued in Ulm in 1482, forming an integral part of the storied "Ulm Ptolemy" *Geographia*, the first atlas produced outside of Italy. The 1486 second edition is recognizable by the inclusion of the woodcut title ("Duodecima Asie Tabula") at the top of the map. This title is missing in the first edition. The text settings on the verso also change between editions.

The map is also the first map of the region printed north of the Alps, the first printed with a woodblock and the first to be issued with publisher's color.

The map is drawn from the work of Nicolas Germanicus, whose manuscript maps were created to illustrate pre-1470 editions of Ptolemy's *Geographia*.

The present map is from the second edition of this work, which was first published in 1482.

### Taprobana

The earliest recorded note of Taprobana dates to before the time of Alexander the Great as inferred from Pliny. The treatise *De Mundo* (supposedly by Aristotle, but according to others by Chrysippus the Stoic (280 to 208 BC)) described an island the size of Great Britain. The name Taprobana seems to date to the Greek geographer Megasthenes around 290 BC. Eratosthenes (276 to 196 BC) references Taprobana



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in his *Geographia*. Ptolemy (139 AD) incorporates Taprobana in his geographical treatise, identifying it as a relatively large island south of continental Asia.

Taprobana was the home of the legendary single giant footed man-like creatures. G.U. Pope, in his book "Textbook of Indian History", claims the name to be derived from Dipu-Ravana, meaning the island of Ravana.

Historically, there was some debate over the location of Taprobana. Locations claimed included:

- Sri Lanka, as in Ptolemy's map and climes
- Sumatra, as in the birthplace of Enrique of Malacca
- A phantom island

While Ptolemy's Taprobane has been the subject of debate, it appears to be the present day Sri Lanka on the medieval maps of Abu-Rehan (1030) and Edrisi (1154) and as described by Marco Polo (1292). The tradition of the Middle Age use of Latinized placenames and delineating places with fanciful figures contributed to absurd designs and confusion regarding the island and Sumatra. In the fifteenth century, Niccolò de' Conti mistakenly identified Taprobana with a much smaller island. Taprobana/Ceylon/Sri Lanka is marked in the 1507 Martin Waldseemuller map.

The debate regarding the proper location of Ptolemy's Taprobana continues in Sebastian Munster's *Cosmographia* of 1580, which incorporates a map of Taprobana with a title in German describing it as "Sumatra, a large island", although there was nothing that was available to Munster which warranted the re-opening of the Sri Lanka/Sumatra debate and this seems to be the final milestone in Taprobana's confused history.

#### Detailed Condition: