



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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Typus Orbis Universalis

Stock#: 33181gm
Map Maker: Munster
Date: 1540
Place: Basle
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG
Size: 15 x 11 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Rare, First State of Münster's 1540 Modern Map of the World

Finely colored example of the rare first edition of Münster's map of the world, one of the most recognized and influential world maps of the sixteenth century. This example is from the first woodblock, which can be distinguished from that in editions of *Cosmographia* from 1550 and after as these later editions were significantly revised and include the initials of the engraver David Kandel.

The map is richly embellished with a dozen wind-heads blowing their gales. Sea monsters frolic in the Southern Ocean, or *Oceanus Australis*, where no large continent is hypothesized to hide. Instead, a small unlabeled landmass lies south of the Straits of Magellan, which were discovered less than two decades before this map was produced. Each ocean is labeled with a text block, made by inserting metal type into the woodblock, and this map contains the earliest naming of the Pacific Ocean (*Mare Pacificum*).

Münster here adds to the contemporary confusion over *Taprobana* and Ceylon. He depicts a Sumatra-shaped *Taprobana* on the west side of the Indian subcontinent, while Java is in the approximately correct size and position of Sri Lanka. *Taprobana* was what the Greeks had called Sri Lanka, but late-medieval and early modern geographers also applied the toponym to Sumatra and a phantom island. To add further to the confusion, farther south is *Calensuan*, which is spelled as *Callenzuan* on Waldseemüller's 1507 world map and *Calensuan* on Juan Vespucci's 1524 world map. The origin of this island is unknown, but it may too be a corruption of Ceylon, or Sri Lanka.

Münster seems to have hedged his bets and combined the various hypotheses while also placing the East



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Indies farther west than they really are. He also includes Gilolo, today known as Halmahera, the largest island in the Maluku Islands in Indonesia. The triangular island Porne denotes Borneo.

North America is broken up, with the bulk of the continent at the left and the west coast appearing briefly on the right side of the oval projection. Münster is non-committal as to the continuity of North and South America; an unbroken Central America is implied but is not clearly shown thanks to a wind head and the curve of the projection.

Interestingly, all of North America is called *Terra Florida*. The northeast is labeled *Francista*, a reference to the French efforts there. To the northeast is a large island referring to the land of the *Bacalhos*, i.e. bacalao or salt cod, a reference to the Basque fisherman seeking cod in the area. Finally, a note in the northwest explains that here lies a strait to the Moluccas, a hopeful reference to the Northwest Passage.

Münster's world map, the first edition

This map first appeared in Münster's revised edition of Ptolemy's *Geographia* published in 1540 (with later editions in 1542, 1545, and 1552). Münster wished to improve on the Latin translation of Willibald Pirckheimer with corrections by Servetus from 1535. Rather than work from Latin, Münster translated freshly from a Greek edition. The work contained 27 maps of Ptolemy's world, the ancient, and 21 of Münster's, the modern.

The work is known especially for this world map, as well as for the influential decision to feature a map for each continent, a concept later adopted by most atlas makers. This world map, made from a woodblock, was used in the four editions of Münster's *Geographia* and the pre-1550 editions of his *Cosmographia*. It is significantly rarer than the second edition with David Kandel's initials.

Münster's sources

Münster's map is a fascinating mixture of information derived from the most up-to-date sources he could access. He maintained a large network of sources, written and printed, and informants who fed him information about the shape of the world. This map reveals several of his sources.

For example, Münster's reference to the French in North America shows familiarity with Giovanni de Verrazano's explorations on behalf of King Francis I of France in 1522 to 1524. On this voyage, Verrazano mistook the Chesapeake for the Indian Ocean and named the land north of Florida *Francesca* to mark a French claim.

Another source of information was brought back by Jacques Cartier, who also traveled to New France for



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Francis I in the mid-1530s. Cartier traveled up the St. Lawrence, ever in search of the Northwest Passage, in 1534 and 1535. Although he did not find the Passage, he did make permanent the French claim to imperial expansion on that landmass. Münster likely heard of both voyages via voyage accounts and word-of-mouth.

Close knowledge of Magellan's historic circumnavigation is evident as well. Münster most likely had access to the maps and manuscripts written by Antonio Pigafetta, partially published in Paris in 1525, as well as Maximilianus Transylvanus' published account based on Christopher Haro's interviews of survivors, published in 1523 in Cologne.

Finally, access to other maps and geographies is evident, including Martin Waldseemüller's 1507 map of the world as mentioned above. As a trained geographer, Münster clearly had studied Marco Polo, as evidenced by his placement of Japan (Zipagri) at roughly 20 degrees north latitude. He also was familiar with Ptolemy's ideas. For example, Münster follows the traditional Ptolemaic geography in Africa by depicting twin lakes on the same latitude near mountains. Ptolemy thought this configuration to be the source of the Nile River.

Münster's methodology of careful consultation of a variety of sources, old and new, was common for geographers of his time. However, Münster's work, first in his *Geographia* (1540) and later in his *Cosmographia* (1544), would have a deep, long-lasting effect on European geography. This world map was one of the most influential depictions of the world to date and would be studied by Ortelius, Mercator, and others.

Rarity

The first state of the map is quite rare on the market. This is only the second example we have offered in more than twenty years.

Detailed Condition: