



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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Deliniatio Cartae Trium Navigationum per Batavos, ad Septentrionalem Plagam, Norvegiae, Moscoviae, et Novae Semblae . . .

Stock#: 70323
Map Maker: Barentsz
Date: 1598
Place: Amsterdam
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG+
Size: 21.5 x 17 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Stunning Old-Color Example of Willem Barentsz's Map of the Polar Regions

A landmark in Arctic cartography, the map is drawn from his observations during Barentsz's third voyage (1596-7). Engraved by the van Doetecum family, this is a particularly fine example of the map in original color.

On this third voyage, Barentsz's ship was stuck in the ice, forcing him and his crew to winter on the northeast coast of Nova Zembla. According to the Osher Map Library, Barentsz drew the manuscript version of this map during the long, dark winter months.

The map shows a sophisticated understanding of the Polar coasts of Europe as far east as Novaya Zemlya (often written as *Nova Zembla* and meaning "New World" in Russian), the furthest east that Barentsz reached. The mapping of the west coast of Novaya Zemlya is very comprehensive and features dozens of placenames. The spot where Barentsz and his men wintered is marked on this map with a small hut, made of ships' timbers, and the label '*Het Behouden Huys*,' or the safe house.

This is the first map to depict Spitsbergen, shown as *Het Nieuwe Land* north of Scandinavia. Barentsz discovered this far northern archipelago in 1596.

The coasts of Asia, further to the east, are speculative, with unfinished shores in Tartary. Here, reindeer pull a sleigh. Beyond this area is northernmost Asia, with some familiar place names like *Mongul*. At the



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edge of Eurasia lies the apocryphal Strait of Anian, supposedly the gateway from the Arctic to the Pacific Ocean. On the other side of the strait is *Bergi Regio*.

In the northern part of the strait is a curious-looking island. This is the *Polus Magnetis*, an island-like symbol meant to show the difference between the North Pole and the Magnetic North Pole. Navigators in this period well understood the effect of magnetic declination on their compasses and they had to accommodate for the variation when sailing.

In the west, Greenland and Iceland are well defined, along with the mythical island of *Frisland* (sometimes Friesland). To the south and west of Greenland are the straits and parts of Baffin Island recently discovered by Martin Frobisher and John Davis. Further north is the mythical *Estotiland*, which, like *Frisland*, originated from the apocryphal fourteenth-century Venetian voyage by the brothers Zeno.

One of the most notable features of the map are the many whales that dot the waters. Barentsz knew that his discoveries, especially Spitsbergen, would be a boon to the whaling industry. In addition, there are groups of seals, which were also hunted for their hides, meat, and fat. There is also a large ship near the Faroe Islands and several ships along the track of Barentsz's voyage.

Three cartouches are arrayed around the map. Fine strapwork frames border the title in the upper center of the map, while the publishing information and scale bar are in the lower left.

The voyages of Willem Barentsz

During the early 1590s, the leading merchants of the Dutch Republic became very interested in opening trade routes with East Asia. Yet, they were deeply concerned that the established route to Asia, by way of the Cape of Good Hope and the Indian Ocean, was under the control of the Portuguese, who were enemies of the Dutch. Moreover, the established route was very long, and it was thought that any navigable polar route to Asia would be more expeditious.

While exploring the Northwest Passage via the North American Arctic was considered, the failure of Martin Frobisher and John Davis's various attempts to find such a route in the 1570s and 1580s discouraged any efforts in this direction. In 1553-54, the English adventurers Sir Hugh Willoughby and Richard Chancellor attempted to find a Northeast Passage to Asia, over Siberia, and while their mission ultimately failed in this regard, their progress and the nature of their reports convinced many in Amsterdam that such a passage could quite plausibly be opened, given another attempt. This torch was to be carried by Willem Barentsz.



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Willem Barentsz (c. 1550-1597) was a Dutch map maker and explorer and one of the great pioneers of Arctic exploration. His first major work was an atlas of the Mediterranean, which he co-published with Petrus Plancius. Barentsz believed that the polar regions consisted of open waters above Siberia, due to the fact that they would be exposed to the sun 24 hours per day.

In the last decade of the sixteenth century, Barentsz made three voyages to the North Polar regions. In June 1594, Barentsz led an expedition of three ships which sailed from Texel for the Kara Sea. On this voyage, the crew made the first ever encounter with a polar bear. Barentsz's first voyage reached the west coast of Novaya Zemlya. After coasting northward, the crew encountered large icebergs and were forced to turn back and return to Holland.

In 1595, Prince Maurice of Orange commissioned a second expedition in two squadrons, with one commanded by Barentsz, which in total included six ships and a cargo of goods that were intended for trade with China. The expedition made several noteworthy encounters with Samoyed "wilde men" and polar bears, but was forced to turn back when they encountered a frozen Kara Sea.

In 1596, the Town Council of Amsterdam sponsored another voyage of two ships. They hoped to claim a reward offered by the Dutch States-General to the first expedition that navigated the Northeast Passage. Barentsz was a pilot on this voyage which discovered Spitsbergen before reaching Bear Island on July 1, 1596 and Novaya Zembla on July 17, 1596. Shortly thereafter, Barentsz's ship was stranded by ice and the sixteen-man crew was forced to winter there. After the spring thaw, the crew set out in two small boats on June 13; Barentsz died roughly seven days later. Seven weeks on, the remainder of the crew reached Kola and were rescued by a Russian merchant ship. The crew made it back to Amsterdam in November 1597 and several crew members wrote accounts of the voyage.

The wooden lodge where Barentsz's crew spent the winter was not revisited until 1871, when it was discovered by the Norwegian seal hunter Elling Carlsen. In 1875, Captain Gunderson returned to the site and collected several artifacts, including two maps and a handwritten translation of the Pet and Jackman voyages. In 1876, Charles L.W. Gardiner visited the site and collected many more artifacts and documents, including Barentsz's and Jacob van Heemskerck's notes on the settlement.

Publication of the map and rarity

The map is a well-balanced masterpiece of Late Mannerist Style. This is a testament to the fact that the publisher Cornelis Claesz commissioned the van Deutecum family, among the finest engravers and artists in the Low Countries, to design and engrave the map.



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This map was originally published as a separately-issued map; several surviving examples can be found bound into composite atlases of the period. It featured in the 1599 Claesz Den Haag and the 1614 Walschaert Amsterdam editions of Linschoten's *Itinerarium*. After traveling in Iberia, India, and Africa, Jan Huyghen van Linschoten accompanied Barentsz on his first two voyages, so he had a vested personal and commercial interest in promoting his late friend's discoveries.

While Barentsz's attempts to find the Northeast Passage were ultimately not successful, his bravery and intellectual curiosity inspired future generations of polar explorers. This magnificent map serves as a foundation for all further Arctic exploration and mapping, especially in search of the Northeast Passage, making it one of the most important maps of its period.

Barentsz's map is much prized by collectors, although it is usually found uncolored and with significant condition issues. The present example is superlative, as it has magnificent contemporary color and is in a very fine condition. It is, by far, the finest example we have ever encountered.

Detailed Condition:

Exceptional original hand-color in full. Trimmed into the border at the left and right edges. Minor stain at the bottom edge around the centerfold, primarily visible on verso.