



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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Septentrionalium Regionum Descrip.

Stock#: 70996
Map Maker: Ortelius
Date: 1572 /73
Place: Antwerp
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG+
Size: 19 x 14 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Including The Mythical Island of Frisland

Abraham Ortelius's map of the North Atlantic, engraved by Frans Hogenberg and extending from Scandinavia, the Polar regions, to Greenland, Iceland, and North America, represents a fascinating convergence of knowledge, myth, and artistic expression. Created during the late 16th century, the map was included in Ortelius' seminal work "Theatrum Orbis Terrarum," considered to be the first modern atlas. The map is an excellent early outline of the Scandinavian coast, bordering the Mare Congelatum, the frozen waters of the Arctic, and it showcases the influence of Gerardus Mercator's wall map of 1569, the infamous Zeno map of 1558, and the work of Olaus Magnus in 1539.

One of the intriguing aspects of Ortelius's map is the depiction of mythical islands, which resonated with the popular imagination of the time. These include:

- **Friesland:** A phantom island often depicted on North Atlantic maps, its origin might stem from a misinterpretation of Iceland.
- **S. Brandain:** This references St. Brendan's Isle, a legendary island said to have been discovered by the Irish monk St. Brendan during his voyage in the 6th century.
- **Brasil:** Not to be confused with the South American country, this mythical island was rumored to be located off the coast of Ireland.
- **Icaria:** Possibly inspired by the Greek myth of Icarus, this fictional island is sometimes linked with real islands in the Aegean Sea.
- **Drogeo:** The origin of this mythical island is unclear but has often been associated with mirages or



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misinterpretations of actual land masses.

In the Arctic region, a mysterious note "Pigmei hic habitant" stands out, translating to "Pygmies live here." This reflects a combination of classical myth and medieval belief regarding a race of tiny people living at the earth's edges.

The portion identified as "Estotilant" in Northeastern America might refer to the mythical land of Norumbega, a term that appeared on various maps during this period, possibly denoting a real Native American settlement.

Furthermore, the note "Angra di Ioa Maio" connects to early Portuguese explorations, reflecting European attempts to grasp the geography of the New World.

Ortelius's map is not only an exploration document but an artistic creation. It includes elaborate sea monsters and sailing ships, symbols of the unknown and dangerous nature of sea travel during this era.

Ortelius's map of the North Atlantic is more than a mere geographical representation. It's a historical artifact that encapsulates the scientific knowledge, myths, beliefs, and artistic sensibilities of the time. By blending real geography with fantastical elements, it provides a window into the Renaissance mindset and the exploratory zeal of an age when the world's edges were still uncharted. Whether as a source of historical study or a piece of art, this map continues to fascinate and inspire, reflecting the timeless human urge to explore, understand, and imagine.

Detailed Condition:

German text on verso.