



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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(World) Ptolemeisch General Tafel / die habe kugel der Welt begreifende

Stock#: 75726
Map Maker: Munster
Date: 1580
Place: Basel
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG
Size: 14 x 12.5 inches
Price: \$ 1,600.00



Description:

Nice example of Munster's second ancient map of the World, based upon the writings of Ptolemy.

This extraordinary representation of the ancient world map as drawn by Claudius Ptolemy, issued by Sebastian Munster in his renowned *Cosmographia* beginning around 1578, is a treasure trove of early cartographic design, pre-Columbian lore, and Ptolemaic cosmography.

The map is enclosed in an intricately designed border, featuring twelve windheads symbolizing the winds from classical geography, each with their unique expressions, capturing the constant and various forces that the ancients believed influenced the world's climates. These windheads are elegantly interspersed among billowing clouds, illustrating the heavens' purported role in earthly events.

The depiction of Africa reflects Ptolemy's and Munster's shared vision, which was, in essence, limited by the geographical knowledge of their time. The continent, vast yet unexplored, is delineated by sketchy outlines and largely oversimplified topography. The Nile, a significant feature of Africa, is depicted based on Ptolemy's understanding. The river is shown with its sources springing from the lakes in the mountains south of the equator, reflecting the blend of empirical knowledge and speculation of the time.

Interestingly, the Indian Ocean is depicted as a closed sea, typical of the Ptolemaic conception. This reflects the understanding of the world before Vasco da Gama circumnavigated the Cape of Good Hope and proved otherwise.



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The depiction of Taprobana and India is significant in this map. Taprobana (thought by some to represent Sri Lanka, by others a phantom island, or even Sumatra) is given considerable attention and appears oversized, reflecting Ptolemy's fascination with this mysterious island. India, on the other hand, is shown with a somewhat distorted coastline, showcasing the limitations in geographical understanding of the time.

Munster's map reflects a complex blend of classical and medieval geographical knowledge. As a relic of a bygone age, it offers us insight into the worldview of some of the greatest minds of the time, as well as the prevailing beliefs and misconceptions that would only be corrected by explorers in the centuries to follow.

Detailed Condition:

Archivally backed. Overall toned.