



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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(Mermaid) Meermin of Boeroneesch Zeessijf. . .

Stock#: 77456
Map Maker: Valentijn
Date: 1724
Place: Amsterdam
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 14.5 x 11.5 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Very attractive and curious original antique copperplate engraving of a mermaid and various sharks purported to originate in Indonesia and other Pacific archipelagos. The view was made by Ottomar Elliger and M. Balen and appeared in Francois Valentijn's *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indien*.

This plate is particularly interesting for the appearance of a mermaid, especially by an author who appears to be otherwise scientific in his publications. Also interesting is the treatment of a sawfish with two dorsal fins. In addition, the oversized shark egg, leopard shark, and the prehistoric-looking fish are all also interesting. The depictions give way to a beautiful landscape backdrop.

Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indien

After spending sixteen years in the East Indies over the course of several voyages, Valentijn returned to his native Dordrecht. There, he finished his history of the East Indies, *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indien*. The book was divided in five parts spread over eight volumes. It had over a thousand illustrations, including some of the most accurate maps of the region published to that date.

For the text, Valentijn borrowed heavily from contemporary works. To create such detailed maps and descriptions, Valentijn most likely also had access to the VOC's archives. These archives were closely watched and very few scholars or officials gained entry, particularly if they were likely to publish the contents of the repository. Indeed, Valentijn was lucky to see his work published at all.

Today, Valentijn's work is regarded as a veritable encyclopedia on maritime Asia. It is considered a useful



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collection of sources, from the eighteenth century and earlier, drawn from the VOC and personal papers. Some of his maps, particularly those of Australia, are drawn from manuscript sources now lost, making his history the lone surviving record of endangered knowledge.

Detailed Condition:

Minor rust spotting.