



# Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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## Hemisphere Septentrional pour voir plus distinctement Les Terres Arctiques . . .

**Stock#:** 91931  
**Map Maker:** Ottens  
**Date:** 1741 circa  
**Place:** Amsterdam  
**Color:** Uncolored  
**Condition:** VG  
**Size:** 18 x 18 inches  
**Price:** \$ 675.00



### Description:

#### *Focusing on the Top of the World*

Rare Ottens edition of Guillaume De L'Isle's fine map of the Northern Hemisphere, originally published by De L'Isle in 1714.

This edition includes improvements in the depiction of northeast Russia, the result of integration of the latest geographic information from the Bering expeditions.

The map centers on the North Pole and the continents seem to radiate out to the equator. The projection has the opposite effect of a Mercator projection, which tends to stretch and distort landmasses that are close to the poles. Here, it is territory close to the equator that is stretched, allowing the Arctic to come into sharp focus.

California is shown as a peninsula, although other contemporary maps still featured it as an island. Greenland is connected to Northern Canada in Baffin Bay, a common hypothesis at this time. Japan too is shown in what appears a rudimentary form; a more horizontal orientation of the archipelago was typical on maps until slightly later in the eighteenth century.

In the North Pacific, an unfinished island extends eastward. This *Terre de la Compagnie* is near *Terre d'Yedso*, an exaggeration of Hokkaido. Nearby, a note ties the former to the voyage of *Dom Jean de Gama*, who supposedly discovered a large coastline in the area. These chimeric shores shrank over the course of



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the century and eventually disappeared from maps.

#### Delineating the North Pacific: The Russians

The unfinished shores of North America and Greenland suggest that further exploration is necessary to better understand the Arctic. Indeed, the map seems to imply that there may be a navigable route north of Asia or around Baffin and Hudson's Bay, a nod to the much-sought and still-elusive Northwest Passage.

One leader in the search for such a passage, and for a more detailed charting of northern waters, were the Russians. Two important expeditions, the first Russian naval expeditions focused minutely on geographic reconnaissance, helped to chart much of the Northeast Asian coast and proved that America and Asia were not connected. These voyages (1725-30, 1733-43), led by Vitus Bering, were only slowly integrated into European maps.

The text outside the hemisphere, in French and Dutch, explains how word of the expedition spread and made its way into maps like this. The text refers to a letter dated January 13, 1740 (with the additional date of January 24, a nod to the fact that certain countries had not shifted from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar). It was penned by a Monsieur Swartz residing in St. Petersburg.

A [Covens & Mortier version of this map](#) includes the text of the letter. Swartz, a Dutch diplomat, was reporting news from the second Bering expedition. He recounts a letter from Martin Spanberg, a Danish officer in the Russian navy, who had served on both expeditions. Spanberg recounted his recent discovery of 34 islands, which he supposed were part of Japan. The letter had been delivered with a coin, which had Chinese or Japanese characters on it.

The first Bering expedition also explains why Russia looks remarkably complete for the time. One of the sources for this and the Covens and Mortier versions of this map was the 1734 map of the Russian Empire by Ivan Kirilov. This map, which is rare, was part of Kirilov's larger project, the *Atlas Russicus*, the first Russian atlas. Kirilov's map was the first scientifically accurate map of Russia and one of the earliest to include the results of the initial Bering expedition. These results are seen here in the shape of the Kamchatka Peninsula and the northeastern-most parts of Asia.

#### Detailed Condition: