



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

7407 La Jolla Boulevard
La Jolla, CA 92037

www.raremaps.com

(858) 551-8500
blr@raremaps.com

Americae Novissima Descriptio 1589

Stock#: 13757
Map Maker: Hondius / Le Clerc
Date: 1589 (1602)
Place: London? (Paris)
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 18.5 x 12.5 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Exceedingly rare map of America, the Pacific Ocean, Japan, New Guinea and the mythical Terra Australis, bearing the imprint of Jodocus Hondius (the elder) and dated 1589 and 1602.

Includes a near continuous watercourse from the St. Lawrence to the Rio Grande, which flows into the Mar Vermeio (Gulf of California). Cibola is mentioned, as are Totontecac and a number of early California place names, extending to Quivira and Grandes Corientes, north of C. de Mendocino. On the East Coast, Norumbega, Nova Francia, Canada, Port Royal, C. de S. Helena, La Florida and Sorrochoe appear, along with numerous Indian names in the interior. Notably absent is any sign of the discoveries shown in the maps of Le Moyne and White in the Southeastern US, which is one of the first of many clues leading to the conclusion that the map was quite likely first issued in 1589. The mythical islands of Brasil and S. Brendan appear, along with Frisland. Bermuda is also shown. The map is richly embellished with numerous ships and sea creatures.

This separately published map has been the subject of much speculation regarding its history. As discussed by Burden, the great mystery is whether the map was engraved and published in 1589, during Hondius' stay in London or during his later residence in Amsterdam. While the map is dated 1589 in the cartouche, the only known state of the map bears the imprint I. Le Clerc excu. 1602. The map is part of a set of four continents, but is the only one of the four to bear the date of 1589. The cartography of America significantly pre-dates 1602, and is consistent with Hondius' world map of 1595 and his wall map of America of 1598, although these maps include the discoveries of Drake and Cavendish, which are absent from this map. Burden further notes that the treatment of Japan and Greenland date to an earlier period, as does Hondius' classic Flemish engraving style and embellishments. Similarly recent discoveries in Canada and the Straits of Magellan are omitted.



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Burden notes that the map bears a striking resemblance to Hondius' small world map of 1589. The map is full of other clues which would strongly suggest the earlier date. The appearance of Port Royal on the map would make it the earliest appearance of this place name on a map, predating De Bry in 1591. It is worth noting that no reference to Virginia appears. Given the available knowledge in London in 1589 regarding the failed English Colony, this is a curious omission. If the map dates from 1589, Burden notes that it must be examined in the context of maps of the Pacific by Hogenberg, Mazza, and Ortelius, all published in the same time period. Burden notes similarities in the four maps, but observes that it is not possible to determine which would predate the other, based upon the information present. While the primacy issue and whether an earlier undiscovered 1589 edition may exist, the map's rarity is beyond question.

Burden noted only 2 known examples in private US collections and no known examples in any American institutional collection. The present example bears the signature of American Architect Whitney Warren (1864-1943), who with partner Charles D. Wetmore designed a number of landmark hotels and office buildings in New York City, including the Grand Central Terminal (1903-13), the New York Central office building, the Chelsea docks, and the Ritz-Carlton, Biltmore, Commodore, and Ambassador hotels. After World War I, Warren & Wetmore were entrusted with the reconstruction of the historic library of the University of Louvain in Belgium, which had been destroyed during the war.

Detailed Condition:

Minor fold split, extending about 1.5 inches into the printed image, professionally repaired on the verso.