



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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Islandia

Stock#: 18782
Map Maker: Ortelius
Date: 1595
Place: Antwerp
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG
Size: 19.5 x 13.5 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Fine example of Ortelius' classic map of Iceland, one of the most decorative atlas maps of all time and the first relatively accurate map of Iceland from indigenous sources.

The map depicts Iceland in remarkable detail, including its mountains, fjords, glaciers and a graphic depiction of Mount Hekla erupting in a fiery explosion of flames and volcanic material. Along part of the coastline, Polar Bears can be seen floating on icebergs. The map includes over 200 place names, primarily Danish in origin and many of which are likely misread from the original map, owing to the different writing style employed in Iceland during the period. While the map is far from accurate, it depicts first time a meaningful depiction of all known settlements in Iceland and many other points of interest, including a number of glaciers.

The map illustrates a remarkable array of the legendary and mythical sea monsters and creatures of the 15th and 16th Century, along with early depictions of the sea horse, manta ray, walrus and whale. Some of the more purely fanciful images may derive from tales of St. Brendan, a sixth century Irish missionary who, according to legend, journeyed to Iceland and whose name is associated with a mythical island of the same name. Others are traceable to Olaus Magnus's Carta Marina of 1539, although they were probably derived directly from Munster's Cosmographia of 1545 and most notably Munster's chart of the Sea and Land Creatures. See link for example: <http://www.raremaps.com/gallery/detail/17670> .

The dedication in the lower right corner notes that the map is drawn up and dedicated by Andreas Velleius to the Illustrious and powerful Frederic the Second, King of the Danes, Norwegians, Slavs, Goths etc., his most merciful Majesty. Andreas Sorensen Vedel (1542-1616) was an important Danish historian of the



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period who prepared, but apparently never published a treatise on history of Denmarke, which he had intended to illustrate with maps. However, it is almost certain that Vedel was not the maker of the map and simply transmitted the map to Ortelius, without mentioning its source. The map is a vast improvement over all prior maps of Iceland and it is believed therefore that it could only have been drawn by an Icelfander, most likely Gudbrandur Thorlaksson, Bishop of Holar, who studied mathematics and astronomy in Copenhagen. It is known that Thorlaksson made a map of the region in 1606. While no map of Iceland by Thorlaksson survives, there is other circumstantial evidence, including a list of churches and fjords which was available and perhaps prepared by Thorlakson, which were almost certainly used in preparing the map. While a privilege for the map was granted in 1585, the map first appeared in the 1587 French edition of Ortelius' Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, the first modern Atlas of the World, first issued in 1570 and expanded thereafter until 1612.

Detailed Condition:

Minor repair at centerfold.