



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

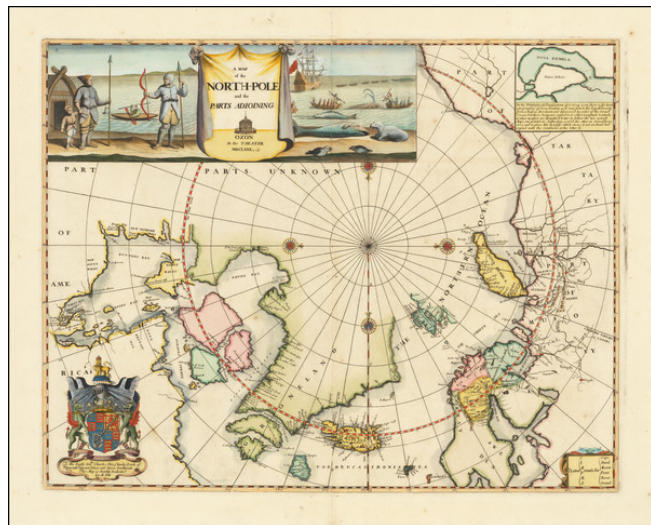
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A Map of the North-Pole and the parts Adioining . . . MDCLXXX

Stock#: 68483
Map Maker: Pitt
Date: 1680 circa
Place: Oxford
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG
Size: 23 x 18 inches
Price: \$5,400.00



Description:

Remarkable Early English Map of the North Polar Regions

Fine example of Moses Pitt's original map of the North Pole and surrounding lands.

Moses Pitt initially set out to produce an expanded edition of Jansson's *Atlas Maior* with his partner Jacob Van Waesberg. Unfortunately, after the production of several volumes, the project failed, landing Pitt in debtor's prison—a common story for mapmaking at this time. While most of the maps produced for the atlas were re-issues of earlier Dutch maps, Pitt's map of the North Pole was a new production.

The map's nomenclature is in English and clearly suggests both a Northwest Passage and a Northeast Passage. However, the ends of both routes are in "Parts Unknown," most of which are helpfully covered by the title cartouche vignettes in the upper left corner.

Iceland is shown in good detail, with Mt. Hekla erupting. Some geographical information is labeled for the far north of Muscovy and Scandinavia, and Nova Zembla has a complete coastline. However, Svalbard, which was often also called Greenland, as it is here, has an incomplete coast to the east. Actual Greenland is connected to Baffin's Bay, a common geographical depiction of the time. The mythical island of Frisland (here Freesland), part of the Zeno Map controversy, is southwest of Iceland.

Previous attempts at finding the Northwest Passage are evident in the place names on the map. Not only are explorers like Hudson, Baffin, Button, and James memorialized here, but there are also corrections like "Briggs Bay formerly Hubbert's Hope." Briggs Bay is named for Henry Briggs, a mapmaker whose work



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was used by Luke Foxe and Thomas James in their voyages of 1631. The hope of the inlet was proven to be only a bay, not a route inland toward the west.

The map is elegantly finished with four compass roses and a small table explaining abbreviations in the bottom right. In the bottom left is an elaborate coat of arms belonging to the Right Honourable Charles FitzCharles, Earle of Plymouth, Viscount Totnes, and Baron Dartmouth. Fitzcharles was an illegitimate son of Charles II. He was given several titles by his father, including the first (and only) Earldom of Plymouth, before dying in a campaign in Tangiers (he drank contaminated water). He passed away in 1680, very shortly after this map was made, and is buried in Westminster Abbey, in the tomb formerly occupied by Oliver Cromwell.

The title cartouche in the top left is accompanied by two vignettes. To the left is an Inuit hunter with bow and spear. An Inuit mother and child, also with spears, are standing before him, near a wooden home. In the water behind them is an Inuit in a kayak; he has a spear as well. To the right is an image of Europeans whaling in northern waters. They are hunting both narwhals and double spouted rorquals.

Finally, in the top right is an interesting discussion of the insularity of Nova Zembla. Pitt has included an inset map showing the island as a peninsula. He writes:

In the Philosophicall Transactions of a[n]o 1674 n[o]. 101, there is set down a Description of Nova Zembla as it was sent to the Royall Society from a Russia Merchant and discovered by order of the Grand Czaar, but there being not joined to it either Longitude Latitiude or other measure, we thought it better to follow the two newest Maps, one printed at Amsterdam a[n]o 1678, the other at Nuremberg 1679: and to place this by it selfe: which shews it not an Iland but joyned with the Continent at letter K.

Pitt is referring to an article in the publication of the Royal Society of London, *Philosophical Transactions*. The article was titled, "A letter, not long since written to the publisher by an experienced person residing at Amsterdam, containing a true description of Nova Zembla, together with an intimation of the advantage of its shape and position."

Detailed Condition:

Old Color, recently retouched.