



# Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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La Jolla, CA 92037

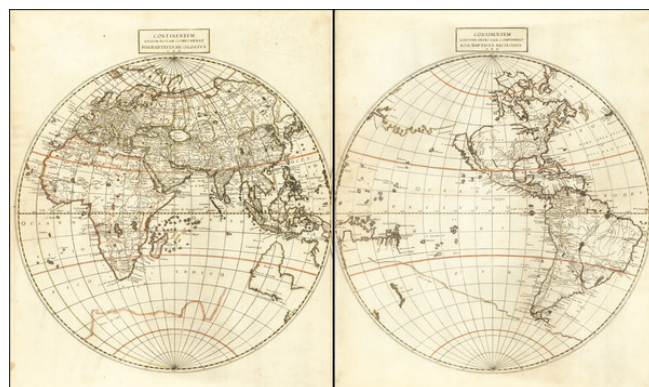
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## [World] Continentem Dudum Notam Componebat . . . (and) Continentem Noviter Detectam Componebat

**Stock#:** 74360mj  
**Map Maker:** Nicolosi  
**Date:** 1660  
**Place:** Rome  
**Color:** Outline Color  
**Condition:** VG  
**Size:** 33.5 x 21.3 inches (if joined)  
**Price:** SOLD



### Description:

#### *A Landmark World Map of the Mid-17th Century*

Fine example of Giovanni Battista Nicolosi's 2 sheet map of the world, published in Rome in 1660.

This world map by Sicilian geographer Giovanni Battista Nicolosi (biography below) is responsible for two cartographic landmarks. Constructed on a polyconic map projection, Nicolosi's world map is the first use of this projection on a printed map, a projection which would become one of the standard projections in the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries. In addition, Nicolosi was the first to accurately depict the course of the Rio Grande River flowing into the Gulf of Mexico, reversing a tradition of the river flowing into the Gulf of California (Sea of Cortez), one of the pervasive myths of early American Cartography.

Also of note, Nicolosi's map is the second printed map on a hemispheric projection to show the Pacific Ocean at the center of the world, preceded only by the 1598 Francis Drake map.

#### Mapping The World on the Nicolosi Globular Projection

This map is the product of Nicolosi's novel approach to global mapping. Essentially, he combined the traditions and perspectives of 16th century Roman and Venetian mapmakers with the latest approaches of contemporary greats, above all the modern scientific approach best reflected by French mapmaker Nicolas Sanson. This amalgamation of traditions and styles meant that Nicolosi could come up with an entirely new way of portraying the world, especially when it came to larger landmasses where the curvature of the Earth affected the way in which such terrain could be portrayed.

Nicolosi was the first to employ the so-called polyconic or pseudo-perspective projection in which the



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established meridians were perfected with the introduction of complimenting circular parallels. Over the next decades, and especially during the early 18th century, this projection technique - also known as the globular projection - became increasingly popular and was applied by seminal cartographers such as Guillaume de l'Isle and Aaron Arrowsmith. In the decades after Nicolosi's death, the globular or Nicolosi projection replaced the stereographic projection popularized by Mercator, which had increasingly fallen into disuse by then. During the 19th century, the Nicolosi perspective became the standard cartographic projection technique and it remains in use even today. As such, Nicolosi's work belongs in a sequence that includes foundational figures like Ptolemy and Mercator.

#### **North America**

Nicolosi bases his mapping of North America on Sanson's map of 1650, with several notable changes. For example, the Great Lakes are based upon Sanson's map, as is much of the nomenclature along the East Coast. However, in the West, there are several very important differences. The Rio Grande (named Rio Escondido) is shown flowing Southeast into the Gulf of Mexico for the first time ever on a printed map, with an elaborate set of tributaries. The lake which historically fed this river when it was flowing into the Gulf of California has disappeared.

Nicolosi's treatment of the Northwest Passage is also of note. Nicolosi depicts a very distinct open water course from the Atlantic to Button's Bay and on to the Pacific Ocean, one of the most ambitious depictions of the Northwest Passage on a printed map of the period.

On the East Coast of North America various Spanish, French, English and Dutch settlements are noted, including Orange, Cape Cod Plymouth, N[ew] Amsterdam, Jamestowne, S. Matteo and S. Augustine.

#### **Western Pacific / New Zealand & Australia**

Nicolosi's chart captures the European understanding of the world during an age in which it was undergoing rapid change. This is seen in the strange composition of the Pacific and its western archipelagos. A very tentative outline of New Zealand in the Western Hemisphere, and a similarly vague Australia or New Holland, including Van Diemens Land (Tasmania) in the Eastern Hemisphere, reflects the pioneering Dutch ventures of Abel Tasman and Franchois Visscher to this region in 1642. Nicolosi is in other words incorporating territories discovered no more than a decade earlier, and furthermore by a competing nation that was hostile to the Catholic Church.

#### **Perpetuating Cartographic Myths**



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Nicolosi's decision to leave the unknown southern continent in place, placing New Zealand beneath the mythical coastline (Terra d Quir, a reference to the 16th Century discoveries of Pedro Fernandes de Queirós), is an example of how Nicolosi was forced to balance the information of known discoveries with those of pervasive, but still unproven depictions of remote places.

### **Terra Iesso**

In the Northwest Pacific, we see clear manifestations of the ample mythology associated with mapmaking. The Jesso and Anian concepts are both cartographic myths that have been extensively explored and explained by scholarship. The etymology of the idiom Jesso is most likely the Japanese Ezo-chi; a term used for the lands north of the island of Honshu. During the Edō period (1600-1886), it came to represent the 'foreigners' on the Kuril and Sakhalin islands to the north of Japan.

As European traders came into contact with the Japanese in the 17th century, the term was adopted and incorporated rather uncritically onto European maps, where it was often associated with the island of Hokkaido. The origins of Jesso's importance can be traced back to Father Francis Xavier (1506-1552), an early Jesuit missionary to Japan and China. Xavier related stories that immense silver mines were to be found on a secluded Japanese island, and these stories were soon strengthened by Spanish traders spreading similar reports. The rumors became so tenacious and widespread that Abraham Ortelius included an island of silver above Japan on his 1589 Maris Pacifici map.

Half a century later, the powerful Dutch East India Company sponsored two voyages of exploration to identify and possibly claim these rich lands for Holland. The first was led by Abel Tasman in 1639, the second by Maarten Gerritsoon Vries in 1643. Vries erroneously perceived Urup as the westernmost fringe of America and mapmakers soon adopted this concept. Over time, variations occurred in which this undefined land came to be referred to as Jesso.

### **Detailed Condition:**

2-sheets, unjoined. Evidence of old wormhole repairs and a minor tear.