



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

7407 La Jolla Boulevard
La Jolla, CA 92037

www.raremaps.com

(858) 551-8500
blr@raremaps.com

Asia Ex Conatibus Geographicis Ioannis Baptistae Nicolosii S.T.D.

Stock#: 74610mj
Map Maker: Nicolosi
Date: 1660
Place: Rome
Color: Outline Color
Condition: VG+
Size: 38 x 31 inches (if joined)
Price: \$ 6,500.00



Description:

Fine Globular Projection of Asia

Rare four-sheet map of Asia, published in Rome by G. B. Nicolosi. The map employs Nicolosi's globular projection.

The continent is shown in a sprawling style, although the geographic features are sparser the farther north one looks. Japan is shown in the horizontal orientation typical of the time, while Korea is shown correctly as an island. Southeast Asia, in particular Borneo and Sumatra, and the Philippines are outlined well, especially for a regional map of the period. Intriguingly, Nicolosi locates Singapore (*Sincapura*) a century and a half before the English would start the process of developing the island as a trade hub.

Some areas, like Papua and New Guinea, contain little information inland. Interestingly, *Terra d. Papui* is shown as a separate island from *Nuoua Guinea* based on an error in maps dating to 1590 which confused Irian Jaya (Papua) with the smaller island of Seram. Elsewhere, there is considerable interior detail; for example, the Great Wall of China is shown with a line of towers that greatly resemble the actual structure.

Perhaps of most interest are those coastlines that are not entirely filled in. The shores of Australia are only hinted at, with lightly drawn coasts hugging the neat line in two places. New Guinea is similarly unfinished. The mythical *Terra di Iesso* is also noted with a speculative coastline.

The treatment of *Formosa* (Taiwan) is also of note. Between 1624 and 1662 (and again 1664-68), the



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island was ruled by the Dutch, who established it as Dutch Formosa and instigated colonial rule. The purpose was to build (and possibly monopolize) stable trade relations with Ming China, but also to cultivate rice and sugar using imported Chinese labor. The Dutch presence on the island came to an end within a few years of this map's publication and so its conclusion constitutes one of those rare windows into a short but decisive period of history.

In 1652, the *Propaganda Fide* of Rome, which was responsibly for missionary work within the Catholic Church, hired G.B. Nicolosi to compose an atlas. This became his *Dell' Hercole e Studio Geografico*, published in 1660 and 1671. The four-sheet maps of the continents have become celebrated rarities; they showcase Nicolosi's meticulous work with a quite unusual, yet clean, presentation style. This is the most detailed of the continental maps and suggest that Nicolosi had access to privileged papers and archives.

The map is on a globular projection. This curved projection is often associated with Nicolosi's name. However, it was originally invented by Abū Rayḥān Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad Al-Bīrūnī, a Muslim scholar active around the year 1000 CE. He used the projection for celestial charts. It is unlikely that Nicolosi knew of the earlier use of the projection when he adapted it from a similar globular projection by Jesuit priest Georges Fournier.

Jesso/Iesso

The etymology of the idiom Yesso (Eso, Yeco, Jesso, Yedso) 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. As European traders came into contact with the Japanese in the seventeenth century, the term was transferred onto European maps, where it was often associated with the island of Hokkaido. It varies on maps from a small island to a near-continent sized mass that stretches from Asia to Alaska.

The toponym held interest for Europeans because the island was supposedly tied to mythic riches. Father Francis Xavier (1506-1552), an early Jesuit missionary to Japan and China, related stories that immense silver mines were to be found on a secluded Japanese island; these stories were echoed in Spanish reports. The rumors became so tenacious and tantalizing that Abraham Ortelius included an island of silver north of Japan on his 1589 map of the Pacific.

The map is relatively rare on the market. This is only the second time we have offered it in twenty-five years.

Detailed Condition:



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4-sheets, unjoined. Original outline color.