Barry Lawrence Ruderman
Antique Maps Inc.

7407 La Jolla Boulevard
La Jolla, CA 92037

www.raremaps.com

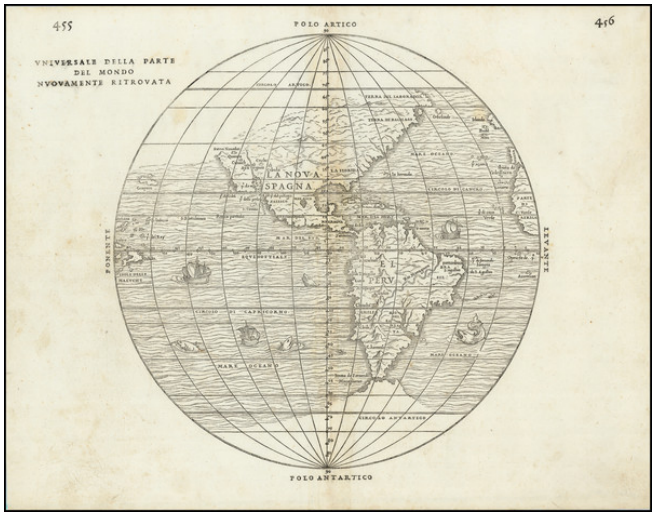
(858) 551-8500
blr@raremaps.com

Universale Della Nuovamente Parte Del Mondo Ritrovata (The Earliest Recognizable Map of America)

Stock#: 76159
Map Maker: Ramusio

Date: 1556
Place: Venice
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 13 x 11.5 inches

Price: SOLD



Description:

The Earliest Recognizable Map of America and The First Map to show Coronado's Explorations in California and the American Southwest

First state of Giovanni Battista Ramusio's map of the western hemisphere, the earliest obtainable map to accurately depict the Americas and an essential map for early American collections. The map shows the landmasses known to Europeans up to the mid-sixteenth century. Surrounding all three continents-North and South America and a Southern Continent-is the *Mare Oceano*. The seas, filled with ships and monsters, represent simultaneously navigation and the perils that accompany it.

This is one of the first maps to depict the names derived from the travels of Francisco Vázquez de Coronado in Southwestern North America, including Quivira, Cicuic, Axa, Cucho, Cibola and Tiguas. Coronado was the governor of Nueva Galicia when he led an expedition in 1540 to follow rumors of the Seven Golden Cities to the north. The conquistadores found no gold, but they did become the first Europeans to see the Grand Canyon and much of California. The reference to *Sierra Nevadas*, snowy mountains, derives from Cabrillo's explorations of the California coastline in 1542. Due in part to these expeditions, Wheat noted that the Ramusio map represented a significant development in the mapping of the American West, calling it "an advance of the first importance." The map also includes an early reference to Florida and suggests its peninsular shape.

Other explorers are also memorialized in the toponyms of the map. Ferdinand Magellan's circumnavigation is remembered with the Straits of Magellan separating South America from a large,

7407 La Jolla Boulevard
La Jolla, CA 92037
www.raremaps.com
(858) 551-8500
blr@raremaps.com

Universale Della Nuovamente Parte Del Mondo Ritrovata (The Earliest Recognizable Map of America)

unfinished southern continent. Such depictions of Patagonia separated from a continental Tierra del Fuego were common until the mid-seventeenth century.

The Rio Maragnon, or Marañón, snakes through the interiors of Peru and Brazil from Cusco to the Atlantic. Marañón was an early name for the Amazon River, which was also known as the Rio de Orellana in honor of the leader of the first European expedition to explore part of the river. The Spanish conquistadores met with fierce resistance en route. They were attacked by a group of warriors, mostly women, near what is today known as the Nhamunda River. Thereafter, Orellana and his men referred to the river system as Rio Amazonas after the female fighters of Greek mythology. The name would eventually become widely used but Ramusio's map shows how it was originally one of several designations for the river.

To the far north, the map remains blank. In the northeast of North America is Labrador, named by the Portuguese ca. 1500. Just south of Labrador is Terra de Bacalos, named after the cod the Portuguese found there in abundance.

Ramusio (1485-1557) was a geographer and politician in Venice. He served as secretary to the Senate in 1515 and on the Doge (Council of Ten) in 1533. Around 1520, Ramusio began compiling geographic knowledge for a collection of voyages and travels. The first volume of *Navigationi et Viaggi*, on Africa, debuted in 1550, followed by volume three, America, in 1556, and volume two, Asia, in 1559.

Ramusio worked with several collaborators on his opus, including the humanist Girolamo Fracastro, Cardinal Pietro Bembo, and cartographer Giacomo Gastaldi. The latter is the author of this map. Gastaldi started his working life as an engineer but transitioned to cartography in the 1540s. He worked for various publishers and patrons, including the Doge. He and Ramusio were at the center of the Venetian, and European, geography network, acting as conduits for information and materials. For example, both are supposed to have had a hand in the creation of the Hajji Ahmed cordiform world map, the first Ottoman Turkish printed map intended for an Ottoman audience ({{ inventory_detail_link('48690') }}).

The present example is the 1556 edition of the map, with the title on the top left of the map and the page numbers 455 and 456.

Detailed Condition: