



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

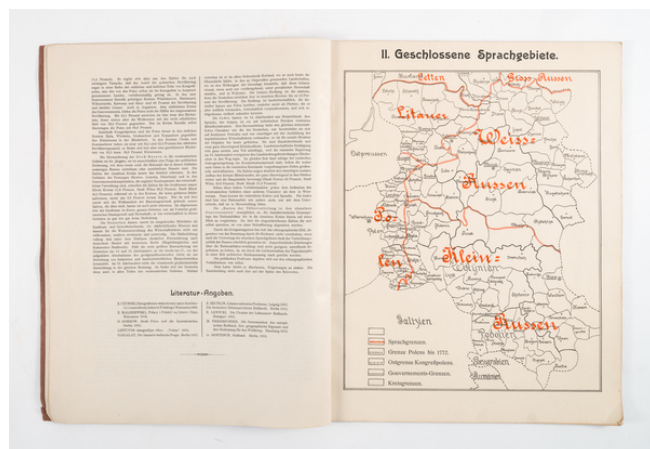
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[Ethnographic Thematic Atlas - Poland, Lithuania, Ukraine, etc.] Völker-Verteilung in West-Russland (Distribution of Peoples in Western-Russia)

Stock#: 94045
Map Maker: Oberbefehlshaber Ost
Date: 1917
Place: Kaunas, Lithuania / Hamburg
Color: Outline Color
Condition: VG
Size: 25 x 16.75 inches
Price: \$ 1,200.00



Description:

Mapping the Ethnic Populations of Occupied "Lithuania" During The First World War

Second edition of this rare thematic atlas of Western Russian peoples, first published in 1916.

The map focuses on the following ethnic groups, who were then living in the areas of the modern nations of Ukraine, Poland, Belarus Lithuania, Latvia and Western Russia.

- Lithuanians
- Poles
- White Russians (Belarus)
- Germans
- Jews
- Greater Russians (Russians)
- Small Russians (Ukrainians)

The following sub-regions are also mapped:

- Lomsha, Sjedlez, Cholm
- Suwalki
- Kowno (Kaunas)
- Wilna (Vilnius)
- Grodno



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- Minsk
- Wolynien
- Podolien
- Kiew (Kiev)
- Mogilew
- Witebsk

The statistical information is based on German-occupied guberniyas polled in the 1897 Russian Empire Census.

The 1916 atlas *Völker-Verteilung in West-Rußland*, published by Kownoer Zeitung Press, serves as a pragmatic response by the German administration to the complex ethnic landscape of occupied Western Russia during World War I. Drawing from Russian census data collected in 1897, this atlas aimed to delineate the ethnic and religious composition of provinces like Lithuania, which was under German administration from 1915 to 1918. The atlas reflects German attempts to make sense of an area described by a July 1916 *Kownoer Zeitung* article as being more ethnically diverse than any region within the German Empire.

The publication of this atlas occurred during a period when the Imperial German Army was occupying substantial territories in the East, including Lithuania. This territorial occupation presented the Germans with the challenge of administering a heterogeneous population, comprising not just ethnic Lithuanians, but also Poles, Jews, Belarusians, and others. As this diversity posed administrative challenges, the atlas aimed to inform German officials by providing empirical data on the ethnic and religious demography of the region, based on the 1897 Russian census.

The atlas is notable for its lexicological ambiguity and the fluidity of terms such as "Volk" and "Völkerschaft." It suggests that the German administration was grappling with conceptual distinctions between nation, people, and tribe in a multi-ethnic context. This variance in terminology had immediate policy implications. For instance, Russians were categorized as "Great Russians," distinct from "White Russians" (Belarusians) and "Small Russians" (Ukrainians), thereby emphasizing their distinctiveness and potentially legitimizing separate administrative arrangements. Yet, the atlas stops short of advocating for complete independence for these various groups, underscoring the lingering German aspiration for annexation.

The atlas also subtly reveals the geopolitical ambitions of Imperial Germany during this period. While not overtly political, the act of publishing such an atlas in the context of occupation illuminates Germany's attempt to create an empirical framework to support its governance. The underlying data, using terms



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that emphasize the diversity of the region, seems aimed to validate a German administrative approach distinct from that of Imperial Russia. The emphasis on ethnic diversity implicitly challenged Russian claims to these territories while positioning Germany as a potential steward.

Rarity

The atlas is very rare on the market. We were unable to find any auction or dealer records.

Detailed Condition: