



A 17th century map of the early exploration of the Arctic Circle

BLAEU, Johannes.  
 Regiones sub Polo Arctico.

Amsterdam, 1662, Latin text edition. Original colour with gold highlights. 410 x 630mm.

£1,250

The Arctic Circle, showing European attempts to find the North West and North East Passages. In Arctic America the preponderance of English names shows the importance of the English explorers in the region, trying to circumvent the Spanish control of routes to the East Indies. On Greenland and the entrance to 'M. Forbischers Straet' is marked and in Arctic Russia the names are those given by the Dutch explorers such as Berentz. At the top of the map is a title cartouche depicting wind-heads, a European explorer with a brazier on his lap and a white cannibal, and a scale cartouche with hunters and a polar bear. The European is Henry Hudson, whose explorations in Hudson Bay (which he called 'a labyrinth without end') ended in 1611 when he was forced into a small boat and cast adrift by a mutinous crew. He was never seen again and it is assumed that his crew would have turned to eating each other to survive. This is an example of the second state of the map, with the dedication added c.1645. It is a direct copy of Jansson's map, but it is interesting that the engraver copied the Baltic Sea's name but not the coastline!

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