



Uncommon Italian edition of Munster's woodcut map of the world

MUNSTER, Sebastian.
 Figura del Mondo Universale.

Basle, Henri Petri, c.1558, Italian text edition. Coloured woodcut. Printed area 280 x 380mm.

£2,700

Munster's 'modern' map of the world, on an oval projection, surrounded by windheads and with sea-monsters filling the oceans, first published 1540. Of particular interest is the mapping of America, only fifty years after Columbus: although the basic shape of both North and South is recognisable, there are several mistaken assumptions: 'Terra Florida' is connected to the north-east by only a narrow isthmus, based on Verrazzano's mistaken belief that Chesapeake Bay was the Indian Ocean. Greenland is joined on to Scandinavia; and the west coast appears as 'Temistitan', the general name for Mexico, on the far right of the map. In the east, 'Zanzibar', 'Taprobana' and 'Java' are all marked, and 'Zipangu' (Japan) also appears having been visited by Europeans for the first time ten years before. This is an example of the second woodblock world that was cut for the 'Cosmographia' and 'Geographia', and the initials of the wood engraver, David Kandel, can be seen in the bottom left corner. There were three Italian text editions (1558, 1571 & 1575), all using maps printed in 1558.

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