

# Collecting Antique Maps

2021

Tips for the Novice



# A Kick Start Guide for Who?

This is for those who are new to collecting antique maps or even new to the idea of collecting old maps. How you got to this point doesn't really matter. What you do next is what matters. This maybe something you've been thinking about starting for sometime, its fast becoming you're new passion, so where do you start?

Obviously I'd recommend you start right here. This guide will help you get to grips with what you really need to know first. Jumping in feet first can be fun but leaves you open to the potential of making what could be an expensive mistake. I've been there so I'm adequately qualified!

Here's the three fundamentals, get these right and the rest is fun and a world of discovery . . .

## **1) Where to Start - Is it Original?**

## **2) What's on the Paper?**

## **3) Kinds of Maps - What to Collect?**

Soon you'll know what you're doing and be able to move forward, gain some experience and be more confident.

If you're thinking beyond an interesting hobby or personal collection and see this as your next 'side hustle' maybe even getting into buying and selling online as I do then you **MUST** read this guide before anything else - enjoy!

## Who is Kevin J. Ryan?

Let's keep this simple: Map Collector, enthusiast, creative, blogger, entrepreneur, business founder, encourager and jazz lover.



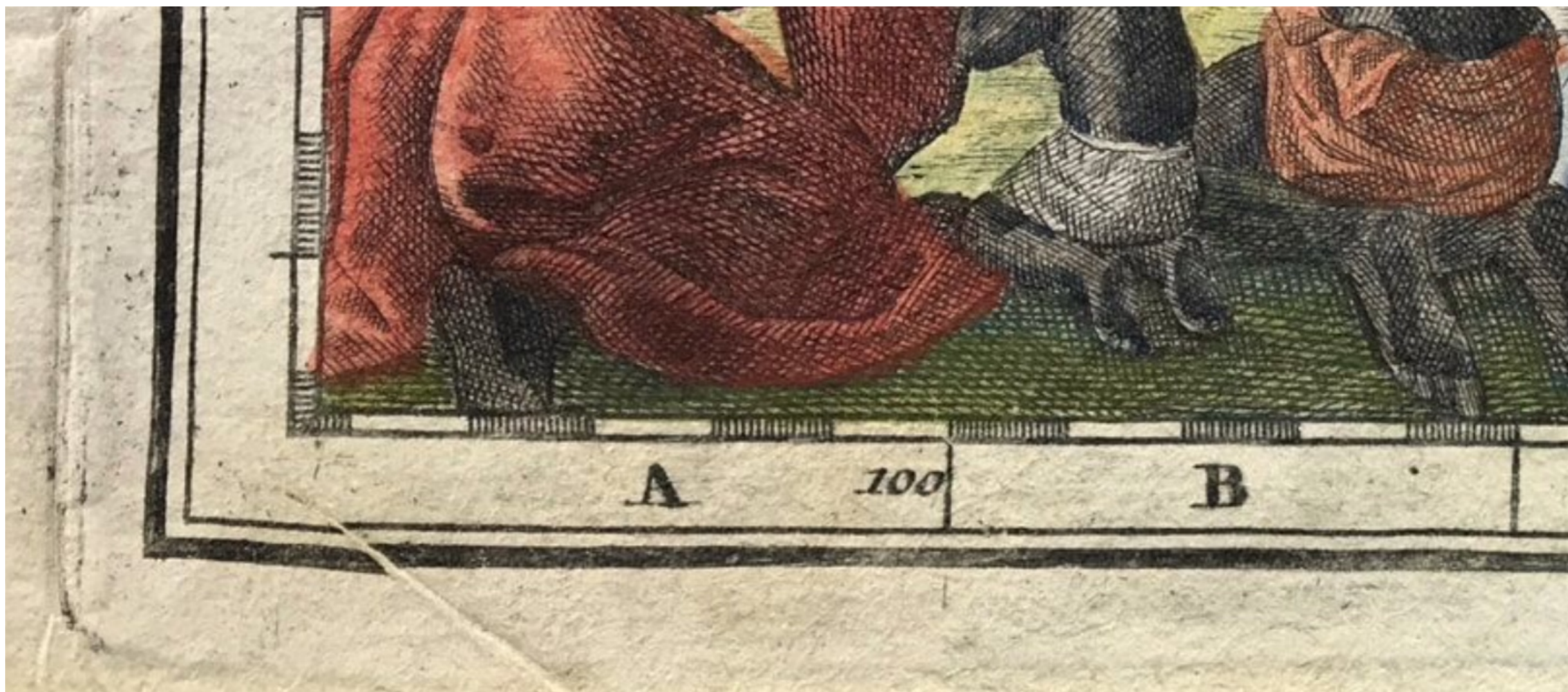
[RareMapsandPrints.co.uk](http://RareMapsandPrints.co.uk) "We're very boutique, we don't have the largest stock but we do have some real gems and a huge amount of passion and enthusiasm for the subject - plus lots of free advice and resources"

# Where to Start

## Is it Original?

If you're new to collecting antique maps one of the first things that confuses the novice is the term 'original map'. This is compounded by the fact that many maps are attributed to differing people, sometimes the cartographer or the engraver, sometimes to the publisher. Often map dealers will simply use the most famous name associated with the map. So what exactly is an original? If there are many, how can they all be original? It's simple, when it comes to antique maps as with prints the term original refers to a print pulled from a plate or block that was made at a specific time in history. If a run of 100 prints were pulled from a copperplate of a c1700 map then each is an original.





*Previous page and above Map of Southern Asia, Indian Ocean and Australia "India Orientalis" by Matheus Seutter c1730 - 42.*

Today we are plagued with online sites saturated with reproductions of antique maps and prints. These reproductions are copies made by some other modern method more recent. Price alone should indicate as to original or reproduction but for those new to collecting its wise to do some basic research and be able to distinguish the different processes used in map making. This will aid you in making the right call when it comes to buying. To keep this simple, if you're interested in maps made between c1600 to

late c1700 these antique maps were printed using the intaglio print process. Basically the image is formed by cutting grooves in the copper plate. The grooves were filled with ink and the paper pressed onto the plate. This forced the fibres into the grooves to take up the ink resulting in the image being pressed onto the paper. In the image above you can see the image has been pressed into the paper. Notice the clearly visible plate mark around the edge of the image. Notice also the texture of the hand made paper.

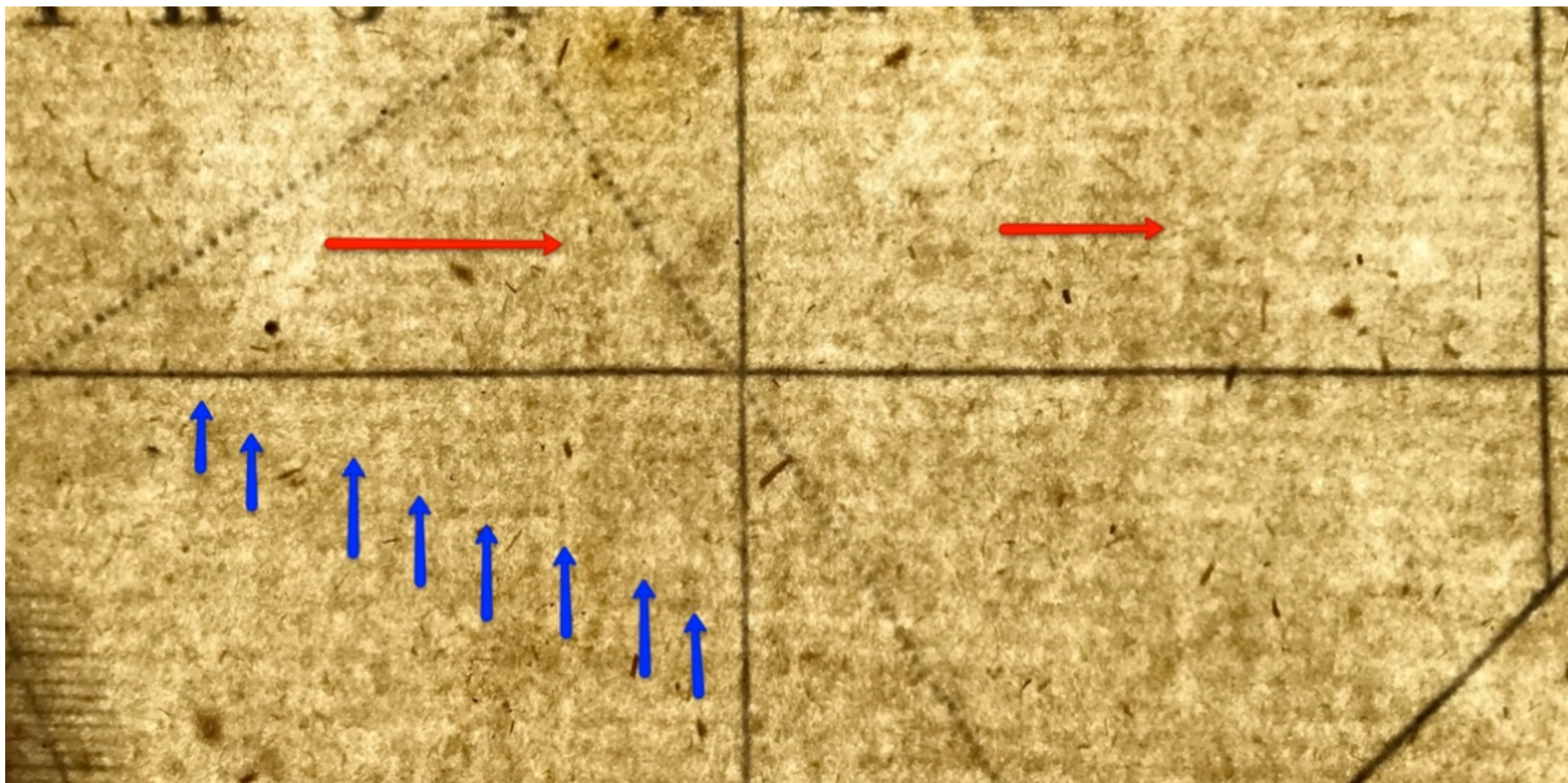


From "India Orientalis" by Matheus Seutter c1730 - 42 with strong light behind showing laid paper.

I would suggest a real help to you as a new collector of maps is to get an understanding of what the map was printed on, yes the paper! Getting an understanding of the history of paper making and how it relates to old maps is the real place to start. Have you heard the term 'laid paper' or seen it used by a dealer in describing a map. All maps were printed on laid paper up until around the end of the 18th century.

This process involved a slurry being made from linen and cotton rags and each sheet of paper being made by hand. The slurry was spread over a handmade wire screen mold.

**Top Tip:** *It's not just what's on the paper, its the very paper itself thats all important.*



*Laid Paper with vertical chain lines and horizontal laid lines.*

This laid paper has a very distinct appearance and is identified by the visible lines seen in the paper when held up to a bright light. The vertical lines (Red arrows above), are normally about an inch apart, these are called chain lines and clearly distinguishable from the horizontal lines (Blue arrows above) called laid lines. Hence laid paper. This is why its so important when possible to be able to examine an old map

especially when you're new to map collecting and maybe not so familiar with knowing what to look for when it come to identifying and dating a map. So the place to start is with the paper. It's not just what's on the paper, its the very paper itself thats all important.

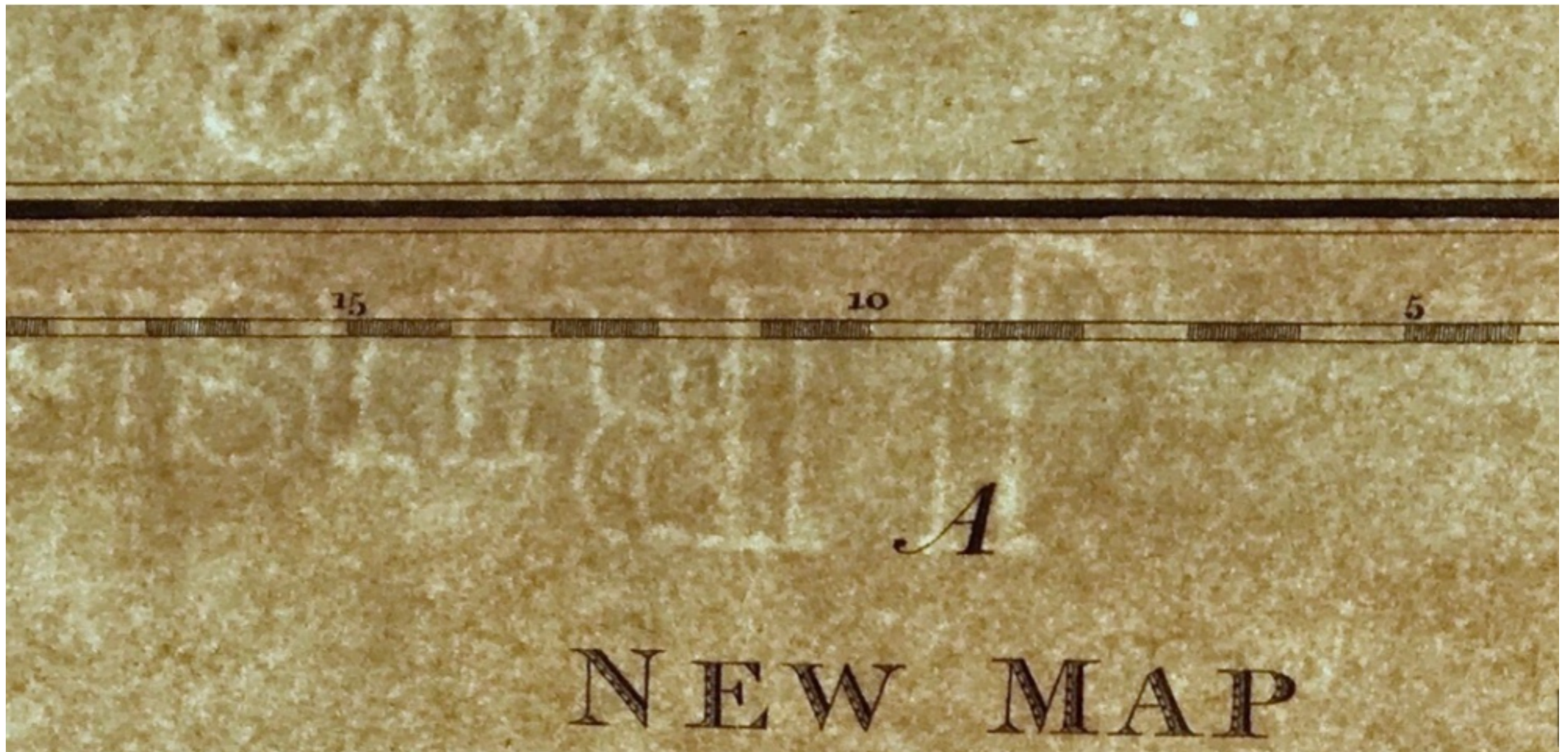


*1802 Map Sheet the result is a smoother regular surface than with laid paper. No chain or laid lines.*

As map making entered the start of the 19th century a shift took place towards using paper produced on a new mold called WOVE. This wove paper had been invented by James Whatman in 1757. The development of 'wove' paper led to producing paper on a smooth, regular-surfaced, woven mesh material that was pioneered by Whatman at his Turkey Mill in Maidstone, Kent. It resulted in a sheet with a much

smoother, less irregular surface than previously found in 'laid' paper.

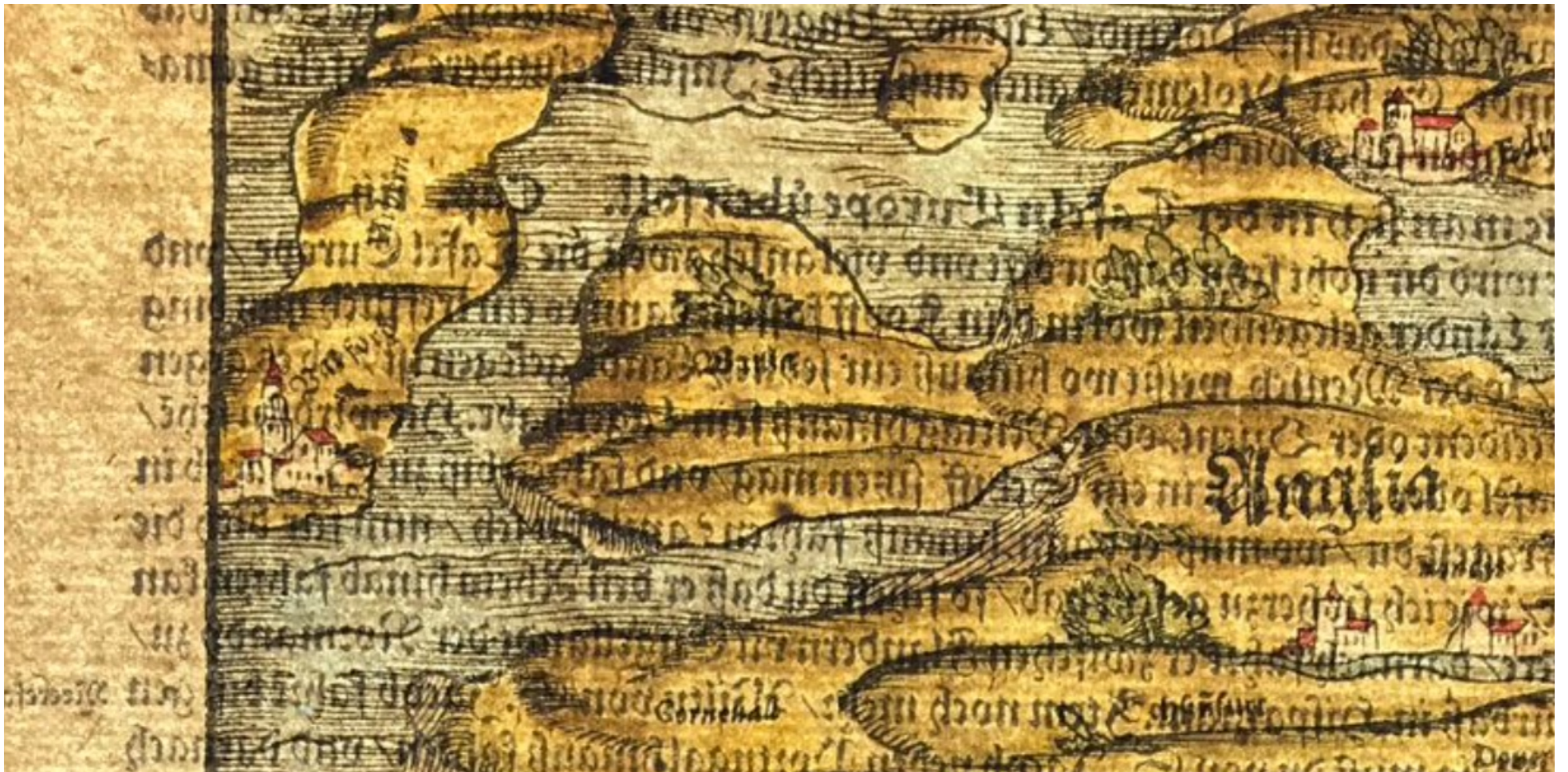
**Top Tip:** *Go to auctions, see antique maps, touch them, feel the paper, examine it, hold the map up to the light, then you will start to see there is another world of exploration under the surface of the image - The all important paper!*



*1802 Map Sheet with visible Watermark.*

Like many other crafts, paper making by hand on a commercial basis eventually became non viable. The new technique quickly spread throughout Europe and America and soon it dominated the paper making industry. In time machines were developed that made paper on a continuous roll, no more individual sheets! As we entered the first half of the 19th century this wove paper was most common, hence

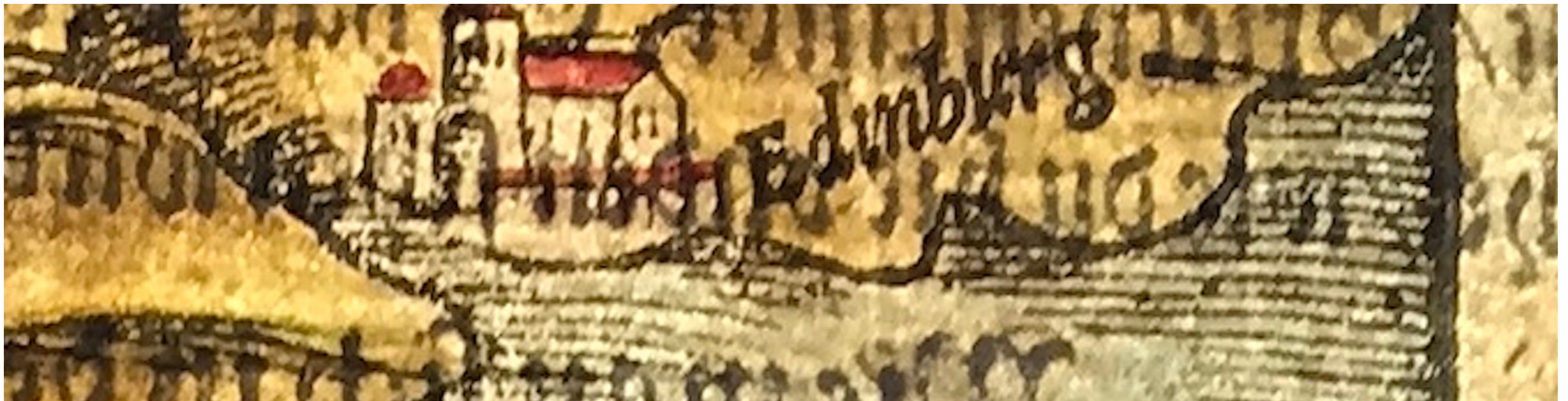
most original maps were produced on wove paper, sometimes watermarked sometimes not. Again the place to start is with the paper but as explained you're now looking for a different set of clues because over time the paper making process changed. Recognising paper in this way will help you greatly when it comes to identify if a map is original or a reproduction produced using modern paper processes.



*Map of Anglia c1578 a relief woodcut woodblock Map from Munsters Cosmographia*

If you're new to collecting maps its likely you may be interested in maps from anywhere between the 17th century and 20th century. This provides a wide range of possibilities where the majority of newbies tend to pitch their collecting tent. Before moving on I'm going to share with you one other area back downstream as it were. You may be interested in starting to collect maps pre 17th century? The very earliest

maps are referred to as Manuscript, drawn by hand. Most all early maps and navigational charts were manuscripts, often the work of explorers. This is the place of experts when it comes to authenticity so best advice I can give is, leave it to the experts or certainly get an experts advice if you want to delve into manuscript maps.



From mid 15th century to late 16th century the earliest printed maps were produced using the Relief printing process. In the map world, relief woodcut or woodblock maps were common since printing first began. A map could be produced by pressing paper against a raised inked surface that had been carved out on wood. Having carved the image into the wood, ink was rolled onto the raised image, then paper pressed onto the raised area transferring the image to

the paper. When you look at the examples here, again produced by having a bright light behind the paper you can see in the enlarged image above the typical lines of this kind of printing. The lines are simple, heavy and have blunt ends. The text in woodcut was achieved by inserting movable type as it was easier to make changes. Observe that the paper is laid paper, in keeping with how paper was being produced at the time.

You can find this map over on my Etsy shop site: [ANGLIA c1578 from Munsters Cosmographia](#)

**Top Tip:** *Most all early maps and navigational charts were manuscripts. Observe that the paper is laid paper, in keeping with how paper was being produced at the time. Remember the laid lines and chain lines!*

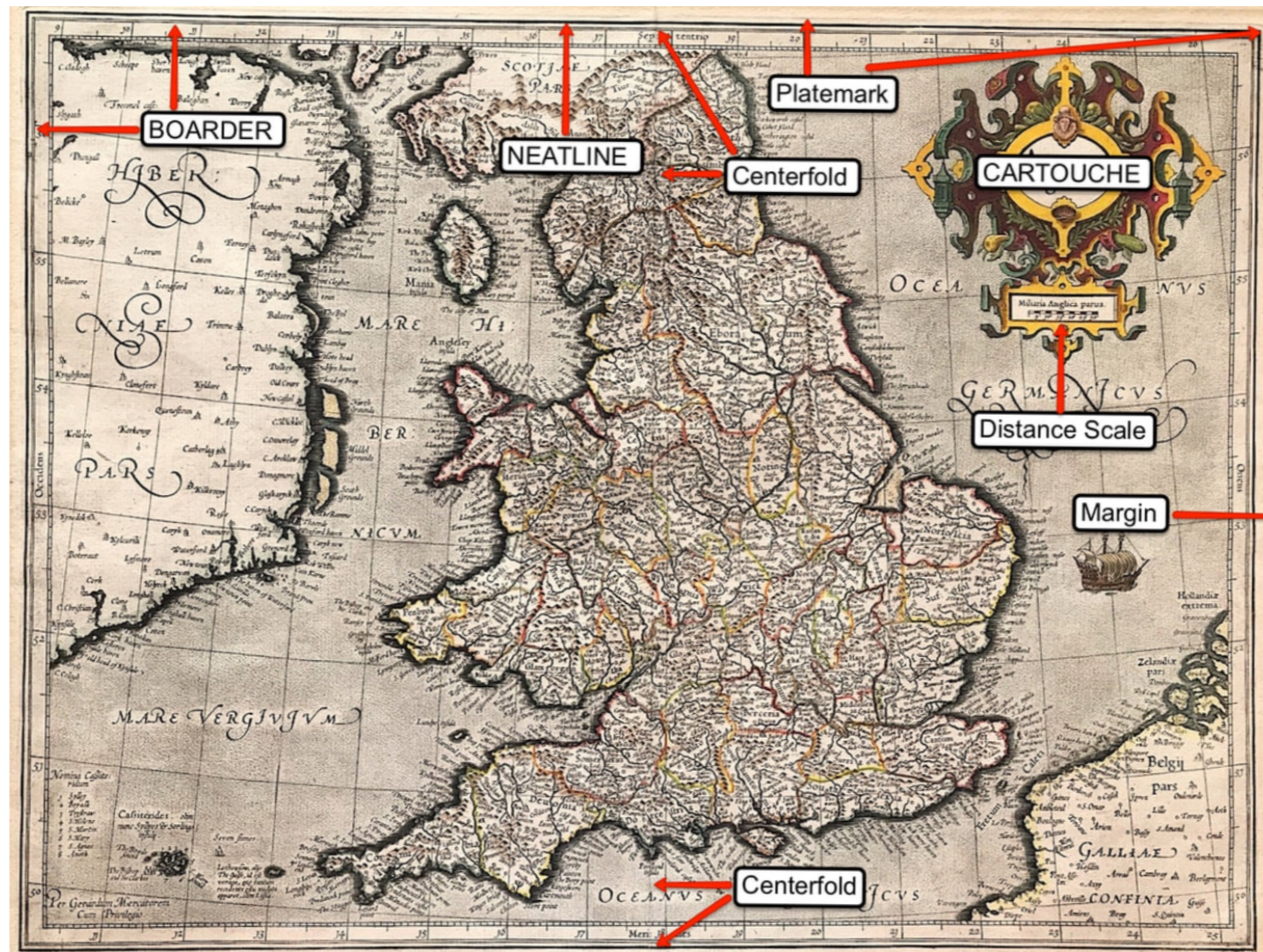
# What's on the Paper

## A crease down the middle?

Some time ago I remember a buyer contacting me having purchased a Robert Morden map from me on ebay. They wanted to express their disappointment as on opening the package they had discovered that the map had a crease down the middle! That's a true story and always amuses me when I think back to the event. But to be fair if a person has no knowledge or experience of antique maps, its unlikely they would know what to be looking for.

The next important step is to know what to be looking for on the paper itself. Identifying elements is what you're after. Back to our friend and the 'crease down the middle'.

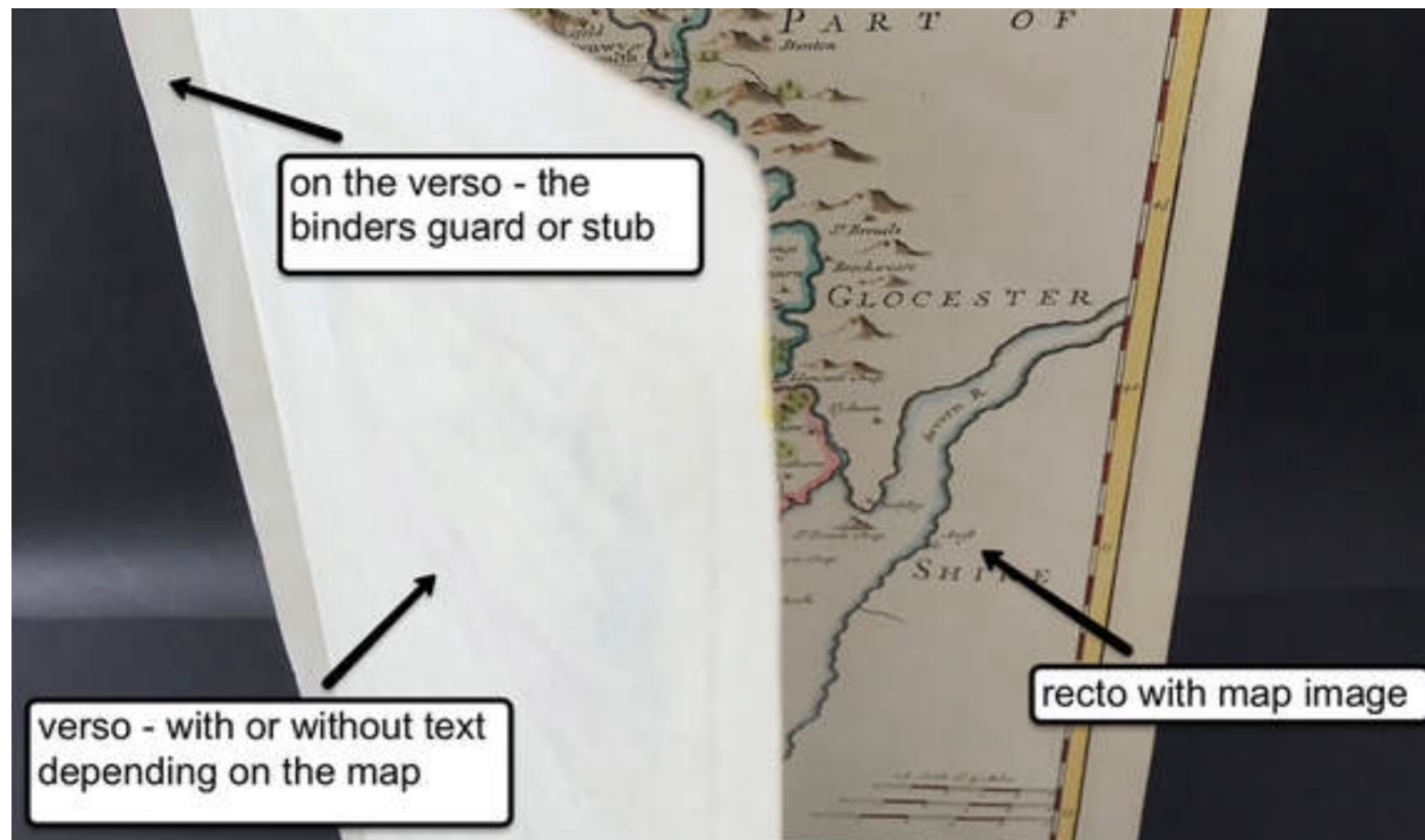




Above: Map of England & Wales 'Anglia Regnum' Duisberg 1595 by Mercator.

The fact is most maps available to collectors today are printed maps that were originally bound into books and atlases, hence a crease down the middle where it was folded. This made it possible for the map to be inserted and bound in an atlas. Above is the basic identifiers on a 16th Century double page map. Printed maps were generally contained within a boarder, this may be a simple line. The outermost line is

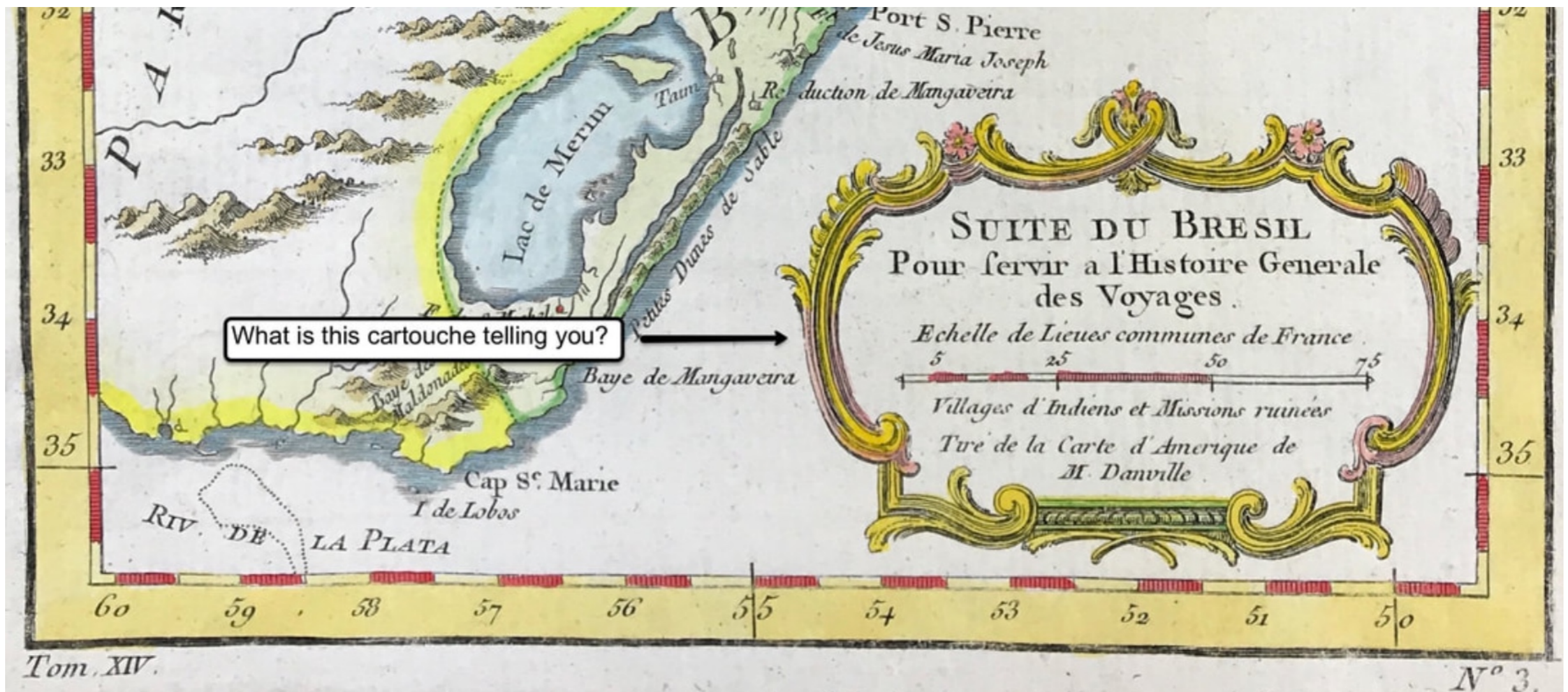
called the 'neatline' and the area beyond this to the edge of the sheet is called the 'margin'. All engraved maps have a platemark. The paper within the platemark is slightly lower than the margin paper because it has been compressed. A maps size is measured by the area within the neatline not the sheet size. You would not include the margin of paper out beyond the neatline to the edge of the sheet.



*Robert Morden Map of Monmouthshire c1695*

A centrefold down the middle made binding possible and the map was folded ready to be inserted and bound. So when you look at a map as in the example above the front of the map is often referred to as the 'recto' from the latin (Leaf), the front side of a leaf. The reverse or back of the page is known as the 'verso'. That's it in map trade talk 'recto' the front side of the sheet with the image on it and the back is called the 'verso'.

Often the verso will have text printed on it but not always. For the map to have been bound previously into an atlas it would need what's known as a binders guard or stub. This was simply a strip of paper glued to the back centrefold which enabled the binder to attach the map into the atlas or book. A simple stitching made this possible without damaging or leaving holes in the centrefold of the map.



Above: c1758 Jacques Nicolas Bellin. Continuation of Brazil drawn from Mr. Danville's America map

Early on mapmakers quickly realised that once the issue of scale had been addressed this was obviously going to result in some empty space appearing on the map in production. So like any good marketing push they set about filling such space with a variety of devices including cartouches, vignettes or insets. Collectively grouped we can refer to these as map ornamentation. This was presented in a way that wisely used the space available to capture attention and convey the

message - There's nothing new under the sun! One such device is the cartouche. To quote Wikipedia "A cartouche in cartography is a decorative emblem on a globe or map. Map cartouches may contain the title, the printer's address, date of publication, the scale of the map and legends, and sometimes a dedication. The design of cartouches varies according to cartographer and period style." That just about covers it.



*Late 16th Century*



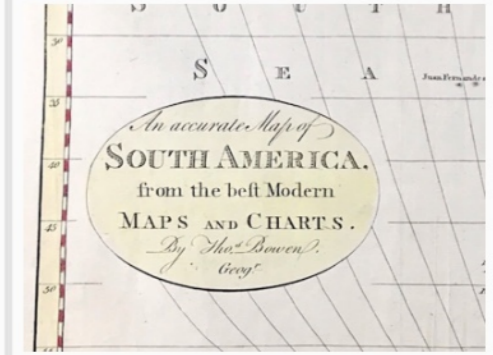
*Mid 17th Century*



*Late 17th Century*



*Early 18th Century*



*Late 18th Century*

I previously mentioned checking that the design style of the cartouche is in keeping with the period the map is claimed to be from. If you're looking to buy a sixteenth century map say by Abraham Ortelius could you instantly tell by the cartouche design on the map if the cartouche at least is looking right for that period? The more experienced you get at recognising cartouche styles the better.

**Just by looking at the cartouches above could you name the mapmakers?** If you can't as yet, not to worry but the more you research and get familiar with the work of mapmakers the better equipped you'll become in identifying antique maps. You'll be a lot more confident when it comes to answering the all important questions - is it original, reproduction or even fake!

In the above examples you'll see the cartouche styles changing faces over time. Using the maps of just a few well known mapmakers we start with the late 16th century. Then strap work designs as they were known were generally

representations of leather, parchment or metal bands interwoven sometimes with hideous figures or heads.

Then by the mid to late seventeenth century a more Baroque style with mythological symbolism appeared and remained into the early eighteenth century. Now however the cartouches were generally uncoloured. By the nineteenth century cartouches were often nothing more than a simple oval or rectangle as the desire for more elaborate decoration was left behind.

*So could you name the mapmakers? Late 16th century - Mercator, Mid 17th century - Blaeu, Late 17th century - Speed, Early 18th century - Seutter and Late 18th century - Bowen.*

**Top Tip:** When it comes to the question is it original all the points discussed so far can help you evaluate the antique map you're considering. As mentioned you want to look at what's on the paper, but even more importantly the paper itself. What does the paper itself tell you? Is it laid paper or wove? This will help clarify does the paper fit with the claimed age of the map. What is the back of the map telling you? If possible, especially as a novice you want to try and get to see the maps 'in the flesh' as it were. There's nothing like seeing, touching and feeling these antique items. Once you're more confident you can consider distance buying online.

**Top Tip:** It's good to examine the cartouche carefully, especially on early maps where they are more elaborate. What does it tell you? Is the design style in keeping with the period the map is from? But it's not just about design style, often the official title of the map is found within the cartouche. Other useful information sometimes recorded within the cartouche will include the mapmaker, publisher, date and place of publication, a distance scale or a dedication. All this is important information helping you to identify the map and its originality.

**Top Tip:** When you become familiar with cartouche styles and designs you will notice that you can often identify a mapmaker simply on the basis of a cartouche design. Having a basic knowledge of cartouche styles from sixteenth

to nineteenth century and the work of mapmakers of the period is a big benefit when you want to build a map collection. It's another piece in the jigsaw helping you identify an original antique map.



# Ornamentation

## A Maps Anatomy

A key feature of most sixteenth to eighteenth century maps as we've seen is the cartouche. There's a handful of other elements that make up a maps ornamentation that you will want to be aware of and these are shown in the boxes on the next page.

Maps were made to different scales so it would be logical for there to be a ratio that compared the measurement on the map to the actual distance. These scales are normally shown by means of multiple scale bars for the units of measurement to the mile.

Another feature is what's known as the 'Legend'. This simple device contains the explanation for symbols used on the map such as towns, roads, canals, rivers, forts, bridges etc.

Many old maps have different symbols for the likes of market towns, cathedral towns and fortifications, within some legends there is a simple numbered or alphabetical index.

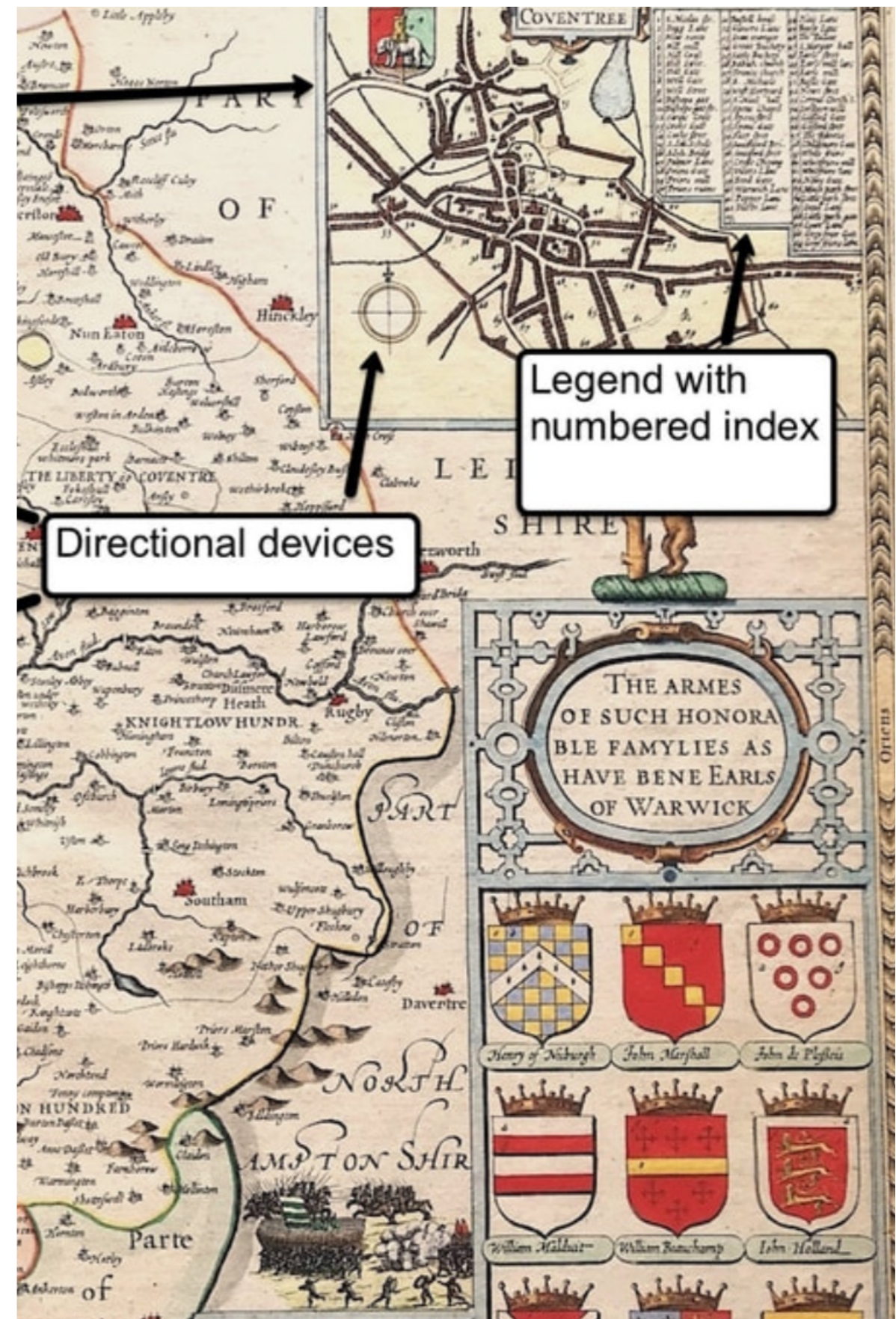
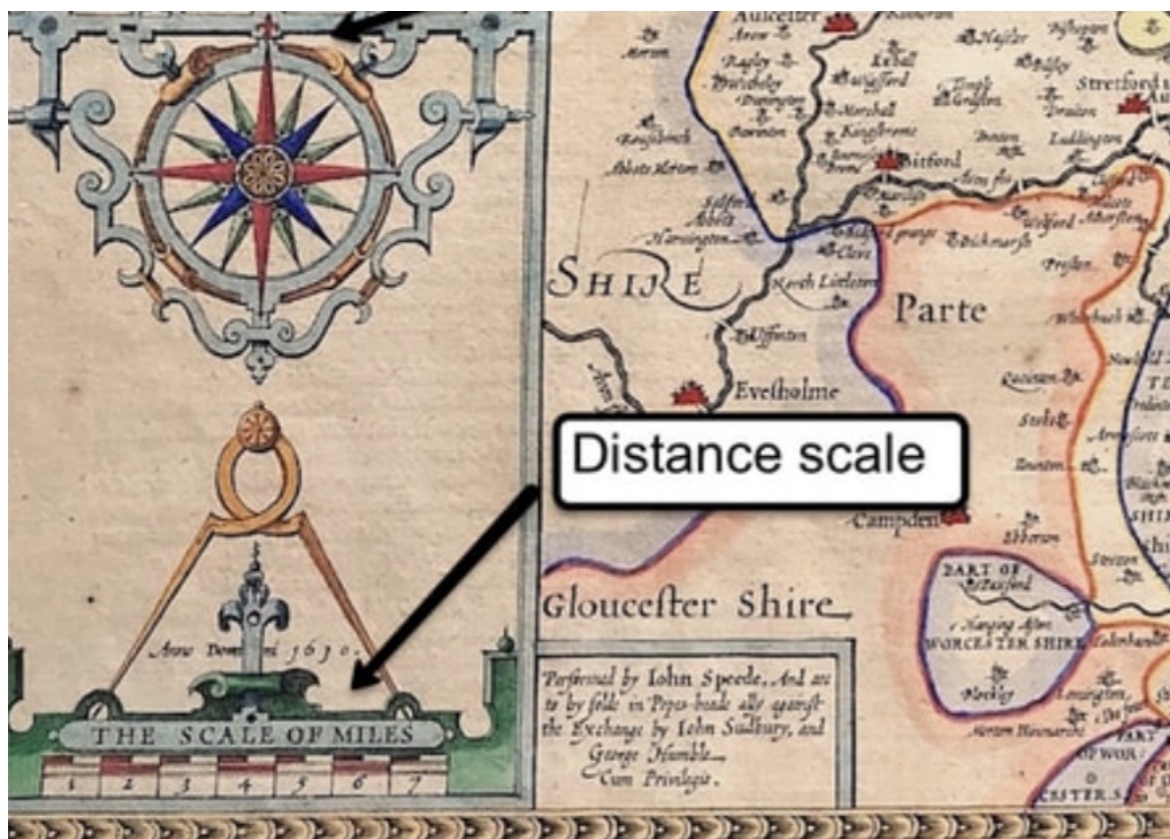
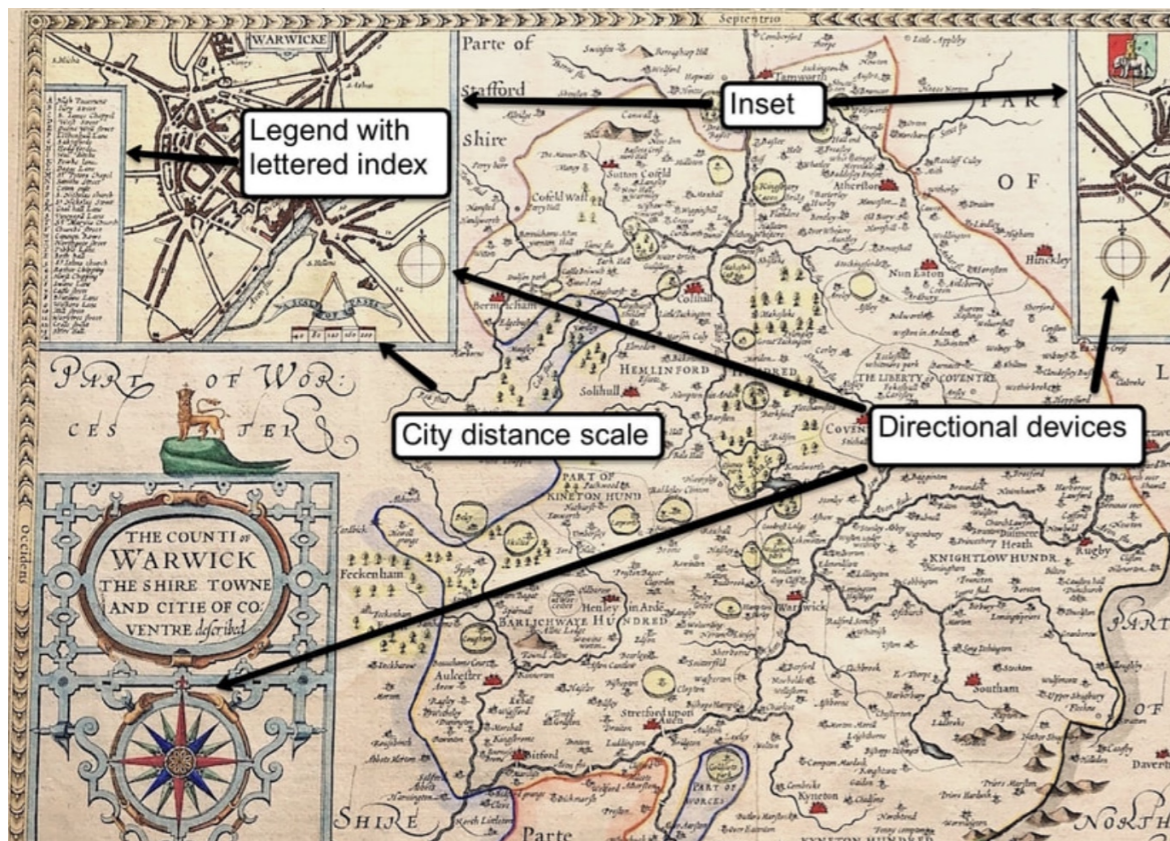
On the John Speed map shown on the next page you can see at the top left a simple legend box within the map inset for the City of Warwick. This has a simple alphabetical index identifying within the street plan certain buildings, streets, lanes, chapels and churches.

The inset on the top right for the city of Coventry has a similar legend, this time with a numbered index, identifying places and buildings within the city. Notice also that within both of the city insets at the top of the map and the larger cartouche inset on the left there are directional devices. A simple device within the top insets with a more elaborate directional device within the cartouche. In all cases north is indicated by the fleur de lis.

### **Here's the Benefit?**

*Getting a basic understanding of a maps anatomy so you're able to identify the ornamental parts that make up a map is essential.*

*This knowledge will arm you with what to look for when it comes to helping you identify an original antique map, plus it may help you decide what type of maps you really want to start collecting.*





*Original Map Chart of the Western or Atlantic Ocean by Thomas Bowen 1788.*

Still on the subject of ornamentation brings us to the matter of what's with all those lines? On your travels you will see maps similar to the example above. These fall into the category of sea or navigational charts. These maps showing large areas of the ocean and a particular coast line are very attractive and popular with collectors. Direction on old maps is indicated by means of a compass or wind rose, simple or elaborate in design, traditionally with north indicated by the use of a fleur de lis and east by a small cross. So what's with all those lines? These are known as rhumb lines. In

navigation, a rhumb line or loxodrome is an arc crossing all meridians of longitude at the same angle, that is, a path with constant bearing as measured relative to true or magnetic north. In this example you can see the rhumb lines radiating from the compass rose. You can see the fleur de lis at the top of the rose indicating north. East is indicated by the small cross to the right. On old sea charts the rhumb lines represent the bearings sailors used to navigate long ocean voyages prior to the invention of the chronometer.

# Kinds of Maps

## What to Collect?

One size fits all! That may be true with many things in this life but you'll quickly realise that its not the case with antique maps. In fact its more a case of every size, shape, form, subject, appearance and kind of antique map is out there if you have a look around. This obviously makes the issue of what to collect somewhat daunting on one level, but on another level you could say you're spoilt for choice.

Understanding why a map was made, the available technology of the time and the maps accuracy is important. How it fits in with the perceived geography, beliefs, social and cultural realities of a bygone era can also have a bearing on how we view such a map today. All these things can influence what maps we are personally attracted to.





*(Nova Totius Terrarum Orbis Tabula Auctore F. De Wit.) Doncker, Hendrik, Amsterdam: Henrick Doncker, 1666.*

The where, why and how has its place, but at its core map collecting is a matter of the heart. So to keep this as simple as possible what kinds of maps are on offer? First and foremost Hemisphere Projections are very popular, attractive and collectable. These maps effectively convert half of the spherical world to a circle. Obviously these don't come in all shapes, but they do come in all sizes, something for everyone almost. World Maps using a hemispheric projection are

known as double-hemispheres. You can also get them based on the Western-Eastern Hemisphere or Northern-Southern (polar) Hemisphere with extensive variations. There are many affordable examples of single and double hemisphere maps to be found in the market obviously the example above is at the top end. If hemispheres are for you, then do some research there are many variations. There is going to be something out there for you, you just need to look . . .

# Embellishment

## Will you get hooked?

When it comes to collecting rare maps its often the embellishment on old maps that catches the eye and draws us in. My first maps as a collector were from the Blaeu family. I'm sure it was my fascination with the embellishments that initially drew me in and before long I was hooked.

I love both reading and research so it quickly became evident to me that what was going on with these maps was not just about art or decoration, but actually visual messaging. Besides the map and geographical area being of interest these embellishments add to the story.

Embellishments are used to enhance and convey messages on a number of levels. Mythology, allegory, emblems, power and the importance of local trade, naval battles, indigenous peoples, flora and fauna. You can add to this sea monsters, sailing ships, customs, explorers, figures of importance, continents, gods and goddesses, the heavens and planets to name just a few devices, all used to help convey the message.

The Map images shown on the next page are from Nova Totius Terrarum Orbis Tabula by Justus Danckerts Atlas. Published in Amsterdam c1688. The Danckerts family were prominent print and map sellers active in Amsterdam for nearly a century.

This map is embellished by four large lively allegorical scenes, representing the four elements. Top left fire is shown by war and destruction, top right air by the heavens, bottom left earth by harvesting and husbandry and bottom right water by ships and a spouting whale. There are groups of figures between the hemispheres and on either side of the smaller polar maps.

### **How to Identify:**

*The embellishments say it all! Delightful maps like the one below by Danckerts and those of the Blaeu family I mentioned earlier are from whats known as the Golden Age of cartography c1550 - c1675.*

*These are rich in cartographic ornamentation and remain popular with collectors. So if you're on the fence about what to collect maybe the embellishments on old maps will catch your eye making maps from the Golden Age the ones for you!*



# What will you Pay? Size Matters

You may take the view that your budget is the real deciding factor and that does have merit. However new or novice collectors often lack knowledge on the subject so do well to start small. Yes I do mean literally 'small' not just a smaller budget. There's lots of advantages to collecting small. For one thing you don't have a problem with storage space. You can also mount frame and provide wall space easily with a collection of smaller maps, before you decide to go big.

**Important:** *Also it's less of a shock for your partner when they return home from shopping only to discover that large artwork now taking pride of place on your office wall or even the lounge wall! They then ask "How much did you pay for that thing?"*

So starting small on most fronts gives you time to find your feet, get a feel for the market and get some experience under your belt, all without spending big! On the right there's an example of one kind of smaller map. Notice this map carry's big names in the map collectors world, even though this is a small map!

There are plenty of maps like this example and others to choose from that fall into this category. Maps of the world, country and county maps, town plans, road maps, river maps

planispheres, hemispheres, celestial charts, even playing cards with maps on them, to name a few. As a new collector why not investigate what's available and of interest to you in smaller maps. Starting small is never a bad thing.

Below is an excellent map of the British Isles and Ireland showing the major cities. Large strap work title cartouche. Blank to Verso (Ref: R W Shirley Early Printed Maps of The British Isles 1477-1650 Revised Edition p 123) Approx engraved area 5.5" X 8". Mercator, G. Hondius, J. (Cloppenburg) "Atlas Minor Gerardi Mercatoris...Ioannis Cloppenburgij 1630" Map engraved by Pieter Van Den Keere.



# Look Up! - Celestial Maps

As I mentioned previously understanding why a map was made, the lack of technologies at the time, how a map fits in with the perceived geography, beliefs, social and cultural realities of a bygone era all has a bearing on how you view such a map today. All these things can influence what maps we are personally interested in or attracted to.

Celestial Maps are a favourite of many, myself included. Mapping of the sky and its celestial bodies within star charts goes all the way back to Ptolemy who is credited with creating the first star catalogue around the year 150AD.

But the Golden Age of celestial cartography is roughly 1600 to 1800. All benefiting from the technological advances in astronomical observations and printing techniques. Many of the most notable star atlases and maps can cost thousands of pounds but there are many celestial maps and charts in the market place available at a reasonable price range for the novice collector with a celestial interest.

There are many examples of celestial maps and you may need to hunt a bit harder as there can be strong competition for these maps. If celestial maps tickle your fancy then do some research there are many variations and they come up in various online auctions so its worth searching the specialist

auction houses. There is going to be something out there for you, within your price range, you just need to search.

*Below: Planisphere Des Constellations Meridionales by Alain Manesson Mallet c1683.*



# Before Google - Strip Road Maps

Another kind of map that's collected by the enthusiast is antique road maps. Way before google was around the Romans produced a pretty accurate map of the fifty thousand or more miles of roads in the Empire in around the third century.

Jump forward in time to the late seventeenth century and sheet maps showing post roads and 'cross-roads' in England and Wales appeared but were limited in detail. One of the most popular for collectors nowadays first appeared in 1675 with John Ogilby inventing the 'strip map'. These maps were compiled into the work Ogilby's Britannia.

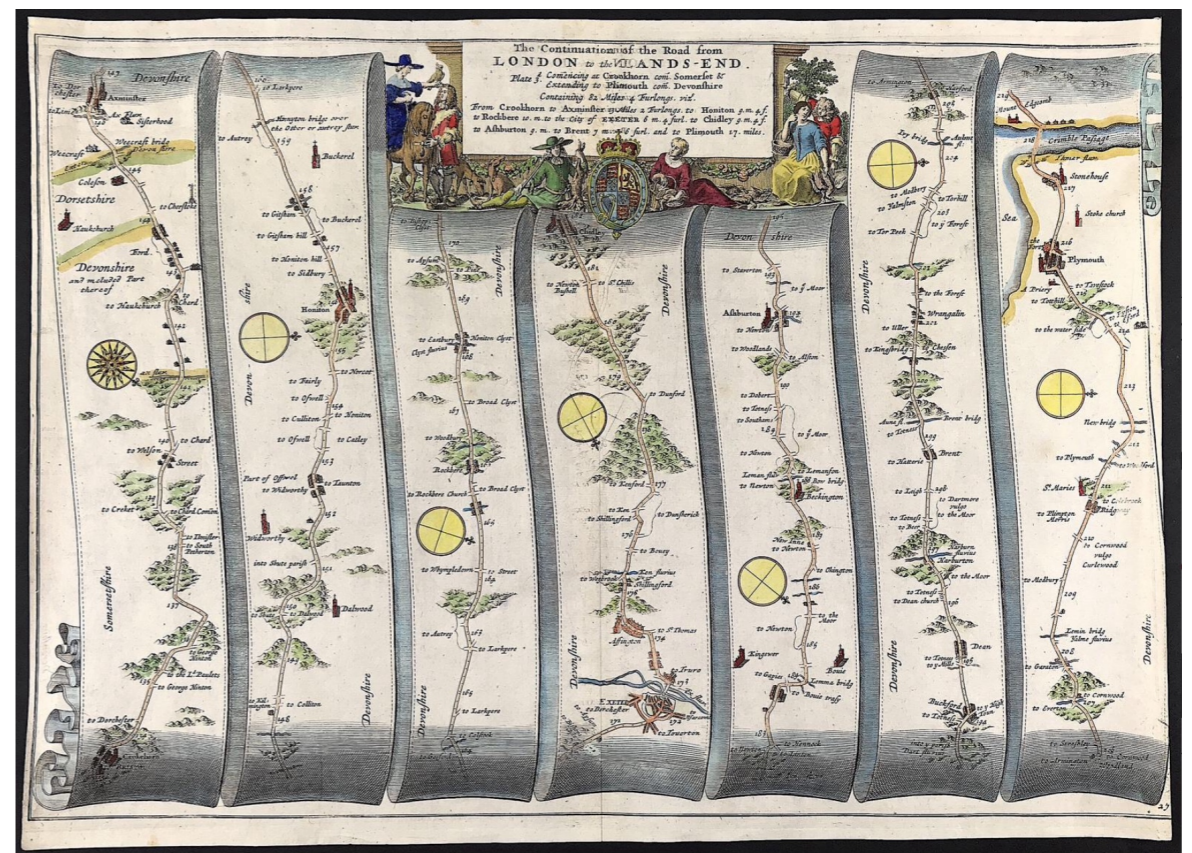
Here's an example of a Strip Road Map by John Ogilby c1675. Its an original by John Ogilby being Part 3 (Plate 27) of the Road to Lands End. This part starting at Crookshorn via Axminster, Honiton, Exeter, Ashburton, Buckford through to Plymouth.

**Ogilby's Britannia** - A Geographical and Historical Description of the Principle Roads thereof, consisted of 100 maps of the principle roads of England and Wales, engraved in strip form. These maps provided details of the roads themselves and descriptive notes of the country on either side. Each strip had a compass rose to indicate changes in

direction. Ogilby measured over 25,000 miles of roads all surveyed on foot with a 'perambulator' or measuring wheel.

I see these antique road maps consistently sell at auction. Those in good condition fetch a good price and they remain popular with collectors. These may be of interest if you're new to collecting.

**Top Tip:** *These maps are a nice size for displaying framed on a wall the approx sheet size: being about 14" X 20" and they can often be found in local auctions or like everything you'll find them for sale online.*



# For the Ocean Going - Sea Charts

About 100AD a man known as Marinus of Tyre began drawing maps for the use of seamen based on a cylindrical projection forming a grid of parallelograms centred on Rhodes, the marine focal point of the then known world.

It is only through the writings of one of the greatest geographers of all time that we now know what we do of Marinus, for Ptolemy consciously built upon the former's work. Ptolemy wrote a great deal, his best known work being *Geographia*, in which he discusses cartography and lists the latitude and longitude co-ordinates of 8,000 places, culled from ancient maps or estimated from a study of traveller's tales.

Sea Charts then have been around some time, travel back to around 1800 and charting was showing a true picture of the world. Captain Cook had disproved the existence of a great southern continent and placed New Zealand on the map. The knowledge gained by the Dutch in the East-Indies in the seventeenth century was now gradually becoming available.

Admiralty surveying and charting probably reached its peak in the early 1850's and the charts of the period may be admired for their accuracy and their fine engraving.

Sea Charts are a fascinating subject and another area of interest for the antique map or chart collector. These charts can describe seas, rivers and coasts in many parts of the world. Some show man-made features such as harbours and shore defences. There are charts available of just about every part of the world constructed on large and small scales, in sheet and atlas form.

**Below:** The Harbour of Port Royal, Jamaica. Captain Joseph Speer c1766. From Speer's *The West-India Pilot* London.



# Maps on the River of Life

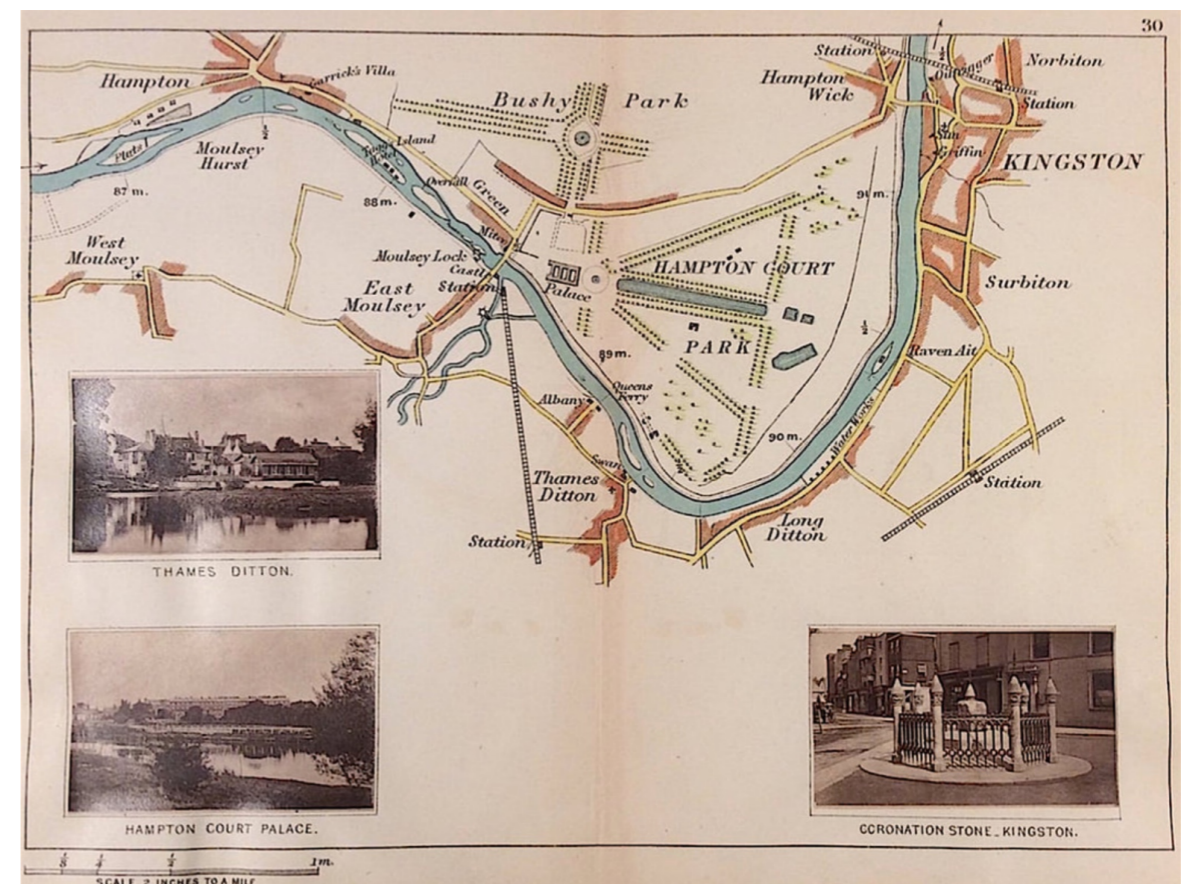
If you're new to collecting antique maps its unlikely that local canal or river maps will be the first thing that springs to mind. As I've already mentioned just about every subject, size, shape, form and kind of antique map is out there if you look. This includes some exceptional and rare river maps.

I've been fortunate to live near the River Thames near London on and off for most of my life. Maybe you have a connection in your own past with a town or river that brings back fond memories perhaps from when you were growing up. Do you now live near a famous river? Do you know if any good antique maps of that river exist? Its worth doing some research, a river map may be just what you want to add to your new collection.

The Map shown here is an original map of a section of the River Thames by Henry W. Taunt c1885 Photographer to the Oxford Architectural and Historical Society from 'A New Map of The River Thames from Thames Head to London' on a scale of two inches to a mile. With tipped in albumen prints that were added to the map before publication. This is a unique smaller map of the river Thames. A lithograph print with early albumen prints and additional later hand colour.

Maybe your family has roots in a certain area from way back, a town, a county or state, a region, country or part of the world you simply have an interest in historically.

All sorts of people collect all sorts of maps for all sorts of reasons, even maps of rivers. Every map collector is different and the reason they collect what they collect is often linked to their own story or journey along the river of life.



# Technically Minded - Projections

So far we've focused on a small selection of what 'kinds' of maps are available to collectors. Hopefully this has at least given you some direction, maybe has introduced you to some new ideas or has made you aware of the possibilities. Perhaps for the more technically minded or those simply seeking something different from the run of the mill maps, take a look at projections. These are a niche within the antique map market that may interest you.

As paper maps are flat and the earth is roughly spherical shaped the flat map obviously cannot represent the earth's surface exactly. This is where the so called 'projection' comes in. Representations of the earth's curved surface or forms of celestial spheres drawn on a flat surface are called projections.

There are many ways projections can be constructed. Depending on the purpose of the map the projection will cause distortion of at least one aspect of the real world - shape, area, distance or direction. Ptolemy described several ways to translate the spherical earth onto a flat plane which you can research online for an in depth explanation if you choose.

**Below:** Map Projections of earlier maps 'Carte du Monde de Marc Paul; Carte du Monde de Jacques Castaldo; Carte du Monde de Miguel Lopez' by Marco Polo, Giacomo Gastaldi and Miguel Lopez. Alain M. Mallet c1683.



# Has it Got Any Sea Monsters?

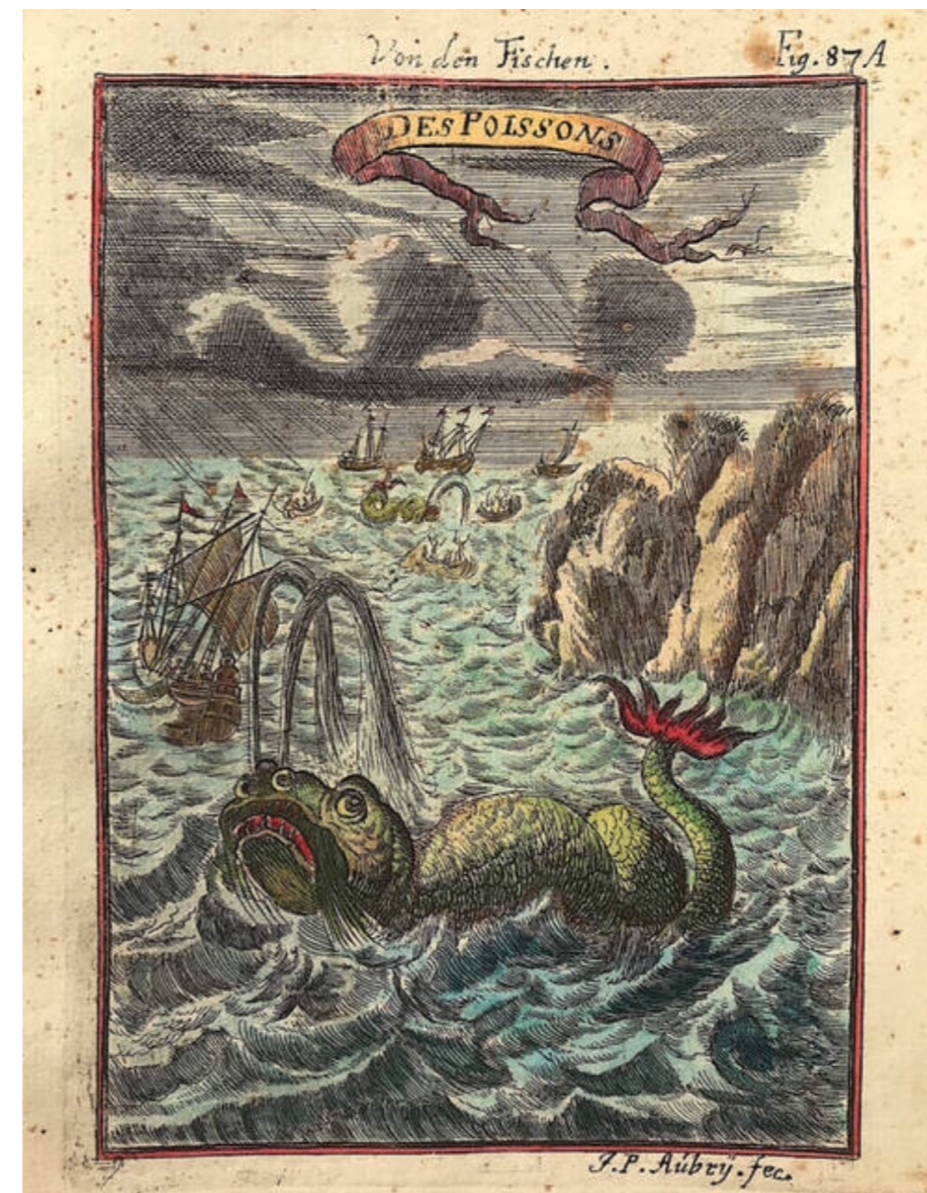
I regularly get map and print enthusiasts contacting me online about maps with said sea monsters or curious looking humans. The sea monsters especially, "have you still got that map with the sea monsters?" Usually the answer is no as these are so popular they get snapped up pretty quickly. The best I can often do is direct these enquiries to other reliable antique map dealers who may have some of these delightful maps and prints in stock.

If it's got sea monsters then it's most likely going to be a sixteenth or seventeenth century map. This was a time when many people believed that strange and dangerous monsters inhabited the oceans. Many of these maps carried the medieval fascination with monsters, some derived from the ancient Greek historian Herodotus.

Herodotus spent his life traveling from one Persian territory to another. He crossed the Mediterranean to Egypt and traveled through Palestine to Syria and Babylon. He headed to Macedonia and visited all the islands of the Greek Archipelago: Rhodes, Cyprus, Delos, Paros, Thasos, Samothrace, Crete, Samos, Cythera and Aegina. He sailed through the Hellespont to the Black Sea and kept going until he hit the Danube River. While he traveled, Herodotus collected what he called "autopsies," or "personal inquiries"

He listened to myths and legends, recorded oral histories and made notes of the places and things that he saw. So in the nicest way you can blame the sea monsters on Herodotus. These along with an array of other fantastical creatures continue to captivate many map collectors. How about you?

**Below:** "Des Poissons" by Alain Manesson Mallet c1683 from Volume I of 'Description de L'Univers' by Mallet.



# Endless Options - Thematic Maps

While we're still on the subject of 'kinds of maps' that are available to the newbie antique map collector, here's another one for you. Thematic Maps will need to be added to your list of possibilities. The range of themes is just about unlimited and generally covers physical, political, economic and social aspects connected with a specific geographical area. If geography and especially in this case mountain ranges are of interest to you then the thematic map displayed here is for you!

This fascinating Map is of Canada c1840. It shows not only the geographical area of the territory but also a Classification of Places, Population and Mountain Ranges including their Height above Sea Level. This is from a unique set of smaller maps published by Ore and Company, Amen Corner, Paternoster Row, London and drawn and engraved by John Dower of Pentonville London.

Many of these maps came into existence in the first part of the nineteenth century with the onset of the Industrial Revolution. The rapid technical advances in mapmaking and colour printing making this possible.

You can see more of these 'Mountain Range' maps on my etsy site [HERE](#)

The field of thematic maps is vast and interesting and its an area where you can build a collection for a relatively modest financial investment.

**Top Tip:** *Thematic maps are often to be found in local auctions, estate sales, often tucked away in job lots. Because many are deemed as not of high value they easily end up discarded. Armed with some knowledge of what you're looking for this is a treasure trove area. As an online dealer in maps and prints this area alone generates a very healthy return.*



# Your Own Back Yard - Town Plans

Back in early November 2020 I started posting about the different kinds of maps available to collectors on my weekly Rare Maps and Prints Blog. To quote myself again "One size fits all! That may be true with many things in this life but you'll quickly realise that its not the case with antique maps. In fact its more a case of every size, shape, form, subject, appearance and kind of antique map is out there if you look around."

With this thought in mind don't forget your own back yard. Many antique map enthusiasts look to collect based on the area they live in. Old town plans are a favourite.

In reality I've just scratched the surface with this kick start guide, but hopefully its given you some solid ideas. Town Plans is certainly not one to be left out of any basic list.

Any view straight down on a city or town showing its streets, parks, blocks of buildings etc is called a town plan or birds-eye plan. Again its popular with collectors as its something most of us are familiar with from modern and today's digital mapping. Now of course if you're lost in a city somewhere in the world you're going to pull up the available town plan likely via Google maps on your mobile device.

The Map below is The City And Environs Of London, As Fortified ....1642 & 1643. Published for Walter Harrison's History of London 1775. The map shows and a numbered key describes the fortifications put in place (and perhaps made of wood) to defend London from the Royalist forces in the Civil War. With no such attack forthcoming, they were demolished in 1647.

There were many town plans published in the nineteenth century and those published by the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge (SDUK) are among the most popular. Older plans like the one below of London are also popular but like with most things scarce they require a bit more searching to find.



# Antique Maps - Illogical Prices!

Before I go, I need to give you a quick heads up on the matter of price's in this market. The truth is there are no fixed price's for maps. You'll have to take some time and do some research to get an understanding of how the map market works. Some maps that are more popular with a wide appeal do have a more stable price range but this is not the case with most maps.

Within the antique map market there are segments that within themselves create differing sub markets. Prices will differ within these sub markets for the same map.

Think of it like this, the overall market is made up of a mix of buyers and sellers including dealers, auction houses, serious collectors, casual collectors, institutions, even interior decor buyers and various others that of themselves create there own transient markets.

The buyers and sellers take into consideration factors that will impact the price of the map being sold. These factors will include factors like: Geographical area popular or unpopular. Popular maps with wide appeal will usually demand a higher price. An early state or first edition of a map by a mapmaker of significance will usually demand a higher price than a later edition of the same map.

But there's lots of other factors that affect price. No two maps are exactly the same! Add to this issues like condition good or not so good, its visual appeal, has it got original colour, later colour, or is it uncoloured as first published. As an example, if this is a popular map the issue of colour alone may make for a higher value if its original, or it could even lower the value if the colour has been added later and executed poorly or incorrectly for the period!

**Top Tip:** *Research, research, research. Knowledge gained along with experience comes highly recommended at this stage. As they say "If in doubt - don't" well maybe don't is no help so I recommend ask someone with more experience and if you can't ask directly you can reach out to people online.*

There are many experienced dealers with websites, do your research and you will be able to establish some guidelines on price's for most antique maps for both retail and trade prices.

# Antique Maps - Enjoy the Chase!

In conclusion, hopefully this kick start guide has given you some pointers when it comes to getting started with collecting maps. The examples used here are in reality just the tip of the iceberg. You as a collector will want to start somewhere and some of the kinds of maps referenced here may be new to you.

The upside is most of these kinds of maps can be found in today's market at reasonable prices via online sellers, auction houses or map dealers. Does it cost a fortune to collect maps? Well it doesn't have to. You can start building a map collection with a modest financial approach. It can be just as challenging to find **what you're looking for** as it is for those who are in a position to spend vast sums of money to gain that special prized map or collection.

The reasons for collecting maps are as varied as the map collectors themselves. All sorts of people collect all sorts of maps for all sorts of reasons. What they collect is often linked to their own story or journey through life. Finding what you're looking for is rewarding and importantly there's a lot of fun in the chase.

Enjoy!

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