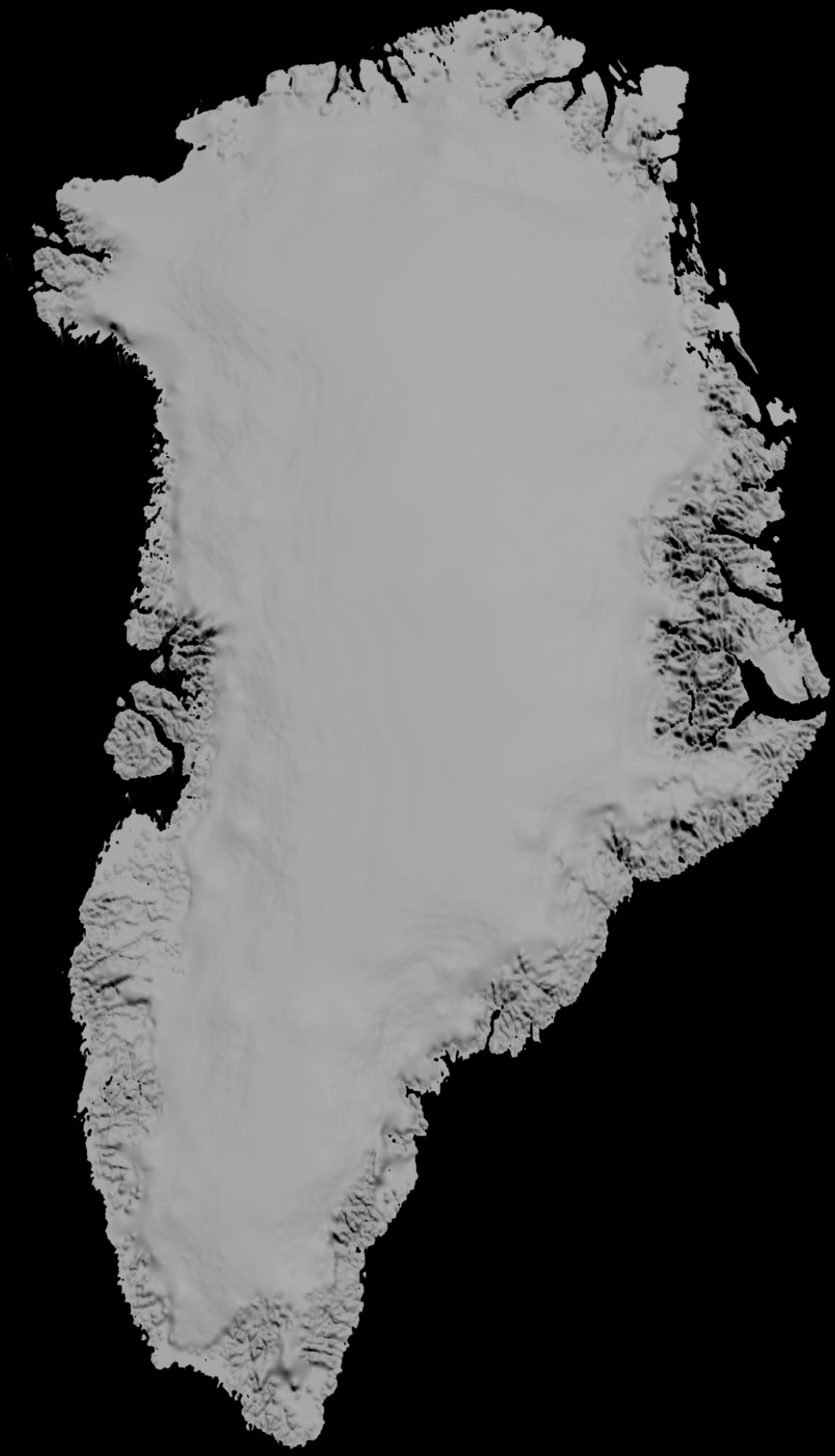
Neatline



They travelled and travelled.
For such a vast land
there cannot be enough people
to name all the places.

They travelled and travelled
and travelled back again
with maps of the land
and its way of life described.

To honour and glory
to medals and more
all for having journeyed to a land
where people live and dwell.

Translated excerpt from Aqqaluk Lynge 's poem "Til hæder og ære" (1982)

The author at Knud Rasmussen's desk

Denmark's Big Chunk of Ice

As a Dane born and deeply rooted in America, recent events break my heart. Not only is the US threatening and insulting its most long-standing ally (215 uninterrupted years), but it is done with the explicit intention of robbing the Kingdom of Denmark of both its territory and its history. More importantly, it endeavors to rob Greenland of its selfdetermination.

It is a claim made without legitimacy. Without history. And it is unworthy of the greatest nation on Earth.

As a result of this - and as a means of mitigating an excruciating feeling of powerlessness in the face of injustice - Neatline has allowed me to shape this month's catalog.

I am proud to present this Greenland-focussed selection of material, accompanied by my take on the history of Greenland's mapping and exploration.

While I entertain no illusions that this will have any sort of political impact, it is my hope that the following can elucidate why talk of acquisition or annexation is so hurtful.

This catalog is dedicated to our friendship - may it last another two centuries!

- Kristoffer Damgaard

A History of the Exploration and Mapping of Greenland

In recent years, Greenland's unique status and historical ties have drawn global attention, most notably when U.S. President Donald Trump in 2019 floated the idea of buying Greenland. While this was swiftly dismissed by both Greenlandic and Danish governments, the issue has since returned in force, with President Trump now demanding that the landmass be handed over to the United States for security reasons. The majority of analysts and politicians across the globe reject his premise - including most in the United States. In stead, many perceive it as an authoritarian move to acquire new territory for the United States, and a special place in the history books for President Trump.

To Greenlanders and Danes, these developments are heartbreaking. By ignoring Greenland's sovereignty and its centuries-old connection to Denmark, the current administration not only threatens to blow up the security of the NATO Alliance, but Trump's actions serve to humiliate and punish an ally that unhesitatingly has stood alongside the United States for over 200 years. Worst of all is the uncertainty faced by the 57.000 people of Greenland, who despite an unforgiving climate and centuries of colonial rule, are living through one of the worst existential threats that Greenland has faced so far.

At Neatline, our loyalties lie with the rule of law, and our solidarity with the people of Greenland. This is not a political stance, but a legal and moral one. As an American company with close connections to Denmark, we use history to bolster our apprehension at the current confrontation. Or to be more specific, we use the history of Greenland's exploration and mapping to inform our position. Understanding how Greenland was explored and mapped over time provides an important context for understanding why the present confrontation is so deeply unnecessary and wrong.

From the Viking Age to the Cold War, only the boldest have charted the massive island's rugged coasts and deep fjords. Many of these Arctic pioneers operated under the auspices of Denmark, continually reinforcing Danish claims and shaping how we see and understand Greenland today. The following essay surveys the major chapters in that history. We begin with the Norse discovery and settlement of Greenland in the 10th century and the resurgence of Norwegian-Danish interests in the late medieval period. But we shall also look at Greenland's role during the age of exploration and early cartography in the 16th-century, and immerse ourselves in the intrepid expeditions of the 18th and 19th centuries. While most of these were Danish in origin, the later part of this period also saw notable American contributions to the geographical understanding of Greenland. And finally, we shall delve into the post-World War II era, during which Greenland won growing autonomy and Denmark applied the latest techniques to its continual mapping.

The story of Greenland's exploration and mapping is deeply intertwined with its political and national history. It is a living legacy for a real people.

Norse arrival and settlement

Greenland's first known explorers were Norse Vikings, whose arrival in the late 10th century marked the beginning of European presence on the island. According to the Icelandic sagas, *Erik the Red* – an exiled Norwegian adventurer – sailed from Iceland and **reached Greenland around 982 CE**. Finding hospitable fjords in the southwest, Erik named the land *Grønland*, reportedly to attract settlers with its promising name. He returned to Iceland extolling Greenland's merits, and in 986 a larger expedition established two permanent Norse colonies: the Eastern Settlement near modern Qaqortoq and the Western Settlement near present-day Nuuk. At their height, these farming communities may have numbered between 3,000 and 6,000 people living on about 280 farms. The relatively mild climate of the *Medieval Warm Period* likely aided the Norsemen in sustaining livestock and agriculture that far north. By 1000 CE, Leif Erikson (Erik the Red's son) had introduced Christianity to Greenland following his conversion in Norway; and by 1126 Greenland had its own episcopal seat at Garðar. For several centuries, the Norse Greenlanders were Europe's outpost in the Arctic, maintaining trade with Iceland and Norway and even venturing to hunt, fish, and settle in North America (Vinland).

For a period, the Norsemen coexisted with what we today consider the island's indigenous peoples. The Inuit (or Thule Culture) arrived in northern Greenland from Arctic Canada by the 13th century and gradually spread south. Sporadic contact consisting of both trade and conflict are documented in the Icelandic Sagas, though details remain sparse. By the mid-13th century, Greenland formally fell under the Crown of Norway, held by Håkon Håkonsson, thus tying it to Norwegian–Icelandic trade networks and subjecting it to a European feudal hierarchy. In the 14th century, however, the Norse settlements entered a period of decline from which they would not recover. Scholars attribute this to a combination of factors: climate cooling during the Little Ice Age, dwindling trade (especially after Norway's civil unrest and the Black Death), soil erosion, and perhaps conflicts or competition with the Inuit. Archaeological evidence indicates the Western Settlement was likely abandoned by the mid-14th century, and the last written record from the Eastern Settlement is a wedding at Hvalsey Church in 1408. By the 15th century, the Norse colonies had vanished altogether, their buildings left to ruin and their fate long a mystery in Europe. This marked the end of medieval Greenland's first chapter. Yet even as the Norse community waned, the idea of Greenland did not entirely disappear from European minds, particularly among Norwegian and later Danish rulers who regarded it as part of their realm.

Medieval decline and renewed Nordic interest

As news of Greenland grew infrequent and the colony's survival came into question, Scandinavian monarchs showed intermittent interest in re-establishing contact and authority over the island. King Magnus IV of Norway and Sweden (Magnus Eriksson) launched an expedition in 1355 to investigate Greenland's condition and "aid" the remaining settlers. Magnus's envoy, Paul Knutson, sailed westward with clergy and crew in

a voyage framed as a mission to preserve Christianity in Greenland. When Knutson's party reached the Western Settlement, they found it deserted. This discouraging discovery confirmed rumors that Norway's most distant colony had collapsed. The Eastern Settlement likely persisted a few decades longer, but by the late 1400s it too was abandoned or absorbed by the Inuit. In 1540, the last report on Norse settlements in Greenland speak of the discovery of a dead Norseman's body by European sailors – a poignant final glimpse of the medieval colony's demise.

In 1397, the Kalmar Union united the Nordic kingdoms under Danish Queen Margrethe I, thus bringing Norway, Iceland and Greenland under the Danish crown. At first, Greenland was simply viewed as a lost possession or in absentia. The Danish royal family showed little interest in the remote arctic outpost and regular voyages soon ceased. Indeed, when the last official trading ship "*Greenland Knarr*" sank in 1369, it was not replaced, effectively cutting off all scheduled contact. Symbolic ties nevertheless endured - not least in emergent field of cartography.

The Catholic Church continued to appoint titular bishops of Garðar well into the 15th century, although most of these clergymen never actually reached their diocese. There were also early cartographic stirrings. Most remarkable was the visit of a **Danish cartographer named Claudius Clavus** to Greenland in circa 1420. Based on his journey, Clavus compiled one of the first maps of the North based on his experiences and observations. This map, which included Greenland's west coast, was later brought to Rome where it was well-received by both papacy and intelligentsia alike, and quickly became incorporated into the Ptolemaic repertoire. Indeed, Greenland made its debut by name on a European map around 1427, appearing in a revised edition of Ptolemy's *Geographia*. By 1482, The *Ulm Geographia* included another map inspired by Clavus, which showed Greenland as inhabited, challenging the

notion of the far north as an unpeopled void. This model was quickly adopted by other Germanic cartographers such as Martin Waldseemüller (1513) and **Lorenz Fries (*Norbegia et Gottia*; 1522, 1535, 1541)**, who both reference the Clavus prototype in their maps.

Despite these efforts, for several centuries Greenland existed in the European imagination and on maps as a quasi-mythical place, hardly worth exploring. During the late 15th and 16th centuries, Danish-Norwegian kings nevertheless reaffirmed a theoretical claim to Greenland. This claim that would later become important, but at the time, no new expeditions were sent. Instead, Greenland's coastline remained more familiar to walrus hunters and whalers than to royal officials or European cartographers. The disappearance of the Norse colonies and Europe's failure to re-establish a presence, meant that by 1500, Greenland was effectively cut off from European contact. It returned to being a blank spot on the map, awaiting rediscovery in the coming Age of Exploration. It was the dawn of that Age which would soon bring Greenland back into focus, as navigators probed the northern seas for a Northwest Passage and cartographers struggled to piece together the true form of this icebound land.

Greenland in the Age of Exploration

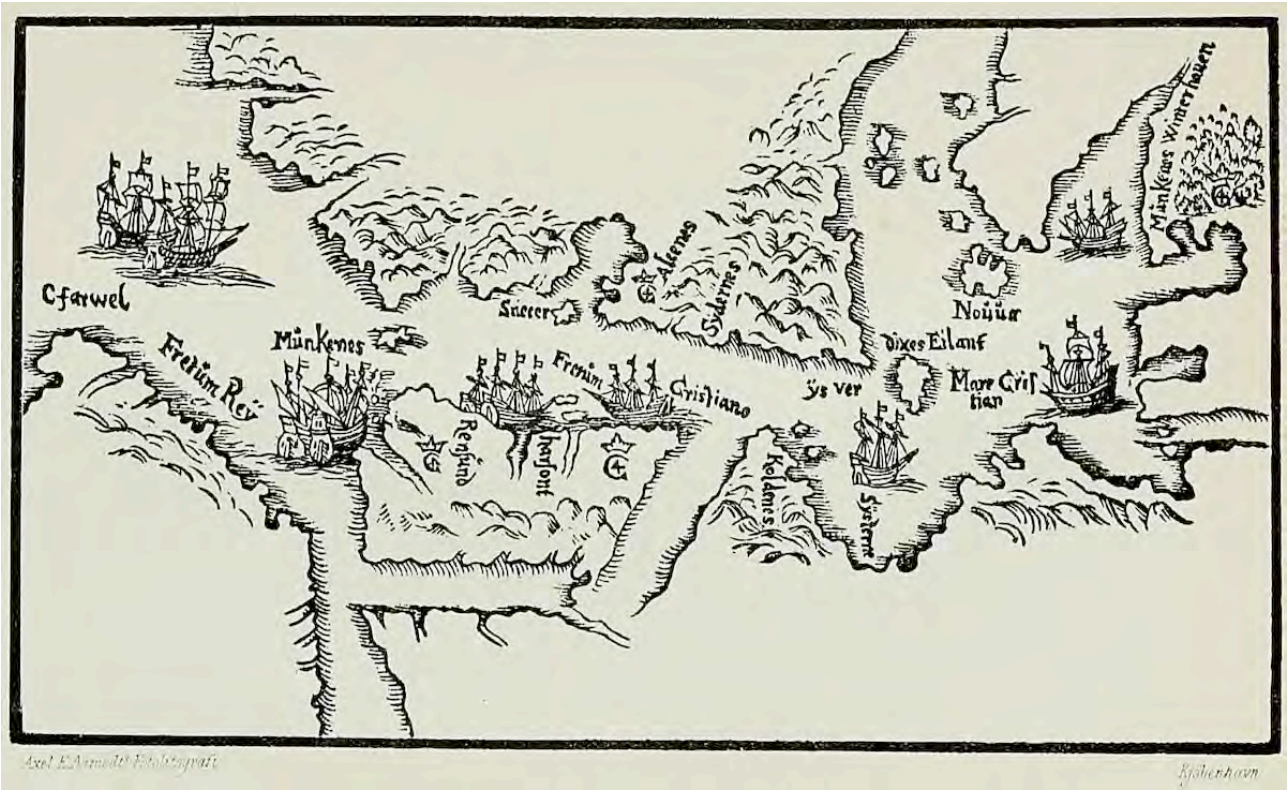
By the 16th century, European seafarers from several nations were venturing into the North Atlantic in search of new trade routes and resources. Greenland, though still home to its indigenous Inuit population, was "rediscovered" by these expeditions and gradually re-integrated on European charts. English and Portuguese explorers skirted Greenland's coasts during their quests for a Northwest Passage to Asia: John Davis sailed along Greenland's western shore in 1585, navigating the strait that now bears his name and encountering Inuit near modern Nuuk. Similarly, Martin Frobisher's earlier searches for a Passage (1576–1578) brought him into Greenlandic waters, and later in the century, Dutch whalers increasingly hunted the seas around Greenland during the summer months. These voyagers brought back sporadic reports and crude sketches of Greenland's coast, providing fresh data to European mapmakers who scrambled to update their ideas and images of the far north.

Cartography in this era often blended observation with speculation and myth, and Greenland's depiction on maps evolved accordingly. A milestone was the work of **Gerardus Mercator**, the great Flemish cartographer. In 1595, Mercator's son published his ***Septentrionalium Terrarum Descriptio*** – the first dedicated map of the Arctic, which synthesized the latest exploration reports with enduring medieval lore. Mercator's Arctic chart portrays Greenland amid a mix of fact and fable. On one hand, Mercator incorporated new discoveries: he labeled "*Fretum Dauis*" (Davis Strait) west of Greenland and "*Fretum Forbosshers*" (Frobisher's Strait) along its southern shores, just as he included notes of recent Dutch explorations. Yet the map also shows imaginary features inherited from older legends, most famously a giant magnetic mountain at the North Pole and four surrounding polar continents with a whirlpool at the center. South of Greenland, phantom islands appear: *Frisland* and *Groclant* are depicted as sizable lands in the North Atlantic. In Mercator's rendering, Groclant seems to be a cartographic ghost of Greenland

itself, likely arising from a misreading of *Gronland* in earlier sources and thus duplicated on maps as a separate island. Such errors were common: if an influential map mistakenly showed an extra island, later mapmakers often copied it, giving these myths a long life.

Another significant map of this period was the **1593 double-hemispherical polar map by Cornelis de Jode** (son of cartographer Gerard de Jode). Printed in Antwerp as part of the *Speculum Orbis Terrae* atlas, this map presented the world in twin polar projections – a striking innovation that allowed a direct view of high latitudes. Here, Greenland (labeled "*Grvnlandt*") is depicted as part of a polar landmass amid another highly speculative geography. Indeed it is worth noting that during the 1600s, Dutch cartographers in particular excelled in mapping Greenland's coast, leveraging whaling voyages for geographic knowledge. Skilled Dutch navigators like Joris Carolus charted parts of Greenland's west coast in the early 17th century, causing his *Groenlandt* pilot (1634) to become a decisive influence on Greenland maps for decades.

Denmark's King Christian IV, keen to reassert influence in the North Atlantic, sponsored expeditions from 1605 to 1607 in order to search for the lost Norse colonies. These voyages, led by Englishman James Hall under Danish commission, mapped portions of Greenland's southwest coast near today's Nuuk and Sisimiut. One of Christian IV's captains, Jens Munk, later attempted the Northwest Passage in 1619 and on his return drew a map of southern Greenland (below).



Collectively, the 16th and 17th centuries saw Greenland transformed on paper from a half-legendary outline into a progressively more concrete landmass, thanks to the interplay of exploration and cartography. Each new voyage filled in some blanks, while mapmaking – usually driven by imperial and commercial motives – guided future

expeditions by illustrating where routes and resources might best be found. These early maps, imperfect as they were, laid the groundwork for the far more detailed Danish surveys to come in later centuries.

Exploration and Mapping in the 18th and 19th Centuries

After a long hiatus, formal colonization of Greenland resumed in the early 18th century under Danish kingship. At this point, Denmark and Norway were united as a dual kingdom (Denmark-Norway), and the Danish crown saw an opportunity to reassert control over the island. Part of the motivation was a religious zeal to find any remaining Norse (i.e. Catholic) Greenlanders and to convert the Inuit to Lutheranism. But another equally important motivation was the strategic interest in Arctic trade and fishery. In 1721, Hans Egede, a Norwegian-born Lutheran pastor backed by Denmark's King Frederik IV, led a mission to Greenland. Egede established a mission and trading post near the old Norse sites, founding Godthåb (now Nuuk) on the west coast. This began what is considered Greenland's colonial era under Denmark. Over the following decades, Egede and his family built up the colony and spread the gospel. This included studying the local language and geography. Hans Egede and his son Poul Egede also undertook pioneering coastal surveys, creating some of the first modern maps of Greenland's west coast in the 1720s–1740s. In 1741, Hans Egede published a description of Greenland (*Det gamle Grønlands nye Perlustration eller Natur-Historie*), which included a new map that, while still rudimentary, significantly improved European knowledge of Greenland's fjords and bays (below).

By 1776, the Danish government assumed direct control of all trade with Greenland and enforced a monopoly, effectively closing the coast to foreign access. This isolation, maintained for nearly two centuries thereafter, meant that the mapping of Greenland became an almost exclusively Danish enterprise, carried out in careful steps as the colony expanded.

During the 19th century, Danish exploration efforts accelerated. After the Napoleonic Wars, the 1814 dissolution of the Dano-Norwegian union left Greenland on Danish hands, boosting Denmark's resolve to solidify its claim. The colonial administration sponsored scientific expeditions to chart the still unknown regions of Greenland. Between n 1828 and 1831, Danish naval officer **Wilhelm August Graah was dispatched to map Greenland's east coast**, which until then had been largely uncharted by Europeans. In a highly innovative move for the time, Graah integrated local Inuit guides and helpers into his expeditionary force, drawing both on their geographical knowledge, transport capacity, and survival expertise. The party traveled by boat and sled from Cape Farewell northward along some 1,200 km of very rugged coastline. Seeking the legendary Eastern Settlement, they found in stead formidable sea ice and generally hostile conditions. Yet despite this, Graah surveyed significant stretches of the coast, fjords and islands between roughly 60°–65° N. From these he would go on to produce the first detailed survey of Greenland's southeastern littoral (***Undersøgelses-reise til østkysten af Grønland: efter Kongelig Befaling, udført i Aarene 1828–31***), thus cementing Denmark's presence and hegemony on the east coast as well.

In subsequent decades, Danish explorers and scientists continued to fill gaps. Geologist Hinrich Rink mapped parts of the east coast in the 1840s–1850s, and by the late 1800s Denmark had established weather stations and research posts in both East and West Greenland.

Other nationalities also left their mark on Greenland's cartography in the 19th century, at times in close cooperation with Denmark. The United States in particular undertook expeditions that contributed local knowledge. American explorer **Charles Francis Hall** made multiple forays into the Arctic in the 1860s, motivated by the search for Sir John Franklin's lost expedition and a quest for the North Pole. Hall lived among the Inuit in Baffin Island and northwest Greenland for years, learning their hunting skills and gathering geographical data. During his 1860–62 expedition, Hall traveled extensively around southern Baffin Bay and mapped much of the unknown Frobisher Bay area, correcting earlier European maps that had erroneously shown Frobisher Bay as an open strait rather than a dead-end bay. Hall's detailed sketch maps, which like Graah's also were drawn with Inuit guidance, helped update charts of the Canadian Arctic and parts of western Greenland. Later, Hall led the ill-fated *Polaris Expedition* (1871), a U.S. government-backed attempt to reach the North Pole via Smith Sound (between Greenland and Canada). Though Hall died during that journey, his team reached a record far-north latitude and documented Greenland's northwest coast up to about 82° N, adding further to the map. British explorers too made significant contributions: John Ross in 1818 charted *Melville Bay* in northwest Greenland, and in the 1850s and 1860s, expeditions by Elisha Kane (American) and George Nares (British) navigated the narrow

channel between Greenland and Ellesmere Island, identifying features like the Kennedy Channel and the Greenlandic side of the Nares Strait.

The cumulative result of these efforts was a far clearer picture of Greenland's geography. By 1880, the west coast from Cape Farewell to Thule was well mapped, as was the southern east coast up to about 66° N. An important milestone came in 1888, when Norwegian explorer Fridtjof Nansen made the first successful crossing of Greenland's inland ice cap on skis. Nansen's transect from the east coast to the west demonstrated that the interior was covered by a vast continuous ice sheet and provided ample data on its elevation and conditions. At the dawn of the 20th century, the only uncharted stretches of Greenland's landmass were in the extreme north and northeast. These areas were nevertheless soon tackled by a series of Danish expeditions, the most famous of which were led by the **Greenlandic-Danish explorer Knud Rasmussen**.

Knud Rasmussen, the son of a Danish missionary and an Inuit mother, became one of Greenland's most famed explorers in the early 20th century. In 1910, he co-founded a small trading post at Thule in far northwestern Greenland, intended as a base for exploration and as a tangible sign of Danish presence in the high Arctic. With support from the Danish king and scientific societies, Rasmussen led seven **"Thule Expeditions" (1912–1933)** across Greenland and the broader Arctic. The expeditions were incredible feats of exploration, driven in no small part by Rasmussen's deep familiarity with both culture and landscape. All were done by dog-sled and with Inuit partners and guides. The First Thule Expedition (1912) crossed the ice sheet from Greenland's west coast to the unvisited northeast coast and back, mapping the vast *Independence Fjord* region and confirming that Greenland's northern coast was contiguous. Subsequent Thule expeditions charted virtually the entire rim of northern Greenland from Smith Sound in the west to Scoresby Sound in the east, documenting islands, fjords, and glaciers along the way. In doing so, Rasmussen – and men like Peter Freuchen and Lauge Koch – produced detailed surveys of the last blank areas, often at great personal risk. Five members of Rasmussen's Second Expedition perished in 1917–18 during a harrowing trek in the far north.

By the mid-1920s, thanks to Rasmussen's mapping and the earlier *Denmark Expedition of 1906–1908*, the last gaps in Greenland's coastline had now been surveyed. One major outcome of this was disproving American explorer Robert Peary's claim that "Peary Land" (the far north peninsula) was a separate island. Danish maps now showed it to be physically connected to the mainland, nullifying any U.S. territorial pretensions there.

Throughout this era, mapping was not just a scientific endeavor but also a tool of sovereignty. In the early 20th century, Denmark faced a legal dispute with Norway over Greenland's ownership. Norwegians, who had not forgotten their medieval ties, made a claim on East Greenland in 1931, briefly declaring "Erik the Red's Land" as Norwegian territory. Denmark challenged this, and the case went to the Permanent Court of International Justice in The Hague. To bolster its case, the Danish government marshaled evidence of its long-standing activities in Greenland, including records of exploration and mapping. Danish lawyers highlighted how Denmark had been mapping Greenland as an

assertion of sovereignty since at least 1605. In this regard, the expeditions of both Graah and Rasmussen became foundational to the Danish claim. Lawyers even scoured archives for a rumored 1761 map of Scoresby Sound by the Danish whaler Volquard Boon, in order to further cement Danish knowledge of the eastern coast. In the end, the court ruled that all of Greenland belonged to Denmark, citing the breadth of Denmark's administrative and exploratory engagement. Mapping had literally helped Denmark draw the boundaries of its kingdom.

By the close of the 19th century, the topographic map of Greenland was essentially complete. Yet the story did not end there. The next phase in history – World War II and the Cold War – would introduce new mapping technologies and shift the dynamics of who charted Greenland's formidable landmass.

Mapping the path to autonomy

World War II was a watershed for Greenland. In 1940, Nazi Germany's occupation of Denmark cut off its control over Greenland, prompting the island to accept formal protection from the United States. American forces established military bases (notably *Bluie West* and *Thule Air Base*) and conducted aerial surveys, suddenly bringing Greenland into a modern strategic sphere. After the war, Greenland was returned to Danish authority, but the experience had catalyzed change. In 1953, Denmark formally integrated Greenland as a full part of the Kingdom, thus ending its colonial status. Over the following decades, political power increasingly shifted to the Greenlandic people. Home rule was achieved in 1979 and was later expanded to self-rule in 2009. Alongside these political developments came a new chapter in Greenland's mapping; one marked by advanced technology and collaboration between Danish, Greenlandic, and American teams.

Immediately after WWII, mapping efforts turned to practical needs. The U.S. military had performed extensive aerial photography over most of Greenland's ice-free areas, producing maps for operational use. In the 1950s and 1960s, Denmark, with U.S. assistance, created modern topographic maps to support civilian development, mineral exploration, and navigation. **The Danish Geodetic Institute** undertook numerous systematic triangulation and surveying projects, so that by the early 1980s they could declare the new mapping of northern Greenland complete. As Greenland's own government gained more say, the need for up-to-date local maps also grew. In the 1970s, Greenland established its own survey agency, **Asiaq**, which started producing detailed maps of towns, settlements, and popular travel routes.

A turning point came in 2012. Recognizing the importance of comprehensive cartography for both economic development (fishing, mining, infrastructure) and sovereignty claims (such as defining continental shelf boundaries in the Arctic), Denmark and Greenland launched an ambitious joint mapping initiative. The project revived large-scale topographic mapping of Greenland's wilderness, this time using cutting-edge technology and international partnerships. Satellites, aerial drones, and GPS are now employed to create high-resolution digital maps of every ice free region in Greenland. The endeavor

remains international, with Denmark's Ministry of Defense working in close collaboration with the US *National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency* and Greenlandic authorities (including Asiaq). By combining resources and expertise, this project aims to finally provide uniform, detailed coverage of Greenland at scales never before achieved. The renewed focus on mapping also aligns with Greenland's strategic importance. In an era of climate change and ever growing interest for the Arctic's natural resources, precise maps are essential for environmental monitoring, the planning of shipping routes, and asserting territorial rights and security.

At the same time, Greenland's move toward self-governance has given the Greenlandic people a much bigger say in how their land is depicted and understood. Modern Greenlandic cartographers and scientists are involved in everything from place-name preservation (ensuring Inuit names appear on maps) to glacier surveying and developing GIS systems for community use. The mapping of Greenland today is as much about *cultural* representation as it is about physical geography, and is a far cry from the days when European mapmakers filled the North Atlantic with quasi-mythological coastlines and sea monsters.

What the future holds…

The exploration and mapping of Greenland has evolved from Viking sagas to satellite scans. This process has not only revealed the land's true geography, but also continually reinforced territorial claims. For Denmark, every phase of mapping – from the Clavus maps of the 15th century to Knud Rasmussen's Thule Expeditions; all served to underpin the notion of Greenland as a Danish sphere, even if wild seas and thousands of nautical miles separated Copenhagen from Nuuk. Mapping was even used to validate Denmark's title legally in the face of foreign challenges.

In our current era, when global interest in the Arctic is rising and Greenland's people once again feel uncertain about their future, historical maps offer a powerful visual narrative on the history of how we got to where we are. They also remind us that the lines and names we see on a map usually reflects the perspective of those who drew them.

President Trump's forceful rhetoric of late is unusual but not without historical precedent. In the 1860, U.S. Secretary of State William Seward also proposed that Greenland might be bought from Denmark. Many of us optimistically believe that we have come a way since then, but history has an unfortunate tendency to repeat itself.

In light of the existential uncertainty that has been thrust upon an entire people, understanding the history of Greenland's exploration and mapping is more relevant than ever. It demonstrates that Greenland is *not* a commodity, but a land that despite its enormous size and tiny population holds a deep and rich cultural heritage. Part of that heritage, Greenlanders and Danes share. For beter or for worse.

Each of the following maps is a testament to a chapter in Greenland's incredible story.

Catalog Index

1. **Lorenz Fries;** *Norbegia et Gottia* (Strasbourg, 1535)

2. **Gerard & Cornelis de Jode;** *Hemispheriu Ab Aequinoctli Linea, Ad Circulu Poli Arctici/ Hemispheriu Ad Circulu Poli Atarctici* (Antwerp, 1593)

3. **Gerardus Mercator;** *Septentrionalium Terrarum descriptio* (Amsterdam, 1595)

4. **Nicolas Sanson d'Abeville;** *Les deux poles arctique ou septentrional, et Antarctique ou meridional…* (Paris, 1657)

5. **Jacques-Nicolas Bellin;** *Carte Reduite du Détroit de Davids* (Paris, 1765)

6. **Wilhelm August Graah;** *Beskrivelse til det voxende Situations-Kaart over den vestlige kyst af Grønland* (Copenhagen, 1825)

7. **Wilhelm August Graah;** *Undersøgelses-reise til østkysten af Grønland: efter Kongelig Befaling, udført i Aarene 1828–31* (Copenhagen, 1832)

8. **Charles Francis Hall;** *Narrative of the Second Arctic Expedition made by Charles F. Hall: His Voyage to Repulse Bay, Sledge Journeys to the Straights of Fury and Hecla and to King William's Land, and Residence Among the Eskimos During the Years 1864-'69* (Washington DC, 1879)

9. **Vincenz von Haardt;** *Nord Polar Karte von V. v. Haardt* (Vienna, 1898)

10. **Anonymous;** *Knud Rasmussens Ekspeditioner* (Copenhagen, c. 1960)

11. **Danmarks Geodætiske Institut;** *Grønland* & *Tektonisk/Geologisk Kort over Grønland* (Copenhagen, 1970)

NB! Lots no. 1, 5, 10, and 11 are completely new inventory and do not yet have formal listings on our website. For more information and purchasing of these, please contact michael@neatlinemaps.com

1. Lorenz Fries's adaption of the lost Claudius Clavus map

Title: *Norbegia et Gottia*
Cartographer: Lorenz Fries
Place/Date: Strasbourg, 1535

Dimensions: 39.6 x 54.3 cm (15.59 x 21.38 in)
Condition rating: VG+

$ 3,600

A milestone in early Nordic cartography.

Lorenz Fries's map *Norbegia et Gottia*, created for the 1522 Strasbourg edition of Ptolemy's Geographia, stands out as an early printed representation of the far north. Unlike the period's world maps that tended to compress or omit northern lands, this map dedicates careful attention to the contours of Scandinavia, Iceland, and Greenland. Its geographic construction draws on a complex lineage of cartographic knowledge that stretches back to medieval manuscript sources. Among these, one of the most critical contributions was made by Claudius Clavus, the early 15th-century Dane who charted northern latitudes and provided some of the first known depictions of Iceland and Greenland. Through a chain of transmission that included figures such as Nicolaus Germanus and early printed Ptolemaic compilations, Clavus's work helped shape how Fries and his contemporaries visualized the Nordic world, even if the precise forms and positions of far northern lands remained imperfect by modern standards.

The significance of *Norbegia et Gottia* lies in its position at the intersection of medieval northern cartography and the emerging print culture of the Renaissance. Whereas prior maps often relegated the high latitudes to vague outlines or mythic labels, Fries's depiction treats them as geographic space that could be integrated into a systematic mapping tradition. Greenland and Iceland appear more consistently and recognizably than on many earlier depictions, reflecting a gradual accumulation of northern geographical knowledge. At the same time, heraldic symbols and descriptive text on the map convey contemporary political and cultural interests in these regions. For scholars and enthusiasts of cartographic history, the map offers a vivid example of how early modern mapmakers blended inherited sources, new information, and classical frameworks to bring the far reaches of Europe into a shared visual geography.

The present map constitutes the 1535 edition, published by Michael Villanovus (Servetus).

2. A superb example of De Jode's seminal polar projection

Title: *Hemispheriu Ab Aequinoctli Linea, Ad Circulu Poli Arctici/ Hemispheriu Ad Circulu Poli Atarctici.*

Cartographer: Gerard & Cornelis de Jode

Place/Date: Antwerp, 1593

Dimensions: 51 x 33 cm (20 x 13 in)

Condition rating: Excellent

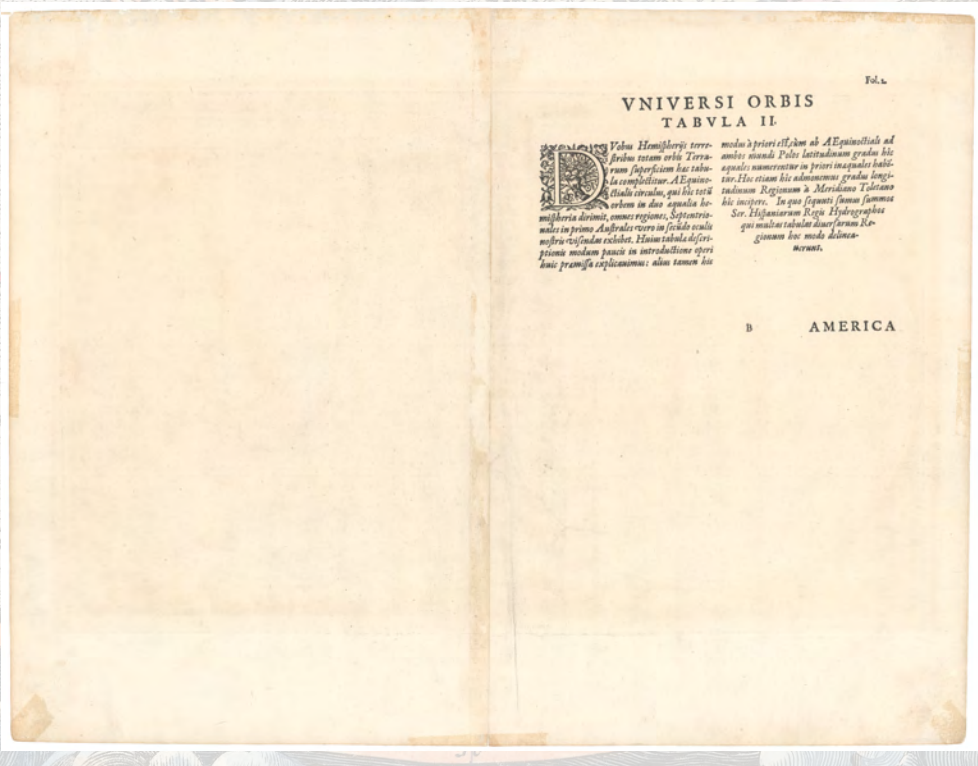
$ 57,000

A masterpiece by any measure.

Cornelis de Jode's polar projection world map is one of the rarest and most innovative cartographic works of the 16th century, notable for its early use of a double-hemisphere polar projection and for preserving the otherwise-lost cartographic vision of Guillaume Postel. Designed partly to distinguish De Jode from contemporaries such as Ortelius, the map adopts an unusual perspective that magnifies polar regions and compresses equatorial ones. Drawing on Postel's 1581 wall map and related Antwerp globe gores, De Jode did not merely copy his sources but enriched them with new geographic intelligence, especially regarding North America, East Asia, and the Pacific. This projection dramatically reshaped familiar concepts such as the Strait of Anian, Japan's position, and the perceived proximity between Asia and the Americas, while also

incorporating contemporary exploration narratives and toponyms that reflected Europe's expanding global awareness.

The map is particularly striking in its treatment of the far north, where Greenland is reduced to one island within a sprawling North Atlantic archipelago and the Arctic emerges as a zone of bold speculation and innovation. North America's northern regions are reconfigured with oversized islands, imagined gulfs, and enigmatic labels, including a massive Gulf of Merosro and a mysterious second "California" placed deep in the American Arctic. At the very top of the world, the North Pole is depicted as a quadripartite landmass, echoing Mercator's theory of an ice-free polar center fed by four channels, and incorporating lands such as Nova Zembla while politically sealing off a Northeast Passage above Siberia. These elements underscore how De Jode's map blends empirical reports, inherited theories, and imaginative geography, making the Arctic not a marginal fringe but a central and visually dominant arena in one of the masterpieces of Dutch Golden Age cartography.


Fol. 2.

VNIVERSI ORBIS
TABVLA II.

DVobus Hemisphærijs terrestribus totam orbis Terrarum superficiem hac tabula complectitur. AEquinoctialis circulus, qui hic totũ orbem in duo æqualia hemisphæria dirimit, omnes regiones, Septentrionales in primo Australes vero in secũdo oculis nostris visendas exhibet. Huius tabulæ descriptionis modum paucis in introductione operi huic præmissa explicavimus: alius tamen his modus à priori est, cum ab AEquinoctiali ad ambos mundi Polos latitudinum gradus hic æquales numerentur in priori inæquales habẽtur. Hoc etiam hic admonemus gradus longitudinum Regionum à Meridiano Toletano hic incipere. In quo sequuti sumus summos Ser. Hispaniarum Regis Hydrographos qui multas tabulas diversarum Regionum hoc modo delineaverunt.

B AMERICA

3. First state of Mercator's groundbreaking map of the Arctic

Title: *Septentrionalium Terrarum descriptio*
Cartographer: Gerard Mercator
Place/Date: Amsterdam, 1595

Dimensions: 41 x 38 cm (16 x 15 in)
Condition rating: VG+

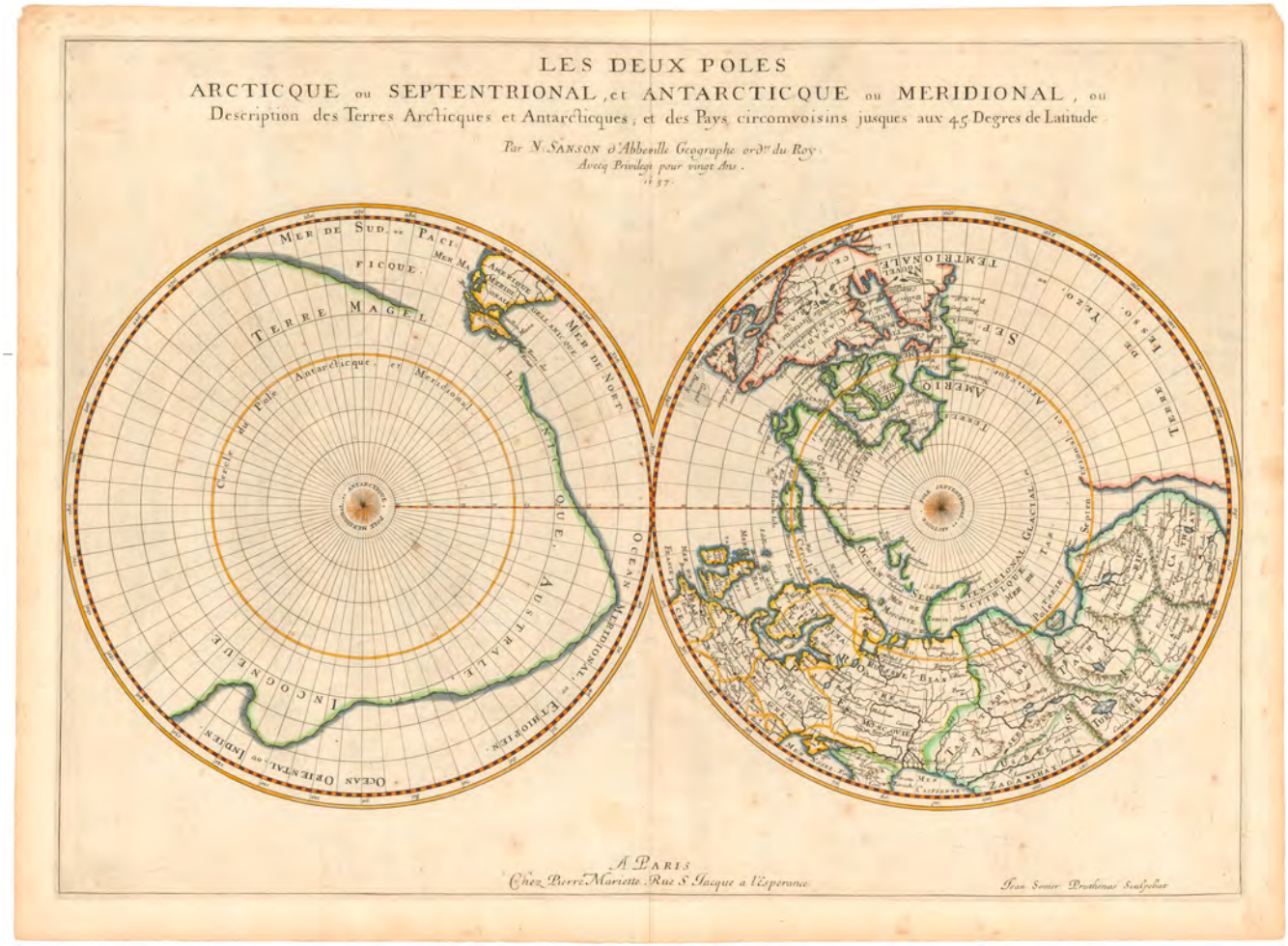
$ 30,000

History's first dedicated map of the North Pole.

This first state of Gerard Mercator's Arctic map represents a landmark achievement in 16th-century cartography and the earliest separately conceived map devoted entirely to the North Pole. Conceived as an expansion of the polar inset on Mercator's revolutionary 1569 wall map, it was intended for inclusion in his posthumously published *Atlas sive cosmographicae meditationes de fabrica mundi et fabricati figura* (1595). The map reflects Mercator's ongoing effort to resolve magnetic declination, depicting both a geographic and magnetic North Pole. At its center stands the towering *Rupes Nigra*, surrounded by four landmasses divided by rivers flowing toward a polar whirlpool, a concept Mercator described in correspondence with John Dee. Drawing on a mix of reported voyages, legends, and learned speculation, the map established an entirely new visual and intellectual framework for understanding the Arctic.

Alongside its dramatic polar construction, the map introduces striking and sometimes fantastical features in the northern Atlantic and American Arctic. The mythical island of Frisland appears prominently, derived from the controversial Zeno narrative of medieval voyages to Greenland and Labrador, while Mercator's broader sources included the enigmatic Inventio Fortunata, relayed through Jacob Cnoyen. North America's far north is radically reimagined with immense lakes, bays, and peninsulas, including an Arctic *California regio*, inventions unique to this map and absent from Mercator's own contemporary map of America. Greenland itself figures within this speculative northern world shaped as much by myth, hearsay, and lost texts as by exploration. Issued only once in its original 1595 state before later reworking by Hondius, this first edition is exceptionally rare today, preserved primarily in major institutional collections and standing as one of the most coveted artifacts of early Arctic cartography.

For a more detailed analysis of this map, click here.



4. Nicolas Sanson's double polar projection from 1657

Title: *Les deux poles arctique ou septentrional, et Antarctique ou meridional…*
Cartographer: Nicholas Sanson d'Abbeville

Place/Date: Paris, 1657
Dimensions: 58 x 42 cm (22.75 x 17 in)
Condition rating: VG

$ 1,250

An innovation in French cartography.

This dual-hemisphere polar projection by Nicolas Sanson represents one of the earliest serious 17th-century efforts to visualize the Earth's polar regions. Limiting each hemisphere to 45 degrees from the poles, Sanson deliberately excluded most known continents in order to concentrate on the Arctic and Antarctic frontiers, which at the time remained among the least understood areas of the globe. Drawing on the latest intelligence available to French cartography, the map reflects a moment when polar space was still shaped as much by conjecture and inherited myth as by direct observation, making it a revealing window into early modern conceptions of the Arctic world.

The Arctic hemisphere in particular underscores Europe's long-standing obsession with discovering a northern route to Asia via the Northwest or Northeast Passage. Sanson incorporates hard-won discoveries of Arctic explorers such as Willem Barentsz, carefully depicting Novaya Zemlya, Spitsbergen, and Bear Island, while leaving regions beyond these points vague or incomplete where exploration had failed. The map suggests speculative routes around the Arctic seas toward China and the land of Yezo, illustrating both the limits of contemporary knowledge and the enduring belief that the Arctic.

5. Bellin's monumental sheet of Disco Bay and the Davis Strait

Title: *Carte Reduite du Détroit de Davids*
Cartographer: Jacques-Nicolas Bellin
Place/Date: Paris, 1765

Dimensions: 90 x 64 cm (35.5 x 25 in)
Condition rating: VG

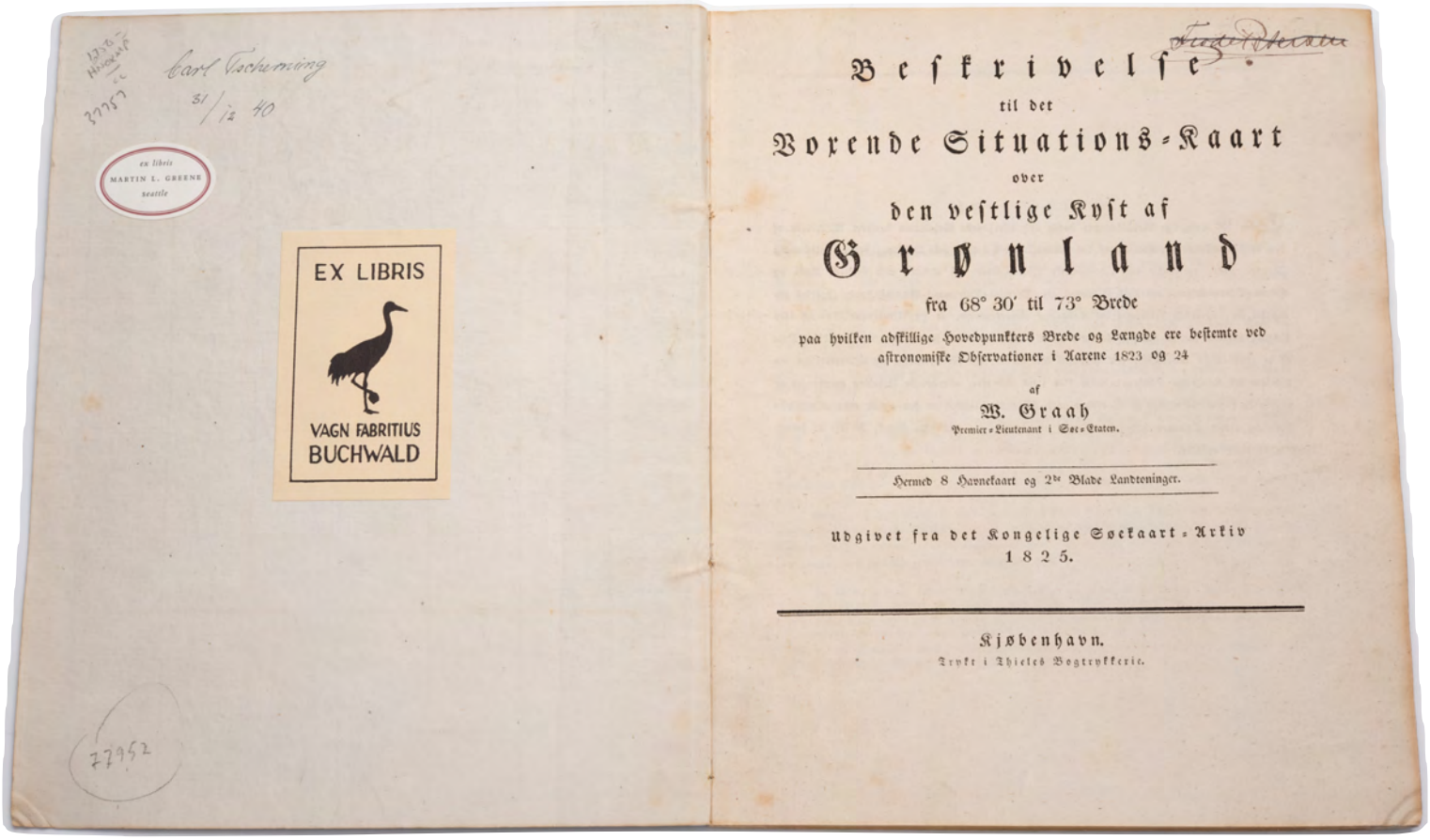
$ 550

A large sheet designed for use onboard whaling ships.

Jacques-Nicolas Bellin's 1765 sea chart *Carte réduite du Détroit de Davids* is a finely engraved nautical map focusing on the waters of the Davis Strait, the broad channel of Arctic waters separating the west coast of Greenland from Baffin Island in present-day Nunavut, Canada. Published in Paris by Bellin, the chart depicts intricate coastal detail along Greenland's shoreline and the partially charted eastern coasts of Baffin Island, with an emphasis on hydrographic features relevant to 18th-century maritime navigation. Oriented with west at the top, the chart's scale and physical dimensions, allow the coastlines to be delineated in great detail, with named headlands, islands, and soundings. This provided practical information on sea depths, anchorages, and currents that were essential for navigation in these perilous northern waters.

The map's title note its origin from the *Dépôt des cartes, plans et journaux de la Marine*. And its production in 1765 at the order of the Duc de Choiseul, France's Secretary of State for the Navy and War.

Drawing on an earlier Dutch chart by Captain Laurent Feykes (Amsterdam 1719), the map was created for practical use by whalers and other mariners operating in the high North Atlantic and Arctic regions. This lineage reflects the collaborative and cumulative nature of early modern charting: Bellin assimilated and refined existing data to produce a sea chart that was at once authoritative and functional for its intended maritime audience.



6. W.A. Graah's important survey of West Greenland

Title: *Beskrivelse til det voxende Situations-Kaart over den vestlige kyst af Grønland*
Cartographer: Wilhelm August Graah

Place/Date: Copenhagen, 1825
Dimensions: Quarto (25 x 20.8 cm)
Condition rating: VG

$ 2,200

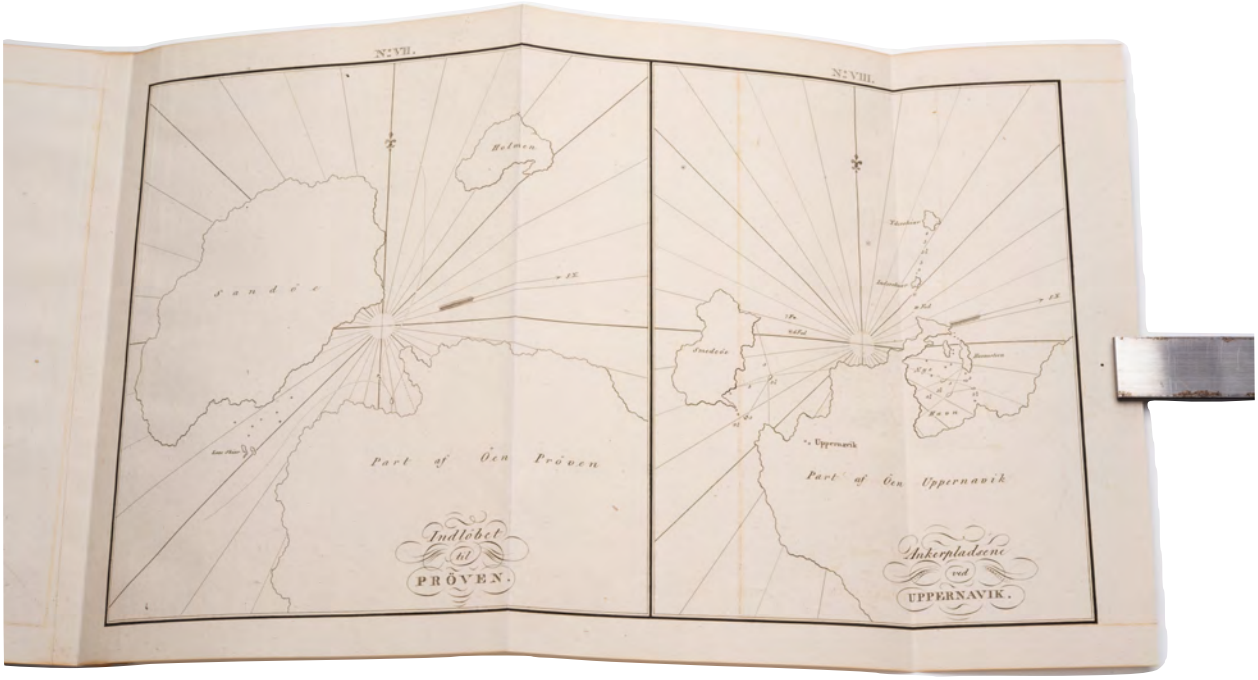
The first modern pilot chart of Greenland's west coast and the foundation of Graah's Arctic legacy.

This scarce quarto publication contemporary marbled boards contains 8 folding maps on 4 leaves, and two elevations. It constitutes the first of Wilhelm August Graah's two foundational contributions to the mapping of Greenland. Issued in 1825, it documents hydrographic survey work along the west coast, undertaken in 1823–24 as part of Graah's regular duties as a Danish naval officer. The aim of the expedition was to remedy the serious deficiencies of existing charts used by ships operating in West Greenland, then the island's principal zone of economic activity and a hotspot for international whaling. The result was an empirically anchored *situations-kaart* (pilot chart), accompanied by a concise but highly technical explanatory memoir. Graah's success in this assignment led directly to his appointment as leader of the far more ambitious East Greenland expedition (see lot 7).

The text is explicitly practical in tone and purpose. After a publisher's preface praising Graah's earlier survey work in Iceland and Greenland, the introduction provides navigational advice for voyages to and from Greenland, including warnings about hazardous routes near Scotland and dangerous onshore winds. A substantial section on

ice conditions (*isforhold*) distinguishes between field ice and floe ice, combining vivid descriptive language with concrete navigational guidance. Further sections treat thermometers, currents, fog, winds, weather, and the aurora borealis, which Graah describes as an indicator of wind shifts and approaching storms. Detailed observations on compass variation and deviation follow, including warnings against unreliable "dry compasses" and low-sun readings.

Graah also explains the scientific basis of his charts, emphasizing that they rest on 48 lunar-distance observations and clearly listing coordinates and longitudes measured from Greenwich. Sailing directions describe coasts, islands, skerries, harbors, and anchorages along the Davis Strait and northern waters, drawing in part on contemporary British exploration accounts. The work is accompanied by eight maps on four sheets and two coastal elevation profiles, intended to be used together with the text. The deliberate omission of graticules and the use of misleading compass roses underscore the publication's function as a working component in the creation of a reliable pilot chart rather than as a stand-alone decorative map.



7. W.A. Graah's seminal mapping of East Greenland

Title: *Undersøgelses-reise til østkysten af Grønland: efter Kongelig Befaling, udført i Aarene 1828–31*
Cartographer: Wilhelm August Graah

Place/Date: Copenhagen, 1832
Dimensions: Quarto (25 x 20.8 cm)
Condition rating: VG+

$ 2,000

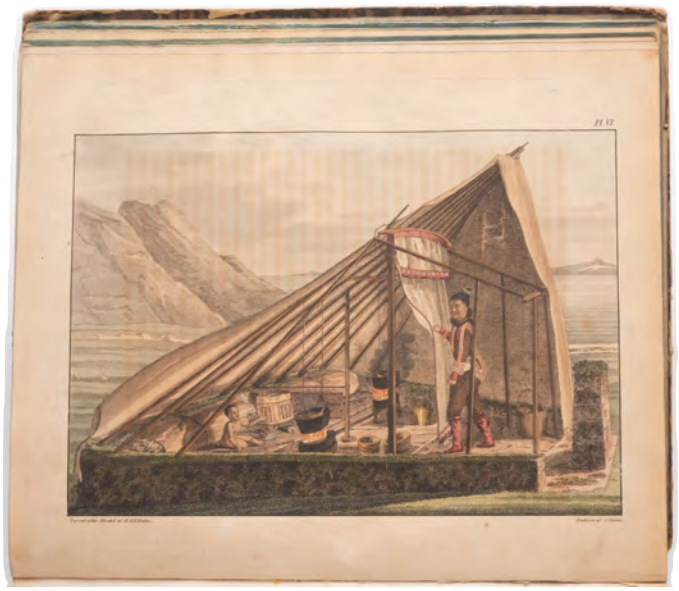
The definitive reconnaissance of Greenland's east coast and a milestone in Arctic exploration.

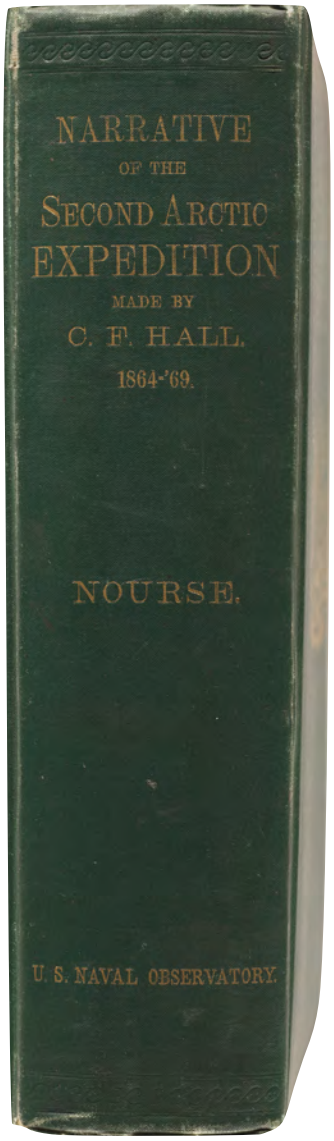
Graah's 1832 account documents the most ambitious and consequential phase of his career, namely the royally mandated reconnaissance of Greenland's little-known east coast. Carried out between 1828 and 183, this expedition built directly on the technical competence and methodological rigor demonstrated in his earlier West Greenland survey and its accompanying publication (see lot 6). Graah's brief was twofold: to search for traces of the lost Norse Eastern Settlement, and to produce accurate observations suitable for modern charting. In doing so, the idea was that he would complete the work begun earlier in the decade by William Scoresby Jr. and Douglas Clavering.

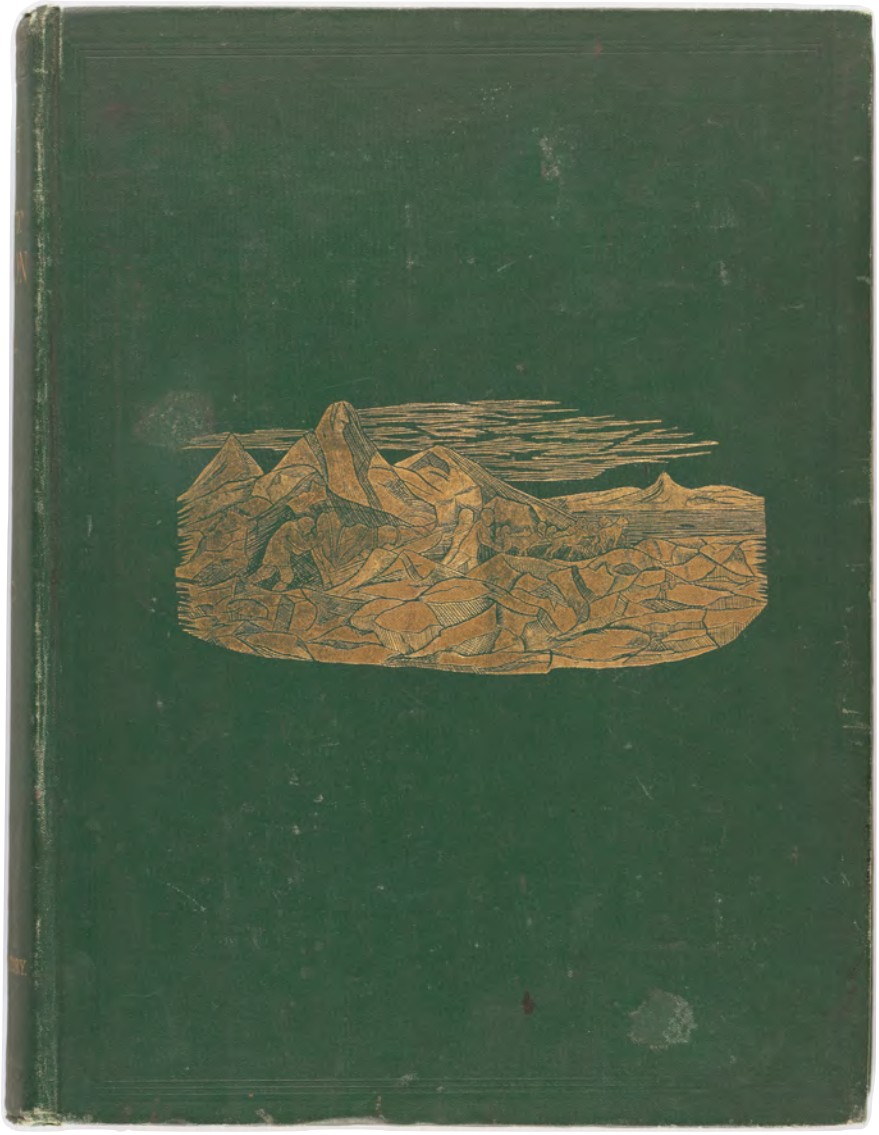
Unlike his earlier strictly hydrographic report, this work combines cartography, narrative, and scientific observation. After reaching Greenland by naval brig, Graah relied extensively on local *umiaq* boats and Inuit pilots for near-shore reconnaissance; an approach that was highly unusual at the time, yet essential given the rugged coastline, heavy ice conditions, and shallow waters. Although he was unable to reach the northern limits specified in his royal orders, Graah and his teams successfully charted long stretches

of southeastern Greenland's fjord-indented coast between Cape Farewell and present-day Tasiilaq (then Angmagssalik); a region he named *King Frederick VI Coast*. The expedition produced the first accurate charts and coastal profiles of this remote area and laid the foundation for later surveys, notably those conducted by Gustav Holm in the 1880s.

Beyond its cartographic importance, the publication is notable for its rich observational content. Graah recorded detailed descriptions of encounters with the southeast Greenland Inuit, documenting material culture, clothing, boat construction, subsistence practices, and social life. Geological and botanical observations contributed by the expedition's naturalists, along with sketches and drawings, further expanded European knowledge of Arctic environments. Read in conjunction with Graah's earlier West Greenland report, this work represents the culmination of a unified cartographic achievement: the transformation of Greenland's southern coasts from fragmentary outlines into a coherent, navigable, and empirically grounded geographic reality.







8. Charles Francis Hall's second expedition to the Arctic

Title: *Narrative of the Second Arctic Expedition made by Charles F. Hall: His Voyage to Repulse Bay, Sledge Journeys to the Straights of Fury and Hecla and to King William's Land, and Residence Among the Eskimos During the Years 1864-'69*

Cartographer: Charles Francis Hall
Place/Date: Washington DC, 1879
Dimensions: 26.5 x 19.5 cm (10.5 x 7.75 in)
Condition rating: VG

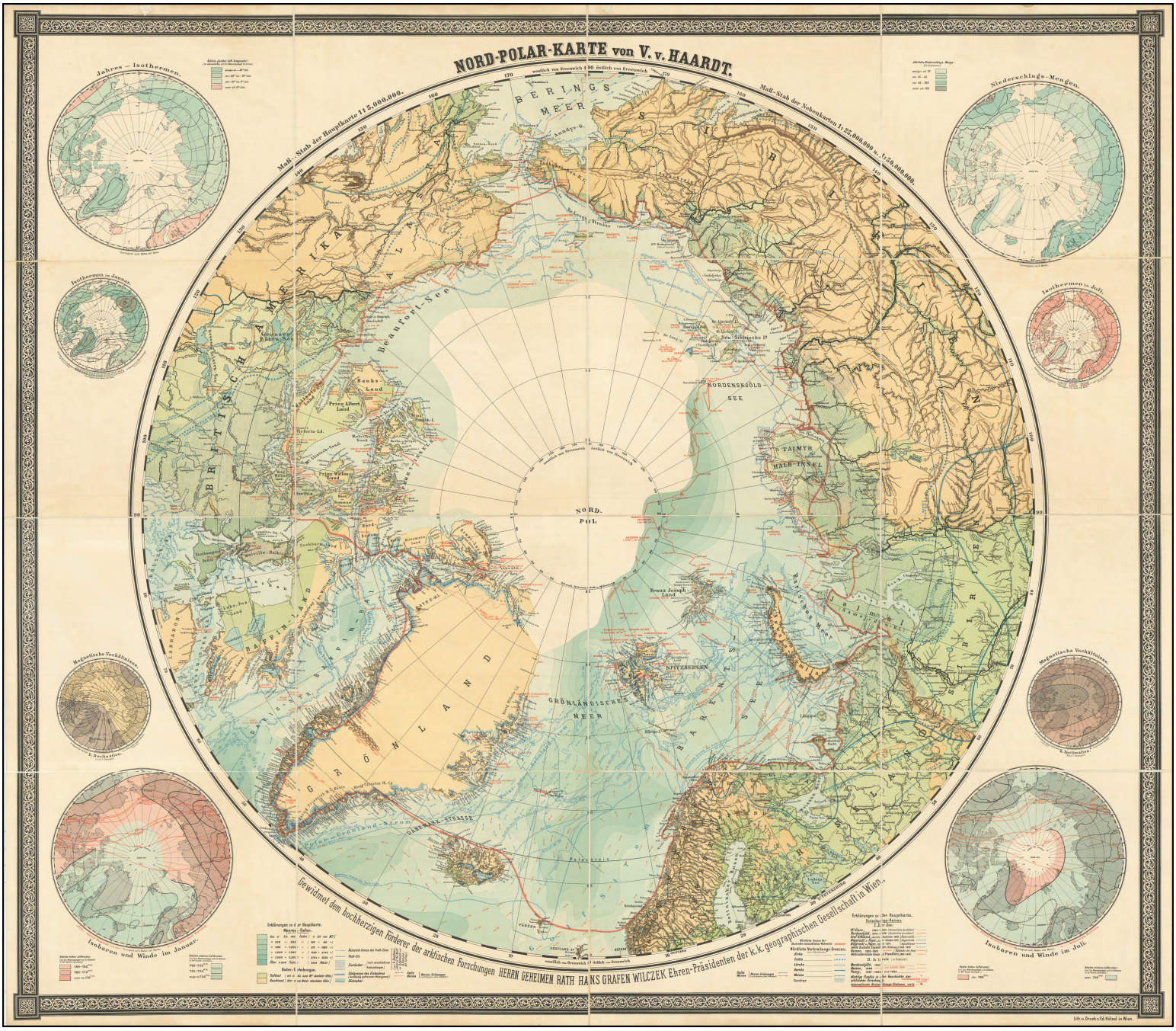
$ 850

With an extraordinary family provenance.

This first edition account of Charles Francis Hall's second Arctic expedition presents a vivid narrative of a nearly three-year American voyage into the polar regions during the mid-19th century. Driven by Hall's singular determination, the expedition sought evidence of Martin Frobisher's long-rumored Arctic mines and clues to the fate of survivors from Sir John Franklin's lost expedition. The book conveys both the awe-inspiring scale and the extreme hardship of Arctic exploration, while situating Hall as a central, tragic figure whose career would ultimately culminate in the mysterious circumstances of his death following the ill-fated Polaris expedition.

Physically, the volume is an impressive production, richly illustrated with maps, engravings, and photographic portraits, including a large folding azimuthal map of the entire polar region. The rugged brown cloth binding, adorned with vibrant gilt stamping to the spine and front board, reflects the ambition and seriousness of the undertaking it documents. Internally, tissue-guarded portraits of Hall, Sir John Franklin, Henry Grinnell, and Eskimo Joe add a personal dimension to the narrative, underscoring the human relationships at the heart of Arctic exploration. The present copy is clean, tightly bound, and well preserved, with firm hinges and crisp illustrations throughout.

Especially significant is the book's provenance, which forges a direct link between Hall and one of the most important families in American Arctic history: the Kane family of Pennsylvania. The volume is inscribed by John Kitzing Kane Jr., brother of the celebrated Arctic explorer Elisha Kent Kane, a key figure in the search for Franklin and leader of the Second Grinnell Expedition. The Kane family's deep involvement in Arctic exploration provides a compelling contextual bridge between Hall's obsessive pursuit of Franklin's fate and the earlier American-led rescue efforts that defined Elisha Kane's career. Passed down within the family and later inscribed by Kane's daughter, Florence Bayard Kane, the volume stands not only as a record of Arctic exploration, but as a tangible artifact of the closely interconnected community of explorers, patrons, and families who shaped America's polar ambitions.



9. Vincenz von Haardt's wall-map of the North Pole

Title: *Nord Polar Karte von V. v. Haardt.*
Cartographer: Vincenz v. Haardt
Place/Date: Vienna, 1898

Dimensions: 172 x 152 cm (67.75 x 59.75 in)
Condition rating: VG+

$ 12,500

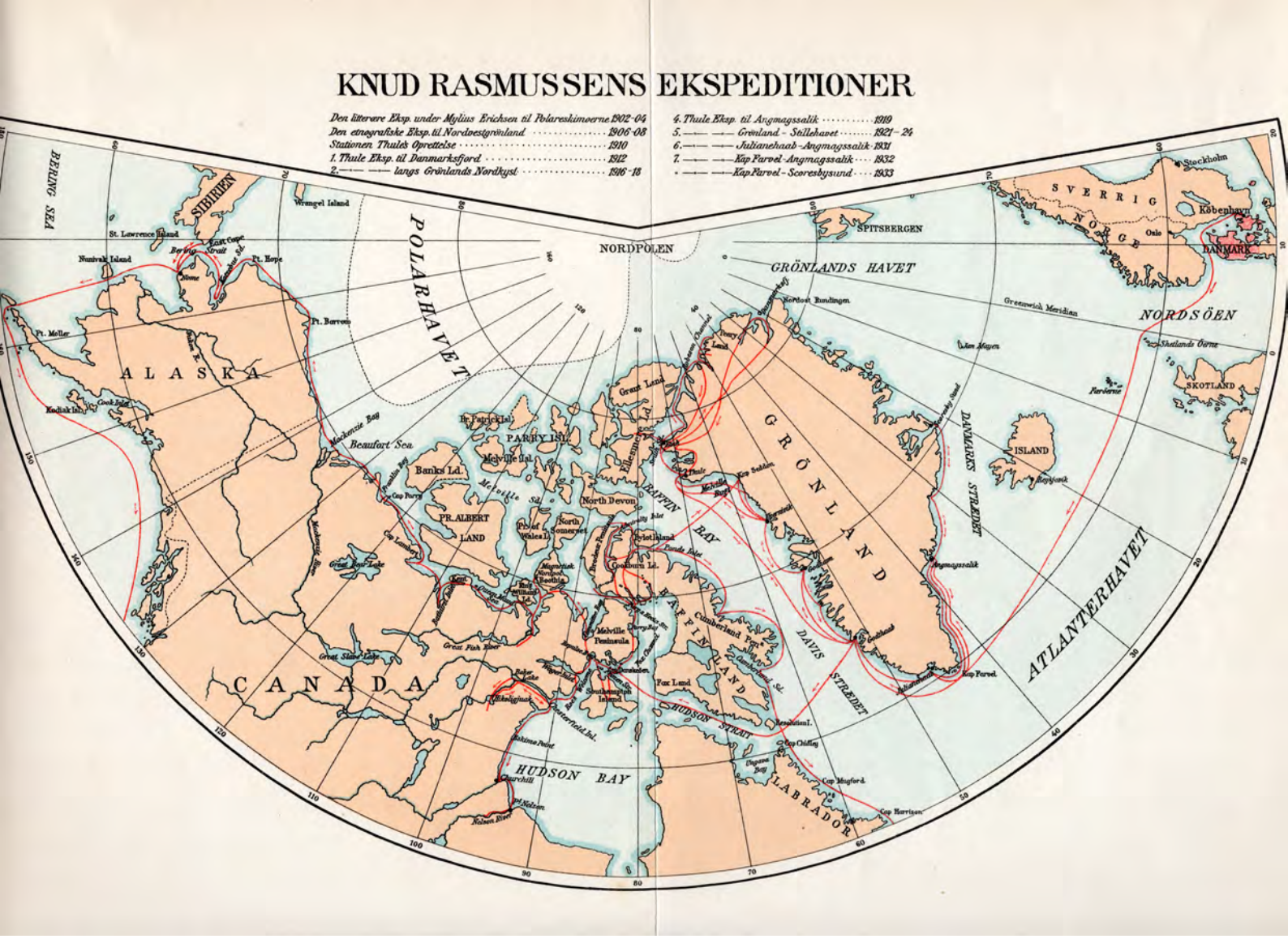
The last great map of the North Pole before it was reached, made by both Peary and Amundsen's favorite mapmaker.

Vincenz von Haardt's Nord Polar Karte (1898) is widely regarded as the most comprehensive wall map of Arctic exploration produced in the 19th century. Created just before the famous race to the North Pole, it traces three centuries of exploration, from 16th-century voyages by Martin Frobisher to the most recent late-19th-century expeditions. Designed explicitly for explorers, the map integrates scientific data such as

ice distribution, ocean currents, temperature patterns, and magnetic conditions, while plotting no fewer than 36 expedition routes, including Fridtjof Nansen and Hjalmar Johansen's 1895 attempt. Its immediacy is underscored by the inclusion of expeditions and discoveries from the very year of publication, demonstrating how rapidly new Arctic knowledge was being incorporated.

Beyond charting routes, Haardt's map captures the broader intellectual and cultural context of Arctic exploration at its historical peak. Eight surrounding insets visualize climatic and magnetic data for different seasons, emphasizing the scientific priorities that increasingly guided polar expeditions. Figures such as Nansen, Sverdrup, Peary, Cook, and Amundsen appear not merely as competitors but as contributors to a cumulative body of Arctic knowledge, at a moment when scientific understanding often outweighed the symbolic conquest of the Pole. Issued in multiple states between 1895 and 1900, each now rare, the map stands as a final cartographic summit before the North Pole was finally reached, embodying the 19th century's manic drive to to master the Arctic.

For a more detailed analysis of this map, click on the headline or image.



10. Overview map of Knud Rasmussen's Arctic expeditions

Title: *Knud Rasmussens Ekspeditioner*
Cartographer: Recato (printer)
Place/Date: Copenhagen, c. 1960

Dimensions: 31 x 24.5 cm (12.2 x 9.7 in)
Condition rating: VG

$ 100

Mapping the accomplishments of Greenland's most famous explorer.

This map presents a sweeping polar projection of the Arctic world, centered on Greenland and spanning Alaska, northern Canada, Siberia, and Scandinavia. Rendered in a fan-shaped format optimized for high latitudes, it emphasizes Arctic coastlines, seas, and island groups rather than topographies or interiors. Red route lines trace multiple expeditions across the entirety of the Arctic, and especially along the coasts and interior margins of Greenland. With these, this relatively simple map is transformed into a record of lived exploration. The prominence of Greenland, shown in full and carefully articulated detail, underscores its role as the central stage for Arctic travel and research in the early 20th century.

The routes depicted document the expeditions of **Knud Rasmussen,** one of the most influential figures in Arctic exploration. Born in Greenland to a Danish missionary father and Inuit mother, Rasmussen was uniquely positioned between European and Inuit worlds. He is best known for the **Thule Expeditions** (1912–1933), a series of ambitious journeys that combined exploration, ethnography, and geography. Traveling largely by dog sled, Rasmussen crossed vast stretches of Arctic North America, including a legendary traverse from Greenland to Alaska, documenting Inuit cultures and demonstrating the cultural unity of the circumpolar Arctic.

Greenland lies at the heart of Rasmussen's achievements, and the map reflects this centrality clearly. Multiple routes loop around Greenland's coasts and penetrate its remote northern regions, highlighting Rasmussen's role in mapping, naming, and scientifically documenting areas that were previously unknown to Europeans and Americans.

Unlike many earlier explorers driven primarily by imperial or commercial ambitions, Rasmussen's work was deeply humanistic: he treated Greenland not merely as territory to be charted, but as a homeland whose people, history, and knowledge systems were essential to understanding the Arctic as a whole. This map thus stands as both a cartographic summary of Rasmussen's Arctic exploration and a visual testament to his enduring legacy in Greenlandic history.

We have not been able to identify the origin of this map, but the most plausible origin is that this map was printed in a Danish book summarizing Knud Rasmussen's expeditions.

11. *Trap Danmark*'s cartographic binder on Greenland

Title: *Grønland & Tektonisk/Geologisk Kort over Grønland*
Cartographer: Danmarks Geodætiske Institut
Place/Date: Copenhagen, 1970
Dimensions: 69 x 58 cm (27.2 × 22.8 in) & 114 x 83 cm (44.9 × 32.7 in)
Condition rating: VG

$ 250

Compiled by Denmark's Geodetic Institute.

This Greenland map appendix, issued with the 5th edition of Trap Danmark in 1970, comprises two complementary large-format maps: a topographic overview and a detailed tectonic and geological survey. Together, they reflect the culmination of Denmark's postwar scientific and cartographic engagement with Greenland up to this point.

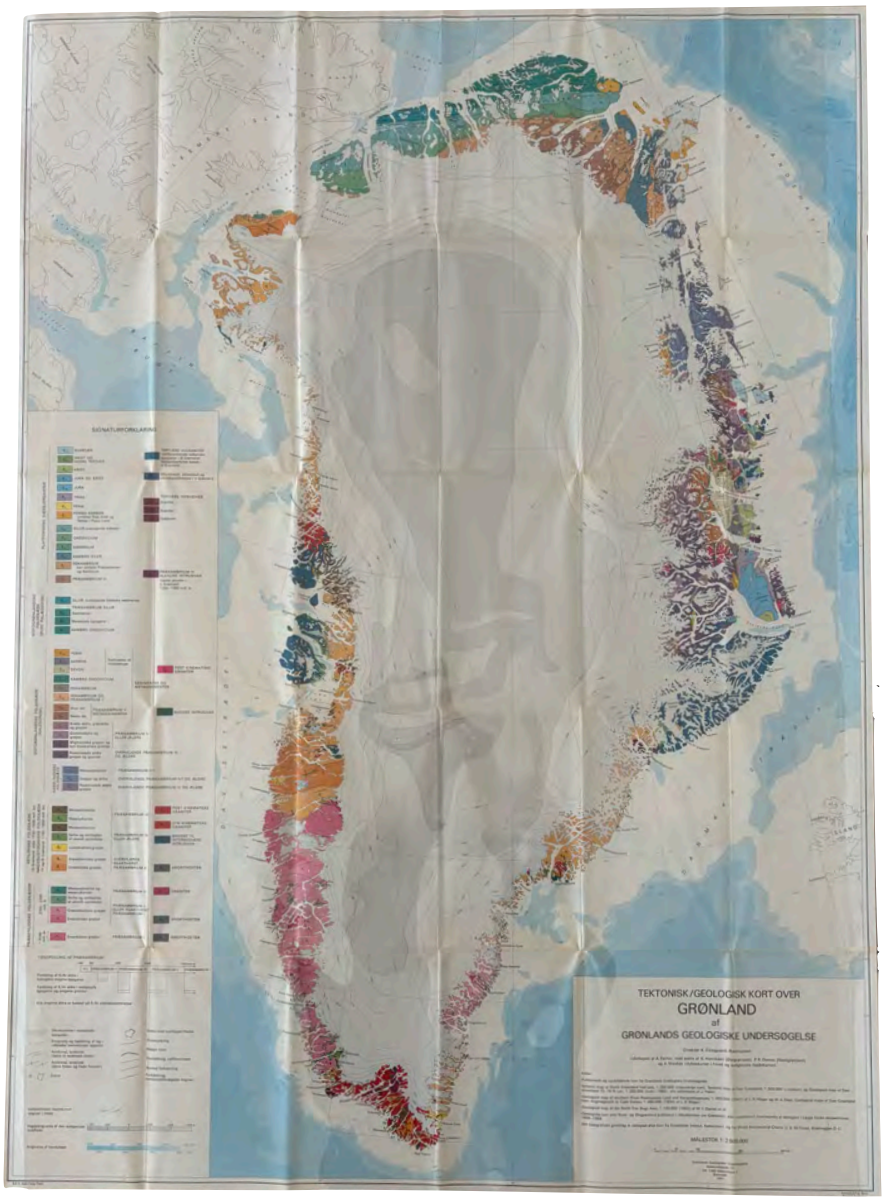
The smaller of the two maps is a finely executed topographic overview of Greenland, issued at a scale of 1:5,000,000. Centered on the island and presented in a polar-adapted projection, the map emphasizes Greenland's coastal morphology, fjord systems, ice

margins, and settlement pattern. The inland ice cap dominates the interior, rendered with subtle shading and contouring that conveys elevation and glaciological structure without overwhelming the coastal detail. Baffin Bay, Davis Strait, the Greenland Sea, and the North Atlantic are all clearly delineated, reinforcing Greenland's geographic position between North America and Europe.

Produced by *Geodætisk Institut*, the map reflects mid-20th-century Danish standards of cartographic clarity and scientific rigor. Place names follow official Danish and Greenlandic nomenclature, while the overall design balances legibility with restraint. Intended as a general reference rather than a navigational chart, the map offers a concise yet authoritative portrait of Greenland as it was understood in the late 1960s.

Tectonic-Geological Map of Greenland

The larger map is an expansive tectonic and geological map of Greenland, issued at the same scale of 1:5,000,000, but far more visually and scientifically complex. Using an extensive color palette keyed to a detailed legend, the map charts Greenland's geological provinces, stratigraphy, and tectonic structures, including Precambrian shields, Caledonian fold belts, sedimentary basins, and intrusive formations. Coastal regions are particularly rich in detail, reflecting the areas most thoroughly surveyed, while the ice-covered interior is necessarily more generalized, overlaid with inferred structures beneath the ice sheet.



Compiled by *Grønlands Geologiske Undersøgelse* (GGU) and published under the auspices of *Geodætisk Institut*, this map represents a synthesis of decades of fieldwork, aerial photography, and geophysical research. It stands as one of the most comprehensive geological portrayals of Greenland produced up to that time, designed not only for academic reference but also for understanding mineral potential and tectonic history. The map's scale and complexity necessitated its large format, making it both a scientific document and an

impressive visual of modern Arctic geology.

Trap Danmark and Geodætisk Institut

Both maps were issued jointly as an appendix to the 5th edition of *Trap Danmark*, published in 1970. *Trap Danmark* is Denmark's definitive national topographical and cultural survey, first issued in the 19th century and periodically updated to reflect new research in geography, history, economics, and natural science. The inclusion of Greenland within the work, and the commissioning of high-quality thematic maps in the regard, underscores Greenland's integral role within the Danish realm during the mid-20th century and reflects the growing emphasis on scientific documentation of the Arctic.

Geodætisk Institut, Denmark's national mapping authority, played a central role in the production of both maps. Responsible for geodetic surveying, cartography, and the standardization of geographic data, the institute was instrumental in coordinating Greenland mapping projects across disciplines. Its involvement ensured consistency of projection, scale, nomenclature, and scientific accuracy, and its imprint on these maps marks them as official, authoritative representations rather than commercial or popular productions.

Mapping Greenland after the Second World War

The period following World War II marked a decisive transformation in the mapping of Greenland. Advances in aerial photography, photogrammetry, and geophysical surveying, combined with increased strategic and scientific interest in the Arctic, allowed for far more accurate and systematic cartographic coverage than had previously been possible. Danish-American efforts dramatically expanded geographic and geological knowledge of the island, particularly along previously inaccessible coasts and mountain regions.

These two maps are direct products of that postwar cartographic and scientific collaboration. They embody the shift from exploratory and reconnaissance mapping toward comprehensive, state-sponsored documentation grounded in modern science. As such, they occupy an important place in the history of Greenland's cartography: not as pioneering first maps, but as mature syntheses that consolidate decades of exploration into coherent, authoritative visual form.