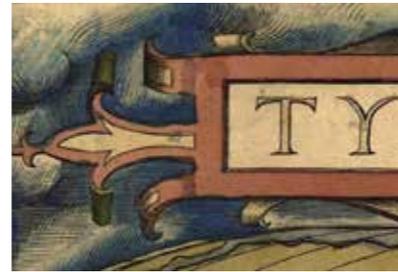
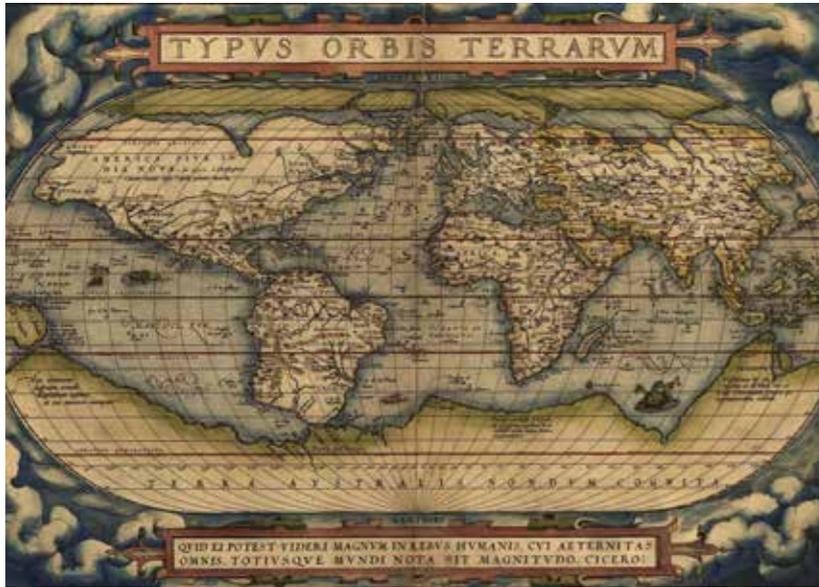


# A MAPMAKER'S TOOLKIT: CARTOGRAPHIC DETAILS OF OLD MAPS

BY YD BAR-NESS



**Include a scale bar:** One of the key linkages between the flat 2-dimensional map and the seemingly flat landscape we inhabit is a sense of scale. If you shrunk Tasmania linearly by one and a half million times, you'd get an island you could hold conveniently in your hand.

**Organise your reference materials:** It would be impractical to list all of the people, charts, and organisations that the mapmaker relied upon to build this map, but by citing "the recent authorities and surveys," he has given us confidence that we could have been provided with that information had we but asked.

## **Terra Australis : Hendrik Hondius 1641 – Polus Antarcticus**

A Dutch map by a notable family of cartographers, this was the first widely published map to include the Dutch discoveries of New Holland and Anthony van Diemen's Land.

**Offer a sense of place:** Illustrations of the terrain, the people, and the wildlife can help engage the viewer and give their imagination something to work with. They can be placed in corners, insets, or directly on the map. If you manage to include a penguin or a kangaroo, you're probably on the right track.

**Change your perspective:** Most maps have been drawn with the north at the top of the map, but this a purely

lessons of wisdom from a lesser-known world that can inform our own handiwork?

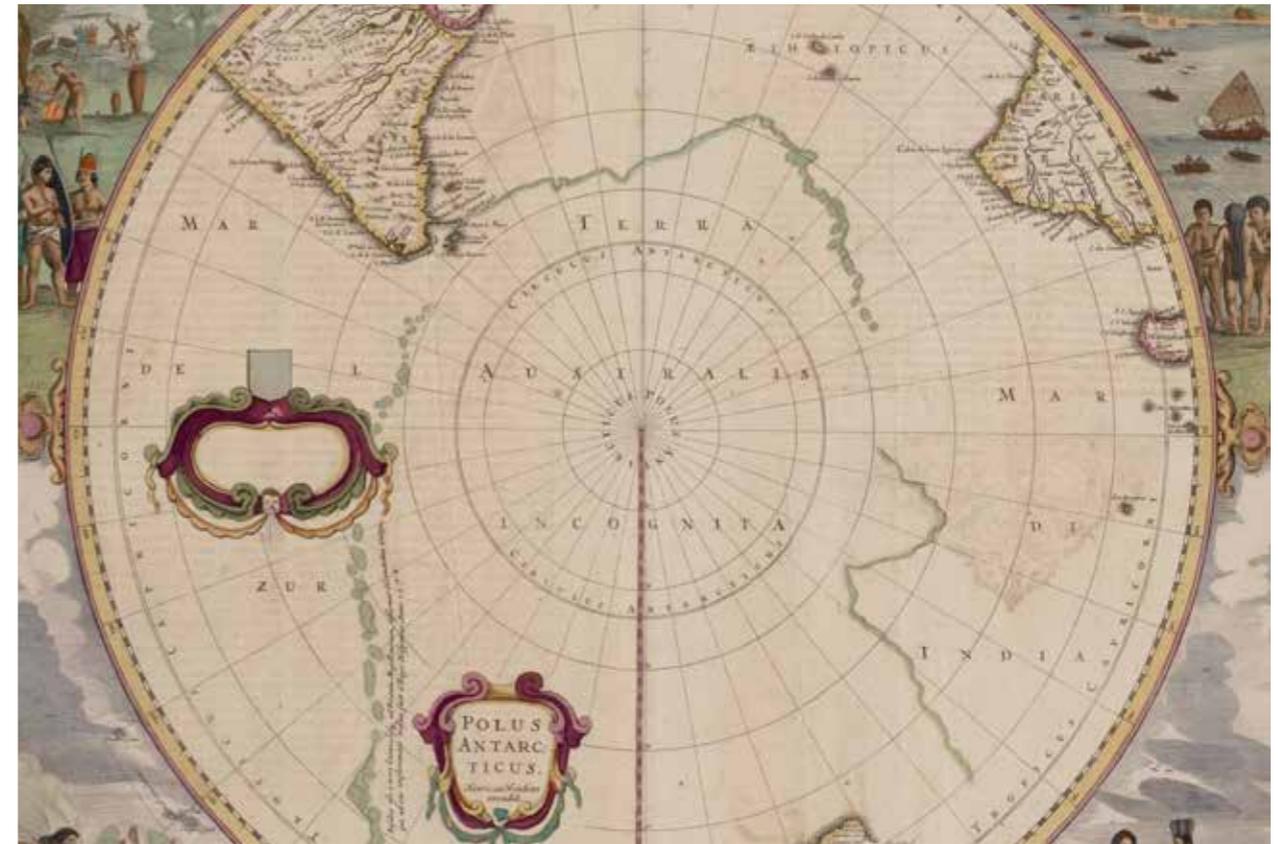
## **A Map of Tassie: Thomson 1821 – NSW and Van Diemen's Land**

By the time the British Empire was colonising Tasmania, coastal mapmaking was a precise endeavour performed from the decks of ships, whereas inland surveying in the mountainous island was a slow and incomplete process. This map, part of a world atlas, is part of what has begun to be a solid body of convention and scientific technique. Serious and functional, there are almost no decorative elements.

**Don't be afraid to step outside:** To make this map work, Cape Barren Island needed to reach beyond the frame already set. Unlike Freycinet Peninsula, which is squeezed in precisely to the boundary, the eastern side of Cape Barren refuses to be constrained by convention.

Somewhere in the uncharted realms between artwork and reality lies the craft of mapmaking. In its modern form, cartography is hyper-precise and calculated down to the seventh decimal place, but in past centuries a map was constructed with a curious recipe of estimation, speculation, and imagination. This recipe is far more engaging than the clockwork science of digital mapmaking, and remind us of a time when art and science were perhaps closer together.

Let's have a look at a small set of the visual ingredients from early maps of the Earth, Australia and Tasmania. By zooming in on some decorative and functional details, we'll be able to explore realms of necessity and imagination that are now almost forgotten. In a digital world where there are no "blank spots" left on the map, maybe we can regain some of that sense of wonder by looking back into the mapmaker's archive. What can we learn from these often inaccurate mapmakers of the past? Are there



cultural concept. This projection centred on the South Pole is even today an unfamiliar perspective – and all the more educational because.

**Admit lack of knowledge:** In this map, the presumed Southern Supercontinent is admittedly unknown – "incognita" and the mapmaker has wisely left the coastlines unfinished and lightly inked. We think better of them for it.

**Have a sense of purpose and impact:** The arrival of the technologically superior sailing ship heralds globalisation and immense change for the native people rowing out to greet it. To this mapmaker, European mythology was an essential part of the scenery. Whether or not you agree with that historical sense of mission,

the map tells a story of adventure and exploration.

## **A Map of the World: Ortelius 1570 – Typus Orbium Terrarum**

In 1570, this giant map in eight pieces "The Theatre of the World" was published by the Belgian cartographic researcher Ortelius as part of a book compiled from more than 87 sources. By standardising the colouring and size, and by organising them by region, these maps became a highly functional atlas. With printing technologies this work spread widely around Europe.

**Use the best information available:** The supercontinent "Terra Australis" was filled in using incorrect information cobbled together from reports including Marco Polo's description of Indonesian islands and a sense of balance to the spherical planet. It's worth remembering that the mapmakers themselves would have had little to no opportunity to travel widely themselves, and used what reference material had been published.

**Choose a common language:** the Latin characters and writing were not necessarily the native tongue for the



publishers, but it helped the book to achieve a wider audience.

**Make it grand:** With a title card resembling a flag against billowing clouds, this map arrives with bold pageantry. The lands and oceans of the world should make you think of kingdoms and empires.

**Don't forget the sea monsters:** Whales in the far south and sea serpents threatening boats in the Pacific help fill in the empty oceans. Sometimes a bit of danger can help remind us what a vast and wild world it really is.