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America Septentrionalis

Stock#: 102949
Map Maker: Hondius / Jansson
Date: 1641
Place: Amsterdam
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG+
Size: 21.5 x 18.5 inches
Price: \$ 6,500.00



Description:

Hondius and Jansson's Map of North America, A Map Central to the Myth of California as an Island

Striking example of the second state of Henricus Hondius' and Jan Jansson's map of North America, called by Burden the single most influential map in perpetuating the myth of California as an island to that date. It is also the first atlas map to focus exclusively on North America.

Although California is a prominent feature, it certainly is not the only interesting aspect of this map. The *Rio del Norte* flows from a large lake in the interior. In South America, another lake, *Parime lacus* is also shown, a reference to the El Dorado myth. On the eastern seaboard of North America, one can spot *James Towne*, the still small English settlement.

The map is a well-researched amalgam of the best cartographic resources available at the time. It first debuted in 1636; this is a second state with the signature of Joannes Janssonius [Jan Jansson] included in the lower-left cartouche. For the western area, the Hondius house mapmakers drew upon Henry Briggs' *The North Part of AMERICA* (1625). For the Gulf of Mexico and Florida, there are many similarities to Hessel Gerritsz's ca. 1631 chart. Some of the place names from John Smith's map of Virginia are included, but the east coast north of Florida seems to be largely an original composition. The Gulf of St. Lawrence follows the work of De Laet and, to the north, the recent work by Thomas James (1633) is borrowed for the west coast of Hudson's Bay.



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In addition to the latest depiction of geographic features, the map features many decorative elements. Animals, including a polar bear, a fox, a boar, bison, and others roam the open North American interior. Ships and sea monsters dot the waters, including north of the island of California—a sly reference to the possible geography of that unmarked coast. The northwest coast is further obscured by a large title cartouche showing Indigenous Americans in full battle dress flanking an ornate frame topped with various reptiles. In the lower-left is another cartouche, this one with swimming putti using navigational equipment and staring at a globe. This second cartouche also contains Jansson's name in this, the second state of the map. Ice became commonplace. Even after Father Eusebio Kino published a map based on his travels refuting the claim (Paris, 1705), the island remained a fixture until the mid-eighteenth century.

States and publication

As previously stated, this is the second state of the map. The first was made in 1636 by Henricus Hondius; it is distinguished from this because the cartouche in the bottom left is blank as opposed to containing the name of Jan Jansson. This second state appeared in 1641. The third state was a reissue by Petrus Schenk; it bears his imprint and has dotted lines demarcating regions. The map was issued as part of the *Atlas Novus*, Hondius and Jansson's highly successful atlas. This is an essential map for collectors of North America and California.

- State 1: Lower-left cartouche is blank, Henricus Hondius, 1636
- State 2: Lower-left cartouche reads "Amstelodami, Excudit Ioannes Ianssonius", 1641
- State 3: Schenk & Valk imprint, circa 1694

Detailed Condition: