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Orbis Terrarum Descriptio Duobis Planis Hemisphaeriis Comprehe[n]sa [Description of the World Comprised in Two Planar Hemispheres]

Stock#: 97432
Map Maker: Van Geelkercken / Jansson
Date: 1617 (1618)
Place: Amsterdam
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: See Description
Size: 23 x 16.5 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Drink and be Merry - Van Geelkercken's Wine and Beer World Map.

This remarkable world map, elaborately engraved by Nicholas van Geelkercken and first published by Johannes Janssonius in 1617, stands as a testament to both the cartography and cultural priorities of the early 17th-century Netherlands.

The Cartography

The cartography in this map broadly follows Van Geelkercken's double-hemisphere world map of 1610 (Shirley 269). In the previous world map, Van Geelkercken included a large inland sea in North America, following information from John Smith via Henry Hudson and Jodocus Hondius; with this map, he has done away with that speculation. Southeast and Northeast Asia are somewhat revised.

South America has been revised to include the Le Maire Strait ("Lameers Straet"), at least in the present 1618 state. Van Geelkercken's map was published shortly after the culmination of Joris van Spilbergen's circumnavigation in 1617. Shirley complains that the map text erroneously states Spilbergen transited the Strait of Magellan in 1615; this is incorrect. Spilbergen did, in fact, transit the Strait between March 8 and May 1615.

Van Geelkercken is further associated with the Le Maire and Schouten voyage in publishing *Oost ende West-Indische Spiegel* in 1619.



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A Decorative Triumph

Beyond the map's fascinating geographic eccentricities, it is bordered with unusual vignettes that offer a window into the life and times of the Dutch in the early 17th century. Notably, the imagery is imbued with a celebratory appreciation for wine and beer. To the lower left, scenes of winemaking culminate in a vintner savoring his creation. The lower right introduces us to a refined gentleman, comfortably seated by a fireplace indoors, sipping ale from a stein. Outside, the theme of revelry continues with a dancing duo, the man triumphantly raising a stein. These vivid depictions underscore the significance of wine and beer in Dutch culture, encapsulating the society's passion for celebration, quality, and the good life. Contrastingly, in the upper left, a maiden proudly holds a bouquet and garlands of flowers, set against a backdrop of scenes of spring, including three men trying to shoot a bird from atop a tall pole, apparently an early Dutch game. The upper right corner presents a figure cherishing fruits and grains, with a montage of harvest activities in the fields and orchards unfurling behind her. These scenes and personifications represent the seasons; the upper left is spring, the upper right is fall, the lower right is winter, and the lower left is summer.

Following [Petrus Plancius's 1594 world map](#), Dutch world map publishing saw a flourishing of decorative border engraving. This style placed equal emphasis on the map's cartographic details and its ornamental elements. The trend continued into the first half of the 17th century and gave us a series of spectacular and often quite rare world maps.

This map features an elaborate scene of the Last Judgement below the two hemispheres and a depiction of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden above the hemispheres. In his previous world map, these scenes were inverted.

Shirley notes of the map:

The signatures on this vividly decorative map indicate the author as Nicolaes Geelkercken and the publisher as Jan Jansson. Geographically, the map is little different from Geelkercken's [1610 world map] . . . apart from a redrawn north-east coast of Asia and the omission of the lake in North America. However, the rich external decoration is quite new. In the corners there are rural scenes illustrating the four seasons, and, in the upper and lower center parts, panoramas of the Garden of Eden and the last Judgement. Some of the human details, milkmaids, reapers, skaters -- are particularly lively.

States



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Shirley (295) lists the following states:

1. Dated 1617, "still shows only Magellan's strait."
2. Dated 1618, "four or five examples are extant."
3. Undated. Shirley is unclear about where this state fits in the chronology but implies it falls in between the second and fourth states.
4. Dated 1632.
5. Later states are implied by circumstantial evidence outlined in Shirley 295.

While J. Keunig (in *Nicolaas Geelkerken*, *Imago Mundi* XI, 1954, pages 174-177) concluded that the map was first published in 1616, no example is known to have survived with this date, and only two known examples of the 1617 edition have survived. Shirley concludes there is no support for Keunig's contention of a 1616 publication.

Shirley seems to indicate that Henricus Hondius had the copperplate substantially modified and reissued in the 1630s: "In 1639 the centre hemispheres were combined with new borders under Henricus Hondius' name to produce a two-sheet world map: see [Shirley] Entry 348." If this is what Shirley meant, he is incorrect. While [the 1639 Hondius map](#) closely follows Van Geelkercken's in its cartography, it is printed from a completely new copperplate.

Rarity

Shirley says that of the 1618 edition, only "four or five examples are extant." That number has increased slightly since he wrote, but it is still less than 10.

Detailed Condition:

Top 2.5 inches and bottom 2 inches of the map image reinstated in expert facsimile across the length of the map. That said, the map presents as VG+, and the restoration is extremely difficult to detect.