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A Map of the Icy Sea in which the several Communications with the Land Waters and other new Discoveries are exhibited [Sea of the West]

Stock#: 0054dg
Map Maker: Gentleman's Magazine
Date: 1770 circa
Place: London
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 8 x 8 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

An interesting map on a north hemispheric projection, showing the regions then being actively explored by the Russians, French and English.

The projection is based upon Phillipe Buache's work from the prior decade and illustrates one view of the rapid changes along the Northwest Coast of America, Northeast Coast of Asia and Arctic Circle. In the 1740s, France and England became acutely aware of the Russian voyages of discovery by Tchirikow, Bering and others into the Northwest Coast of America, especially following the return of Jean Nicolas De L'Isle from the Russian Court. Interest in what had until then been unknown regions intensified, leading to the launch of a number of important voyages of exploration in the second half of the eighteenth century, including Cook, La Perouse, Vancouver, Dixon, Meares and others.

The map includes notes on Dutch, Portuguese and English discoveries near the North Pole. A very definite route from Japan to Portugal is shown, snaking around the apocryphal island of Jeso, or Yesso. The map shows the West Sea, a version of the mythical Sea of the West, which tentatively connects to another large inland lake which, in turn, connects, via dotted lines to Hudson's Bay. Perhaps the most salient feature of the map is the suggestion that there is no indication of any land masses or obstructions near the poles. All in all, these features highlight the importance of the ever elusive, and therefore appealing, Northwest Passage to eighteenth-century readers.



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The *Gentlemen's Magazine*, where this map appeared, was a popular periodical in the eighteenth century and one of the first to regularly feature maps to enhance stories. Exploration was a popular topic in the magazine; it also featured Anson's circumnavigation in the 1740s, a debate over northern Pacific geography in the 1750s, and discussions of Patagonian giants in the 1760s.

Detailed Condition: