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Karta predstavliaiushchaia otkritii Rossiiskikh moreplavatelei na Tikhom More i aglinskago Kapitana Kukka. [transliterated from the Cyrillic]

Stock#: 27297
Map Maker: Wilbrecht
Date: 1787
Place: St. Petersburg
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 31 x 22 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Rare separately published Russian map of the North Pacific and coastlines of Northwest America and Northeast Asia, synthesizing the best available information from Russian and European explorers between 1726 and 1779.

Alexander Wilbrecht was the most important mapmaker in Russia in the last decades of the 18th Century. The present map is Wilbrecht's first map of the Arctic Regions between Asia and America, and is generally regarded as the most important and detailed mapping of the Russian explorations in the region prior to Cook's arrival. The World Digital Library description of the map states:

This 1787 map shows the voyages of the leading Russian explorers of the North Pacific: Bering, Chirikov, Krenitsyn, Shpanberg, Walton, Shel'ting, and Petushkov. It also shows the 1778-79 voyage of British Captain James Cook. The route of each voyage is depicted in great detail, with ship locations plotted by the day. Other details on the map include administrative borders, population centers, Chukchi dwellings, and impassable ice. The inset map is of Kodiak Island, Alaska, denoted here by its Russian name of Kykhtak.

The map title translates as follows: *Map presenting the discoveries of Russian navigators in the Pacific Ocean and those of the English Captain Cook.* (translation source: Library of Congress). The annotation and addition along the southern coastline near modern day Puget Sound in red is almost certainly an early effort to draw in the newly explored coastline of Vancouver Island.

The map does not include the explorations of Gerasim Ismailov, who after meeting Cook in 1778, explored



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the region in the 1780s. The map also pre-dates the explorations of Dimitrii Bocharov and Grigorii Shelikov. The map includes a large inset map of *Polozhenie Kykhtaka I okolo lezhashchikh ostrovov* (Kodiak Island), which would later be colonized by Shelikov.

Among its more interesting features, the map includes a detailed treatment of the topography of the Russian regions in Northeast Asia and a remarkably detailed group of original Russian place names in Alaska and along the NW Coast of America. The map provides excellent detail in Alaska and along the Northwest Coast of America, reaching as far south as the Northern California, a foreshadowing of the Russian attempts at colonization along the California Coast.

An interesting addition to the map are the contemporary manuscript annotations within the map. The redlines showing Vancouver Island are of particular note. Europeans first explored the island in 1774, when rumors of Russian fur traders in the region caused Spain to send a number of expeditions to assert its claims to the Pacific Northwest. The first expedition was that of the *Santiago*, under the command of Juan José Pérez Hernández. In 1775, a second Spanish expedition under the Spanish Peruvian captain Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra was sent. By 1776 Spanish exploration had reached Bucareli Bay including the mouth of the Columbia River between Oregon and Washington, and Sitka Sound.

Vancouver Island came to the attention of Britain after the third voyage of Captain James Cook, who spent a month during 1778 at Nootka Sound, on the island's western coast. Cook claimed it for the United Kingdom. On his expedition to the region, John Meares set up a single-building trading post near the native village of Yuquot (Friendly Cove), at the entrance to Nootka Sound. The red lines, which would appear to be contemporary to the publication of the map, include the name "Queen Charlotte." While in theory this could be a reference to Queen Charlotte's Island, first surveyed by Captain Dixon in 1787, the location of the red lines (between 56 and 50 degrees North Latitude), is more likely a reference to Queen Charlotte's Island would be erroneous, suggesting that this is either an early error or a reference to Dixon's ship, the *Queen Charlotte*, which also coasted along Vancouver Island in the same voyage.

Alexander Wilbrecht (1757-1823) was a mathematician, geographer, cartographer and astronomer. Wilbrecht served as Geographer of The Geographic Department of the Cabinet of Her Imperial Majesty. In 1782, he produced the first Russian atlas. He also produced a number of important separately issued maps between 1787 and 1802. Wilbrecht is credited with authorship of several atlases, including *Ross'iiskoi Atlas iz soroka chetyrekh kart sostaiashch'ii I na sorok na dva namiestnichestva Imper'iiu razdieliaushch'ii*. [The New Atlas or a Collection of all parts of the Globe], St. Petersburg, 1793 (Philips 679).

The map is apparently quite rare. We locate only the copies at the Library of Congress, University of



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Alaska Fairbanks and the Russian National Library.

Detailed Condition:

Annotations along the unknown coastline of southern Alaska. Two German library stamps in the lower left corner. This copy was deaccessioned by the German National Library in Berlin in the 1990s.