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Hemisphere Septentrional pour voir plus distinctement Les Terres Arctiques . . .

Stock#: 68768
Map Maker: Covens & Mortier
Date: 1741
Place: Amsterdam
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG+
Size: 20 x 18 inches
Price: \$ 975.00



Description:

Fine Map of the Northern Hemisphere, With the Latest Russian Discoveries in the Northeast Asia

Striking north polar projection which includes the latest Russian discoveries in the North Pacific. This is a rare 1741 edition of this important map, originally by Guillaume Delisle, and published by Covens and Mortier in Amsterdam.

The map shows the entire Northern Hemisphere. The projection has the opposite effect of a Mercator projection, which tends to stretch and distort landmasses that are close to the poles. Here, it is territory close to the equator that is stretched, allowing the Arctic to come into sharp focus.

California is shown as a peninsula, although other contemporary maps still featured it as an island. Greenland is connected to Northern Canada in Baffin Bay, a common hypothesis at this time. Japan too is shown in what appears a rudimentary form; a more horizontal orientation of the archipelago was typical on maps until slightly later in the eighteenth century.

In the North Pacific, an unfinished island extends eastward. This *Terre de la Compagnie* is near *Terre d'Yedso*, an exaggeration of Hokkaido. Nearby, a note ties the former to the voyage of *Dom Jean de Gama*, who supposedly discovered a large coastline in the area. All three of these proved to be chimeras which shrank over the course of the century and eventually disappeared from maps.



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The unfinished shores of North America and Greenland suggest that further exploration is necessary to better understand the Arctic. Indeed, the map seems to imply that there may be a navigable route north of Asia or around Baffin and Hudson's Bay, a nod to the much-sought and still-elusive Northwest Passage.

One leader in the search for such a passage, and for a more detailed charting of northern waters, were the Russians. Two important expeditions, the first Russian naval expeditions focused minutely on geographic reconnaissance, helped to chart much of the Northeast Asian coast and proved that America and Asia were not connected. These voyages (1725-30, 1733-43), led by Vitus Bering, are referenced here in the letter that is translated into both Dutch and French in the bottom corners of the map.

This letter, dated January 13, 1740 (with the additional date of January 24, a nod to the fact that certain countries had not shifted from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar), was from a Monsieur Swartz residing in St. Petersburg. Swartz, a Dutch diplomat, was reporting news from the second Bering expedition. He recounts a letter from Martin Spanberg, a Danish naval officer in the Russian navy, who had served on both expeditions. Spanberg recounted his recent discovery of 34 islands, which he supposed were part of Japan. The letter had been delivered with a coin, which had Chinese or Japanese characters on it.

The first Bering expedition also explains why Russia looks remarkably complete for the time. One of the sources for this map was the 1734 map of the Russian Empire by Ivan Kirilov. This map, which is rare, was part of Kirilov's larger project, the *Atlas Russicus*, the first Russian atlas. Kirilov's map was the first scientifically accurate map of Russia and one of the earliest to include the results of the initial Bering expedition. These results are seen here in the shape of the Kamchatka Peninsula and the northeastern-most parts of Asia.

The map was originally published in 1714 by Guillaume Delisle. Covens and Mortier had the rights to print Delisle's maps in the Netherlands. This state has an improved northeast corner of Asia, as well as the letter from Swartz.

Detailed Condition:

Fine Old Color example