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Essay D'Une Carte Reduite Contenant Les Parties Connuees Du Globe Terrestre Dedie A JM. Le Comte De Maurepas . . . 1748 (1st Edition!)

Stock#: 50689
Map Maker: Bellin
Date: 1748
Place: Paris
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG
Size: 27.5 x 20 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Bellin's World Map Showing Both the Latest Discoveries and Lingering Geographic Questions-First Edition!

First edition of J.N. Bellin's influential mid-eighteenth-century map of the world, published in Paris in 1748. This first edition shows several geographic hypotheses that were then a matter of debate and reflects the changeable nature of geography at this time. It also is one of the first maps to show the Russian discoveries in the far Pacific Northwest.

This first edition was made in the context of the return of the Anson expedition (1740-44), which circumnavigated the globe and captured a Spanish treasure galleon in the Philippines as part of the War of Jenkins' Ear and the War of the Austrian Succession. Anson's triumphant return to England caused a renewed interest in the Pacific across Europe, including in France.

This world map is on the Mercator projector, with a slight overlap at the edges—the Antipodes of Paris are shown in the far west and the far east. The meridian of the map is through Paris, but longitude calculations are included from l'Isle de Fer. An elaborate compass rose in the southern oceans is labeled with the wind directions. A decorative cartouche protects the title in the lower left corner, which includes a coat of arms and navigational instruments.

While the title explains that this map shows the known world, there are also several conjectures contained within the map. For example, there is a channel cutting off Patagonia from the rest of South America. The



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most significant of these conjectures is in the interior of North America. Stretching from the west coast to the Great Lakes is a fluvial system titled here the *Fl de l'Ouest*. The idea of a River or Sea of the West stems from the work of the renowned geographer Guillaume Delisle, although Delisle never included the feature on his own published maps.

A bit farther south of the *Fl de l'Ouest* is an unfinished entrance in the coastline labeled as having been seen by Martin d'Aguilard. Martin de Aguilar was a Spanish captain who sailed with Sebastian Vizcaino on a reconnaissance expedition up the California coast in 1602-3. Aguilar, commanding the *Tres Reyes*, was blown off course, to the north. When the seas calmed, Aguilar reported that he had found the mouth of a large river. Eighteenth-century geographers, including Delisle and Philippe Buache conjectured that the river was the entrance to the Sea of the West. On this map Bellin has decided to keep the entrance separate, but it remains a viable geographic possibility all the same.

Here, Bellin's River of the West suggests a connection between the Pacific Ocean and the French controlled Great Lakes region, providing a French claim to the long sought Northwest Passage. By comparison, the northern routes in what is now northeast Canada, which were explored primarily by the British, do not lead far west. Just above the Arctic Circle is Repulse Bay, discovered in 1742, which chronicles the latest British failure to find the Passage by Christopher Middleton. Indeed, the coasts of Greenland and Baffin Bay suggest that they join to form a dead end for British claims to the elusive Passage.

Another great cartographic conjecture of the early modern period is also in the interior of North America; the country of Quivira, which Bellin admits is not known for certain. Quivira refers to the Seven Cities of Gold sought by the Spanish explorer Francisco Vasquez de Coronado in 1541. In 1539, Coronado wandered over what is today Arizona and New Mexico, eventually heading to what is now Kansas to find the supposedly rich city of Quivira. Although he never found the cities or the gold, the name stuck on maps of southwest North America, wandering from east to west.

The Pacific Northwest and other recent discoveries

The map also includes the latest discoveries. For example, in the South Atlantic is a coast marked Cap de la Circonsion. This was part of an island found by Jean-Baptiste Charles Bouvet de Lozier in 1739. Bouvet de Lozier had been sent by the French East India Company to search for a southern continent. He crisscrossed the South Atlantic and found this small island, but he mislabeled the coordinates and therefore the island was set in position only in 1808.

In the far Pacific Northwest, Bellin has included speculative coastlines which show a strait passing



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between Asia and North America. A note explains that the Russians, or Muscovites as Bellin calls them, had been to those parts in 1743. Two expeditions led by Vitus Behring (1728-30, 1733-43) explored Kamchatka and what is now Alaska, charting the strait between them. The strait is shown here, but it is not labeled. This would have been one of the first maps to show the Russian discoveries, as they had not yet been widely published in 1748.

Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific

This edition is also noteworthy for its marvelous early projection of Australia and New Zealand, each with largely speculative coastlines. Australia is still attached to New Guinea via a peninsula labeled *Carpenterie*. New Zealand is barely known and has only a portion of its western coastline.

The notes included on the western Australian coast reflect early Dutch encounters with the continent. These include *Terre de With*, which recalls Gerrit Frederikszoon de Witt, captain of the *Vianen*, who sailed in 1628 (mislabelled here as 1623). To the west is *Terre d'Endracht*. The *Endracht* was the second recorded European ship to contact Australia (1616), although it is mislabeled here as discovered in 1628. *Terre de Lewin* is named for the *Leeuwin*, whose crew charted some of the southwest coastline in 1622; Flinders would later name Cape Leeuwin, the southwestern most point on the Australian mainland, after the ship. *Terre de nuits* is named for Pieter Nuyts, a Dutch navigator who commanded the *Gulden Zeepaert* along the southern coast in 1627.

Just east of the proposed Australia is a round island marked *Terre du St. Esprit*. This place was visited by an explorer named Quiros, who is also mentioned in the Pacific on the western portion of the map. Pedro Fernandez de Quiros got his start in the Pacific under the command of Alvaro de Mendaña. Mendaña led a Spanish expedition to the Solomon Islands in 1567-9, but his crew forced his return to Peru. Another attempt was made from 1595-6 to return to the Solomons, but they had not been charted accurately. Mendaña died on Santa Cruz, leaving his wife in charge of the settlement they had started. She decided to return to Spanish dominions and they arrived in the Philippines in early 1596.

Quiros accompanied Mendaña on his second voyage and was a skilled pilot. After returning to Spain, he convinced authorities that he could find *Terra Australis*, the southern continent, if they gave him ships and supplies. He set out in 1605 and eventually landed on what is today Vanuatu. He mistook one of the islands for the fabled continent and called it *Austrialia de Espiritu Santo*. Quiros intended to set up a colony, but his crew forced him to leave.

On this chart, Mendaña's Solomon Islands are clearly marked. Quiros is mentioned as sighting a string of island near the Tropic of Capricorn. His *Terre du S. Esprit* is positioned near the Australian coastline,



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perhaps suggesting that the utopia praised by Quiros was actually Australia, a conjecture Bellin also included on other maps.

Bellin's map was an important summary of geographic knowledge in the mid-eighteenth century. Soon, that geography would be rewritten by war and voyages of exploration, making this map a fascinating snapshot into history and geography. This first edition is rarer than the later edition, making this a significant addition to collections focused on exploration or the eighteenth century.

Detailed Condition:

Manuscript annotations on verso, with minor show through. Margins extended for framing.