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Nova Totius Terrarum Orbis Geographica Ac Hydrographica Tabula

Stock#: 12127
Map Maker: Tavernier

Date: 1643
Place: Paris
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG
Size: 20.5 x 15 inches

Price: SOLD



Description:

Rare Early Seventeenth-Century French World Map with California as an Island

Fine, colored example of Melchior Tavernier's second map of the world, published in Paris in 1643.

The double hemisphere map is split into eastern and western halves, with the Americas to the left and Africa, Asia, and Europe to the right. The title runs along the top, while several cartouches (including a blank one near Antarctica) adorn the map.

Between each of the two larger hemispheres are smaller circles containing the starscape of the northern and southern hemispheres. Large banners unfurl from the celestial hemispheres; these display coordinate tables in French and German miles.

In the four corners are animal representation of the four elements. Air is shown with large birds flying in the clouds. Fire is a flaming salamander, which calls on an association of the lizards with fire resistance that stretches back to Aristotle and Pliny. Water is a voracious sperm whale surrounded by its prey of fish (and, possibly, ships). Earth shows a landscape filled with animals, including an elephant, lion, horse, and deer.

The geography of the hemispheres is no less interesting than these animal allegories. Japan appears slightly squat, yet is a more precise depiction than many other contemporary maps. Nearby, the Strait of Anian separates Asia and North America. Anian derives from Ania, a Chinese province on a large gulf mentioned in Marco Polo’s travels (ch. 5, book 3). The gulf Polo described was actually the Gulf of Tonkin, but the province’s description was transposed from Vietnam to the northwest coast of North America. The

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first map to do was Giacomo Gastaldi's world map of 1562, followed by Zaltieri and Mercator in 1567. The Strait then became shorthand for a passage to China, i.e. a Northwest Passage. It appeared on maps until the mid-eighteenth century.

To the south on the eastern hemisphere, but curiously not on the western hemisphere, is a huge landmass. This is labelled as *Terre Australe* and *Australis Incognita*, or the unknown southern lands. The only place name included on the continent is Beach, a toponym taken from Marco Polo. Beach was supposed to be located in Java, but it often appears in *Terra Incognita* on maps from this period. This conflation of Java with the southern continent stemmed from an error. Initially, Polo used Arabic usage of *Java Major* for Java and *Java Minor* for Sumatra. After a printing mistake made *Java Minor* seem the largest island in the world in the 1532 editions of Polo's *Travels* (Paris and Basel), mapmakers started to make a landmass to accommodate Beach, as well as related place names like Lucach and Maletur.

The cartouche in the southern oceans is blank on the eastern hemisphere, but there is one with text in the western hemisphere's South Seas. It translates as:

Map of America, newly drawn according to the new discoveries and made in France by M. Tavernier, resident in the Isle du Palais on the quay at the Royal Sphere.

For this map, Tavernier indeed made dramatic revisions to the northwest and northeast coastlines of North America. California is shown as an island, with a marvelous conjectural northwest coastline partially hidden by a text cartouche. The discoveries referenced in the cartouche belong to William Baffin, John Davis, and Thomas Button.

The expeditions of Baffin, Davis, and Button

Thomas Button (d. ca. 1634) was a Welsh sailor who served in the English navy at the end of the sixteenth century. By 1612, Button has joined the North West Company, which sought the lucrative, ice-bound passage north of the Americas to China. Button was dispatched with two ships, the *Resolution* and the *Discovery*, to seek fellow explorer Henry Hudson, who had been set adrift by mutineers. While Button did not find Hudson, he did navigate the Hudson Strait and Hudson Bay.

The map makes direct mention of the discovery of Davis Strait in 1586. This waterway was named for John Davis (ca. 1550-1605), an English navigator. Eager to attract the patronage of Elizabeth I, Davis sailed along the eastern and western coasts of Greenland in 1585. He made further attempts in 1586 and 1587, when he made some headway in charting what is now Baffin Bay. After serving in the defeat of the

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Spanish Armada in 1588, Davis continued to explore and is credited with encountering the Falklands in 1592. These islands are not shown on this map.

While the map mentions the discovery of the Davis Strait in 1586, it also shows the bay to the north, which is now named for William Baffin. William Baffin (ca. 1584-1622) was an English navigator who led expeditions in search of the Northwest Passage. Baffin initially encountered the Arctic as a crew member on Captain James Hall's 1612 voyage to find the Northwest Passage. Later, in 1615, he accompanied Captain Robert Bylot to Hudson Strait. Bylot has previously sailed with both Button and Henry Hudson. On this voyage, also in Button's *Discovery*, Baffin was able to calculate longitude at sea by observing the occultation of a star by the moon, the first recorded use of this method. Although he lent his name to the island alongside the Hudson Strait, he and his colleagues did not find the passage to China.

California as an island

The cartouche in the Pacific Northwest of North America mentions the discoveries of Button, but it also lauds a recent geographic revelation. Contrary to previous, and correct, belief, California was now thought to be an island. From its first portrayal on a printed map by Diego Gutiérrez, in 1562, California was shown as part of North America by mapmakers, including Gerard Mercator and Abraham Ortelius. In the 1620s, however, it began to appear as an island in several sources.

This was most likely the result of a reading of the travel account of Sebastian Vizcaino, who had been sent north up the shore of California in 1602. A Carmelite friar who accompanied him later described the land as an island, a description first published in Juan Torquemada's *Monarquia Indiana* (1613) with the island details curtailed somewhat. The friar, Fray Antonio de la Ascension, also wrote a *Relacion breve* of his geographic ideas around 1620. The ideas spread about New Spain and, eventually, most likely via Dutch mariners and perhaps thanks to stolen charts, to the rest of Europe.

By the 1620s, many mapmakers chose to depict the peninsula as an island. These included Henricus Hondius, who published the first atlas map to focus solely on North America with the island prominently featured in 1636. Hondius borrowed his outline of California from another widely-distributed map, that of Henry Briggs and printed in Samuel Purchas' *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas his Pilgrimes* (1625). Tavernier is thought to have worked with Hondius.

Other prominent practitioners like John Speed and Nicolas Sanson also adopted the new island and the practice became commonplace. Father Eusebio Kino initially followed along with this theory but after extensive travels in what is now California, Arizona, and northern Mexico, he concluded that the island was actually a peninsula. Even after Kino published a map based on his travels refuting the claim (Paris, 1705), California as an island remained a fixture until the mid-eighteenth century.

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This is a striking and fine world map from a skilled cartographer. It shows the latest geographic discoveries and hypotheses and is filled with fine details and imagery.

Detailed Condition: