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Mappe-Monde Geo-Hydrographique, ou Description Generale du Globe Terrestre et Aquatique en Deux Plans-Hemispheres . . . Suivant les Relations Les Plus Nouvelles . . . et Principalement sur la Carte que Monsieur N. Witzen Bourgemaistre . . .

Stock#: 19375
Map Maker: Covens & Mortier
Date: 1721 circa
Place: Amsterdam
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG
Size: 38 x 22.5 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Rare double hemisphere map of the World, the earliest printed map to show the Bay or Sea of the West, over 30 years prior to any other recorded example of this extraordinary geographical misconception. The map is also noteworthy for its treatment of New Zealand, Australia, Baja California, the NW passage and the land bridge between North America and Asia.

The source of the modern myth of the Bay of the West are manuscript maps by Guillaume De L'Isle, the Royal Geographer to the King of France at the end of the 17th Century and beginning of the 18th Century. There is a map in Yale's map collection, which depicts a 16th century Thames school map of North America with a large "Branch of the South Sea", which closely resembles De L'Isle's *Mer de L'Ouest* and may well be the source of De L'Isle's idea. There are De L'Isle manuscripts in the Bibliotheque Nationale as early as 1696 (dated) that depict this cartographic myth. Interestingly, De L'Isle never depicted this sea on any of his printed maps.

Among the other unique features of this map is the treatment of New Zealand, with its northernmost coastline nearly attaching itself to the Unknown Southern Continent, suggesting that New Zealand was either part of Antarctica or separated from it only by a narrow strait. On the California Coastline, there are two distinct peninsulas, which appear to be an oversized projection of Baja California with a second smaller example of Baja California to the North. We know of no other map which includes this anomaly. The treatment of Australia is also fascinating, showing a massive southern continent including all of New Guinea and neighboring Islands, the largest depiction of the Australian landmass which we have seen on a printed map.

To the north of the Sea of the West, there is also a very bold depiction of the Northwest Passage, shown as



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a wide open channel flowing nearly due northwest from the Sea of the West to the upper part of Hudson Bay, a most inviting feature for navigational prospects. To the west of the NW passage, we seen a nearly unbroken landmass connecting North America with the Asian continent, culminating with only a very narrow passage between the Islands of Terra De La Compagnie and the Asian mainland, perserving the known existence of a Northeast Passage with the marvelous 16th Century mythical depiction of a land bridge between North America and Asia. Lastly, the map provides a marevlous preservation of the two straits separating the Atlantic and the Pacific, the Straits of Magellan and the inclusion of a narrow Le Maire's Strait, where a small remnant of the unknown southern continent is included in order to show the southernmost water course around the tip of South America as a narrow channel.

The inclusion of the Bay of the West is based upon Nolin's rare world map. There are 3 states of the map, according to McGuirk. The states bear the imprints of Pierre Mortier, David Mortier, and the Covens & Mortier. None of the states are dated, although estimates ranges from just before 1700 to 1704-07 for the first state, with the Covens & Mortier state being offered from 1721 onwards. All of the editions are rare. It should be noted that De L'Isle sued Nolin for stealing his idea and image of the *Mer de L'Ouest* for his wall map (see Shirley 605). Being in another country, Mortier was not subject to French jurisdiction and was therefore not sued. Nolin lost the lawsuit, and in his future wall maps, was forced to depict a different and smaller *Mer De L'Ouest* which, interestingly, somewhat resembles Puget Sound.

Covens & Mortier's map is unquestionably one of the most fascinating large scale maps published in the 18th Century and one of the best examples of the depiction of cartographic myth and conjecture at the beginning of the 18th Century.

Detailed Condition:

Old color, reinforced on verso. Minor discoloration at centerfold.