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Hispaniae Novae Nova Descriptio

Stock#: 2766
Map Maker: Hondius / Mercator
Date: 1606 circa
Place: Amsterdam
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG+
Size: 19 x 14 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Mercator-Hondius Map of Mexico, a Foundational Map of New Spain

Attractive map of Mexico from the Mercator-Hondius *Atlas Sive Cosmographicae*. This map and Ortelius' map of 1579 were foundational maps for all regional maps of Mexico to follow.

The map shows the lands gifted to Hernan Cortes for his service to the Spanish Crown and the lands further west to the Pacific. They are thick with place names; there are so many, in fact, that some had to be indicated with a letter and named in lists at sea. Another list of names is in a rectangular cartouche in the bottom right corner. Cities and towns are marked with dots, a building, or a cluster of buildings according to their size and importance. Squares with a dot in the middle, most in the northeast, mark the location of Spanish barracks. A note there reads, "The encampments of the Spanish, where their armed soldiers roam."

It should be noted that this map closely follows the Ortelius predecessor. However, there are subtle differences, making this a second state in many ways. For example, the oceans have been hatched with waves, whereas the Ortelian seas were dotted. As with the Ortelius map, it includes several ornate cartouches, but only one ship instead of two. The title cartouche depicts interwoven pieces and is adorned with somber faces; it differs from a similar cartouche on Ortelius' map in that it has eliminated the lions and replaced a devil's face in the center top with a crowned male face. The cartouche surrounds the title, which translates to, "New Spain Newly Described." Another diversion from its Ortelian forerunner is that this map has no text box in the lower left corner; instead, the scale is placed in the same space. The text by and large is from Ortelius, although the letters have been re-engraved and tidied.



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Mercator's posthumous atlas

Ortelius' map debuted in the 1579 Latin edition of his atlas, which itself debuted in 1570. This map has the distinction of featuring in the first atlas to bear that name, Mercator's *Atlas Sive Cosmographicae*. However, it was first printed in the 1606 edition of the atlas, which was published by the Hondius family of mapmakers. This provenance can be explained by events in the Mercator family in the late sixteenth century.

Gerard Mercator, the patriarch of the cartography dynasty, died in 1594. Since at least the late 1550s, Mercator had wanted to compile an atlas of the modern world. At the time, this had never been done. Eventually, Mercator planned a five-volume work that covered the creation of the world, a cosmographical description, a geographical description, a history, and a chronology.

The chronology was published first, in 1569, the same year as Mercator's celebrated world map. Then, he moved to the geographical description. He was able to release his own edition of Ptolemy, in 1578, but he died before finishing the modern atlas. In 1585 he managed a volume on the German lands, with a volume on Italy in 1589. In sixteen years, all he had finished was the bulk of Europe; the Iberian Peninsula was lacking even from that.

The delay was caused by a variety of causes. There was supposedly a lack of copper plate and, when attained, a lack of engravers to help Gerard. He mentions in a 1583 letter that Hogenberg sometimes helped, but was distracted with his own commissions, and his grandson Johannes also lent a hand.

The year after his death, the entire atlas appeared together, thanks to the work of Gerard's son and grandsons. This would be the first work to use the word "atlas" in the title, *Atlas sive Cosmographicae meditationes de fabrica Mundi et fabricate figura*. In addition to several more maps of Europe that Gerard had finished, his son Rumold included his world map of 1587, which was in turn based on his father's of 1569. Rumold also completed a map of Europe, while Africa and Asia were by Gerard Mercator the younger. Rumold's younger brother, Michael, engraved the America map. Together, the atlas contained 107 maps, of which 102 Mercator had prepared, if not published, before his death.

Gerard had six children: Arnold, Emerentia, Dorothes, Bartholomeus, Rumold, and Catharina. Arnold (1537-1587) produced his first map in 1558 and took on the quotidian operations of the family business. The second son, Bartholomeus (1540-1568), taught geography in Duisberg, but he died in 1568, aged 28. Rumold, the third son, also became an engraver and mapmaker. He spent much of his adult life in London, but returned to Duisberg in 1587; it was he who spearheaded the atlas' publication in 1595.

Arnold died the same year Rumold returned, leaving his three sons (Gerard, Johann, and Michael) to help



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Rumold and their grandfather. Michael's contribution of the America map is perhaps the most celebrated today, but he could not help his brothers bring out a second edition of the atlas in 1602, having died in 1600. Rumold had also died, in 1599.

The younger Mercators released another edition in 1602, but they then sold the plates to Hondius in 1604. Hondius included this map in his first edition in 1606 and in subsequent editions; there were roughly 50 editions in various European languages in the seventeenth century.

The Hondius family of cartographers

Jodocus Hondius the Elder (1563-1612), or Joost de Hondt, was one of the most prominent geographers and engravers of his time. His work did much to establish Amsterdam as the center of cartographic publishing in the seventeenth century. Born in Wakken but raised in Ghent, Jodocus worked as an engraver, instrument maker, and globe maker.

Hondius moved to London in 1584, fleeing religious persecution in Flanders. There, he worked for Richard Hakluyt and Edward Wright, among others. Hondius also engraved the globe gores for Emery Molyneux's pair of globes in 1592; Wright plotted the coastlines. His engraving and nautical painting skills introduced him to an elite group of geographic knowledge seekers and producers, including the navigators Francis Drake, Thomas Cavendish, and Walter Raleigh, as well as engravers like Theodor De Bry and Augustine Ryther. This network gave Hondius access to manuscript charts and descriptions which he then translated into engraved maps.

In 1593 Hondius returned to Amsterdam, where he lived for the rest of his life. Hondius worked in partnership with Cornelis Claesz, a publisher, and maintained his ties to contacts in Europe and England. For example, from 1605 to 1610, Hondius engraved the plates for John Speed's *Theatre of the Empire of Great Britaine*. When he acquired the Mercator plates, he added 36 maps, many engraved by him, and released the atlas under Mercator's name, helping to solidify Mercator's reputation posthumously.

Hondius died in 1612, at only 48 years of age, after which time his son of the same name and another son, Henricus, took over the business, including the reissuing of the Mercator atlas. After 1633, Hondius the Elder's son-in-law, Johannes Janssonius, was also listed as a co-publisher for the atlas.

This map and Ortelius' map of the region were some of the first maps to show the region to European audiences and dominated its depiction for the next half century. They were critical for shaping how Europeans viewed New Spain and are also central examples of the early development of atlases.



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Detailed Condition: