



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

7407 La Jolla Boulevard
La Jolla, CA 92037

www.raremaps.com

(858) 551-8500
blr@raremaps.com

A New and Accurat Map of the World Drawne according to ye truest Descriptions latest Discoveries & best observations yt have beene made by English or Strangers. 1651.

Stock#: 35276
Map Maker: Speed
Date: 1676
Place: London
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG+
Size: 20.5 x 15.5 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Fine example of John Speed's double hemisphere map of the World, published in London in 1676.

Speed's map is one of the earliest obtainable world maps printed in English. While the map largely derives its geographical depiction from Dutch sources, when first issued it had the distinction of being the first world map to show 'California as an Island' and one of the first to show the new settlement of 'New Plymouth', Massachusetts. The depiction of the Northwest Coast of America is unusual, as the coastline swings dramatically to the west in the northern regions and features entirely fabricated place names. In the far south of the Americas, we find an erroneous depiction of Magellanica, whereupon the Tierra del Fuego is left open to the west. The enormous conjectural continent, the Southerne Unknowne Land, embraces much of the Southern Hemisphere.

Speed drew upon William Grent's exceedingly rare world map, printed in London in 1625, for much of his legends and some of the ornamentation, including the astronomical drawings of eclipses and diagrams of heavenly spheres. The two celestial hemispheres and the four allegorical figures of the elements (fire, earth, air and water), were taken from Hondius' 1617 world map. The map is further adorned with medallion portraits of the four great circumnavigators: Sir Francis Drake, Ferdinand Magellan, Thomas Cavendish and Olivier van Noort.

Speed first issued this map in 1626, and ran into four states. The present example represents the fourth state and was part of the final edition of Speed's atlas, *A Prospect of the most Famous Parts of the World* (1676). While the map bears the date of 1651, it was actually printed in 1676. The third state, issued by



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the Rea Brothers, bore their imprint and the date of 1651. However, most of the Rea impressions perished in the Great Fire of London (1666). The plates for Speed's atlas were subsequently sold to Bassett and Chiswell, who erased the Rea's imprint and added their own for the 1676 edition. No further changes were made, and the date 1651 was preserved.

The present map is relatively scarce on the market. According to Rodney Shirley, the scarcity of the map can be accounted for the fact that Speed's atlas did not enjoy the same level of popularity as its contemporary Dutch rivals, as he notes that the Prospect's "circulation was not international in the same sense as the bilingual atlases of Mercator-Hondius or Blaeu and copies of the Prospect are relatively infrequently found outside the UK. In consequence, demand for the world map - long recognized as a very desirable collector's item- has enhanced its rarity value."

Speed's map of the World is one of the most recognizable and sought after world maps among collectors.

Detailed Condition: