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Essay D'Une Carte Reduite Contenant Les Parties Connuees Du Globe Terrestre Dedie A JM. Le Comte De Maurepas . . . 1748

Stock#: 39495
Map Maker: Bellin
Date: circa 1748 (1780 ca)
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

Fine example of J.N. Bellin's influential mid-eighteenth-century map of the world, first published in 1748 in Paris. This edition features the rapidly-changing geography of the Pacific, including the first two of Cook's three expeditions, dating it to ca. 1777.

This world map is on the Mercator projector, with a slight overlap at the edges—New Zealand and the Antipodes of Paris are shown in the far west and, in a more detailed rendering, in 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 all 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 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



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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 connects the Pacific Ocean to 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. 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 Vazquez 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.

In addition to theoretical geographic features, the map also includes the latest discoveries. For example, in the southern Indian Ocean there is a tiny coastline labeled as the *Baye de l'Oiseau*, discovered January 6, 1774. This refers to the island discovered by Yves-Joseph de Kerguelen-Tremarec on his voyage from 1772-1775. A privateer during the Seven Years War, Kerguelen was placed in command of a French voyage to find *Terra Australis* in 1772. Like many before him, Kerguelen did not find the Great Southern Continent, but he did encounter the desolate Kerguelen Archipelago, of which this Bay of Birds is one part. It is one of the most recent updates to this edition of the map; another is South Georgia, which was charted by James Cook in 1775.

Developing Pacific geography

This edition is most noteworthy for its marvelous early projection of Australia and New Zealand, specifically, and for its portrayal of Pacific geography more generally. Northern and Western Australia is covered with Dutch toponyms chronicling the encounter of Dutch East India Company ships with the Australian coastline from 1606 onward. Cook's first voyage is chronicled on the east coast, with toponyms like Solander Point and Cape Banks. Van Diemen's Land to the south is connected to the mainland Australian coast by a dotted line. Australia is separated from New Guinea by the Endeavour Strait, named for Cook's ship on his first voyage.



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New Zealand, in the east, is drawn based on Cook's detailed survey completed during his first voyage to observe the Transit of Venus in Tahiti, which is shown on the left portion of the map. Although the sea seems filled with islands, several of these remain speculative. For example, one is labeled as simply seen, not verified, by Pedro Ferdinand de Quiros during his voyage in search of a paradisiacal southern continent in 1606. Nearby is an island seen by David in 1686, a reference to the island supposedly sighted by the English buccaneer Edward Davis.

Sachtan Nitada

Perhaps most intriguing is the geography of the Northern Pacific Ocean, which does not include the findings of the third Cook expedition which returned in 1780 (without its leader). An arching sentence explains that this northern area is described thanks to Russian exploration dating from 1740. 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 not labeled.

In 1764, a Second Kamchatka Expedition veteran, Lieutenant Ivan Synd, led a new voyage to the Bering Sea. He was in search of the Northwest Passage, but also hoped to clarify to what extent western Alaska was a peninsula or an archipelago. He produced several maps, all but one of which have been lost. The map that does survive shows a series of islands nearly touching Kamchatka, not a peninsula.

In 1773 Jacob von Stählin, secretary to the Russian Academy of Sciences, created a map based on Synd's discoveries entitled, "A Map of the New Northern Archipelago discover'd by the Russians." This map, published in a book with a similar title, was clearly a source for this map. Although it does not copy Stählin's map exactly, this map does adopt a toponym from it, Sachtan Nitada, located on the North American mainland, near the Arctic Circle.

This toponym seems to have been included for the first time by Stählin. It is supposedly a place Synd landed at and is near the sighting of the Alaskan mainland by the Russians in 1730. The book excited members of the Royal Society of London, who ensured that Stählin's German language publication was translated into English by the end of 1774. The book also clearly circulated in French circles, as evidenced by this map.

This map, first published in 1748, was reissued with the latest geographic discoveries. This edition was updated just after Bellin's death in 1772, underlining the enduring importance of his work to European geography. It is a snapshot of the changeable nature of geography in the late-eighteenth century and would be an intriguing addition to any collection of world maps or of the Pacific.



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Detailed Condition: