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America

Stock#: 45733
Map Maker: Hondius

Date: 1613 circa
Place: Amsterdam
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG
Size: 19.5 x 15 inches

Price: SOLD



Description:

Hondius' Impressive Map of the Americas Featuring Anian and Quiviria

Nice example of this highly sought-after map of America, engraved by Joducus Hondius the Elder. The map shows the North and South American continents surrounded by fantastic beasts, ships, and decorative elements that make this a distinct highlight of early-seventeenth century mapmaking. It was made especially for Hondius' first edition of the Merator atlas in 1606 and was included in the atlas until 1630.

The two continents are surrounded by a veritable menagerie of sea monsters; some resemble flying fish, others strange alien creatures. Also at sea are various water craft from cultures ringing the waters shown on the map. To the west is a Japanese square-rigged vessel. Farther south are three European vessels in full sail. Near the Strait of Magellan is an indigenous canoe carrying a fire in the middle, near another European ship. Farther north, beyond yet another tall ship, a second canoe also carries a fire and a note explains that the canoes are also hollowed out by fire. Even farther north is a kayak with a man holding a trident and wearing what appears to be Santa's hat. The inscription says that this is a Greenlander.

There are also two cartouches on the map. At the top center is the title, "America," in a strapwork cartouche common to the period. The more impressive cartouche is in the bottom left corner. This strap-work frame, with two birds perched on top, separates the rest of the map from a scene depicting Brazilian natives brewing *cauim*, an alcoholic beverage made from manioc root. The manioc is boiled, then women—here it says virgins—chew the root because enzymes in the saliva will help the mixture to convert from starch to fermentable sugars. The mixture is then boiled again and left to ferment in pots. The

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pictures should be read from right to left, as women made the drink and men consumed it. This and other scenes, including the indigenous boats, derive from the collections of Theodor DeBry, whom Hondius knew personally.

Geographic details

There is a wealth of cartographic detail included on this map, which was supposed to be the definitive map of the continent when it was first published. The map shows a more accurate west coast of South America than its Mercator predecessor. Hondius considerably narrows the continent as well. Several large lakes feature in the interior. The largest is a long, thin horizontal lake in Guiana, a reference to Lake Parime, which is associated with the voyages of Sir Walter Raleigh and was sought by many Europeans. Hondius knew Raleigh when he lived in London in the late sixteenth century and still benefited from knowledge he gained there in later maps.

To the south, the Strait of Magellan separates South America from a huge southern continent which extends east as well as west, snaking behind the cartouche. This was a common conjecture at the time, as the 1615-1617 circumnavigation by Willem Schouten and Jacob Le Maire had not yet shown Tierra del Fuego to be an island.

Farther west, various islands dot the Pacific, or South Sea, including Tuberones (Shark Island) and S. Petro (St. Peter's Island), which Magellan had called the Unfortunate Islands. New Guinea just peeks out of the left frame of the map.

Unlike its counterpart, North America retains its wide projection, especially to the north. The east coast includes a bizarre projection of Virginia—it is shown as a blockish peninsula stretching far east into the Atlantic Ocean. To the northwest, the coastline extends nearly due west, split from Asia only by the much-hyped Strait of Anian.

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 first map to do so 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.

Another significant cartographic construct of the early modern period is also shown on this map. Hondius includes "*Quivira Regnum*" near "*Anian Regn*." Quivira refers to the Seven Cities of Gold sought by the Spanish explorer Francisco Vasquez de Coronado in 1541. In 1539, Coronado wandered over what today is Arizona and New Mexico, eventually heading to what is now Kansas to find the supposedly rich city of

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America

Quivira. Although he never found the cities or the gold, the name stuck on maps of southwest North America, wandering from east to west. Here it is used to describe the entire southwest of the North America.

Publication

The map debuted in the 1606 Latin edition of the Hondius-Mercator atlas, the first edition released by Hondius. Until 1630, this map and another of America by Gerard Mercator's son, Michael, were placed next to each other. As the Mercator map included the text about the Americas, the verso of this map is always blank.

Detailed Condition:
Old color. Margins added. Minor restoration at top right corner of decorative border.