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An Essay of a New and Compact Map, Containing the known Parts of the Globe, by N. Bellin Engineer of the Marine . . . MDCCL

Stock#: 49386
Map Maker: De Hondt
Date: 1750
Place: Den Haag
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG+
Size: 27 x 19.5 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Rare Dutch edition of Bellin's influential mid-eighteenth century map of the world

The map was first published in Paris in 1748 by Jacques-Nicolas Bellin (1703-1772). Bellin was a prolific and widely respected mapmaker. When he was only eighteen, Bellin was appointed as the *Ingenieur Hydrographe de la Marine* (Hydrographical Engineer to the Navy). In 1741, he gained the title *Ingénieur de la Marine of the Depot des cartes et plans de la Marine*, which included responsibility over all maps used by the French Navy. He also served as Official Hydrographer to the French King. He is best known for his sea atlases, but his sheet maps were best-sellers in their time. Bellin would periodically update and reissue these maps to reflect the latest discoveries.

These discoveries are noted on the map. For example, early Dutch encounters with the west coast of Australia are noted, as are more recent expeditions in Hudson's Bay and Russian voyages in the far northeast of Asia and northwest of North America. Bellin chose not to include a Bay or Sea of the West, as the existence and precise location of such a body of water was the subject of debate amongst his fellow mapmakers. However, he does include a River of the West, which connects the Great Lakes system to the Pacific Ocean. This version of the Northwest Passage would put the entrance to the route in French territory in North America, rather than farther north in the Arctic or through British claims. This feature is excellent example of the political statement that cartographers often embed in their work.

This edition is noteworthy for its impressive early projection of Australia and New Zealand, each with largely speculative coastlines. Australia is attached to New Guinea, as was common cartographic practice



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at the time, and has tentative shorelines connecting it to Van Diemen's Land, modern Tasmania. New Zealand is barely known and only shows a portion of its western coastline.

There is no sign of a southern continent, underling Bellin's careful, conservative approach to cartography. He would not have wanted to include speculative islands, as sailors might depend on their location when lost or in trouble. This does not mean he was impervious to geographic chimeras, however, as the inclusion of the mythical Davis Land off the coast of South America shows. Eighteenth-century mapmakers had to weigh the details of a variety of sources and then make decisions as to which shores to draw and which to leave out.

This Dutch edition bears a decorative cartouche, housing the title in English. The French and Dutch version of the title are printed across the bottom border, emphasizing that this map was aimed at an international market. Pierre d'Hondt, the publisher, operated out of the Hague and was known to have re-issued many maps under his imprimatur.

Detailed Condition: