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Planisphere Physique ou l'on voit du Pole Septentrional ce que l'on connoit de Terres et de Mers Avec les Grandges Chaines de Montagnes ...[Bay or Sea of the West]

Stock#: 49750
Map Maker: Buache / Schenk
Date: 1756
Place: Amsterdam
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 12.5 x 13 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Rare Dutch Edition of Philippe Buache's Map of the World's Watersheds, One of the First Thematic Maps

Nice example of Buache's watershed map of the world, on a North Polar projection.

The map shows how mountain chains affect the flow of water into the various oceans. The map was presented to the *Académie Royale des Sciences* in 1752 and was published as part of the *Histoire* of the *Académie* in 1756. This example is from an edition published in Amsterdam.

Buache's map is one of the earliest examples of thematic mapping and also shows the mythic Sea of the West.

The continents of the world radiate from a central point, the North Pole. The most prominent features are the mountain ranges, which divide the land and the seas. Some are actual mountain ranges, others are placed where Buache hypothesized they must be, for example along the sea floor. To the south, near *Cap de la Circoncision*, is an unfinished coast line which suggests the presence of another continent. New Zealand, shown on the opposite side of the projection, near the top and interrupting the title, is also



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partially shown.

The geography of Europe, Asia, and Africa appear familiar, but the outlines of the Pacific region are less so. Australia is incomplete and connected via a land bridge to New Guinea. There is a suggestion that Australia could connect to lands far to the east, to an island called Terre de St. Esprit. This is a reference to *Austrialia de Espiritu Santo*, a land contacted in 1606 by Pedro Ferdinand de Quiros. Quiros was an adamant promotor of Pacific colonization and he thought he had landed on a vast continent; in reality, he was on the largest island of the chain that makes up Vanuatu.

Sea of the West and recent geographic discoveries

Another notable feature is the Sea of the West, shown here as a large body of water in the interior of the West of North America. This sea had first appeared on charts published by Johann Baptiste Nolin in ca. 1700, but had quickly disappeared thereafter. Although the great French geographer Guillaume De L'Isle never published a map showing the sea, he had postulated that it could exist, and that it might connect to a Northwest Passage through New France, not through English territory farther north. Nolin had plagiarized the idea from Guillaume, as the latter testified when suing the former for plagiarism. He said, the Sea of the West "was one of my discoveries. But since it is not always appropriate to publish what one knows or what one thinks one knows, I have not had this sea engraved on the works that I made public, not wanting foreigners to profit from this discovery" (as quoted in Pedley, 109).

The Sea of the West began to appear again in 1752, when Joseph-Nicolas Delisle, Guillaume's brother, and Philippe Buache, his son-in-law, published a map showing the Russian discoveries in the far north Pacific. Buache had reviewed his father-in-law's papers and read of the Sea of the West. He and his uncle included the sea on their map, which was also presented to the *Académie*, and it spread to other maps thereafter. To learn more of the 1752 map, see `{{ inventory_detail_link('31701','here') }}`.

Although watersheds are the main purpose of this map, there are also references to several voyages and explorers via their geographic discoveries. One is the 1738-9 expedition of Jean-Baptiste Charles Bouvet de Lozier. Bouvet was an employee of the French East India Company who was convinced that, given a chance, he could make discoveries around the South Pole, or near the much vaunted *Terra Australis Incognita*. In 1739, the Company gave him a chance. Bouvet meticulously searched the South Atlantic, but he had to return to France earlier than expected because his crew became too ill to continue. In the 1750s, he served as the governor of the Mascarene Islands, east of Madagascar. He was France's best known explorer at the time this map was printed.

Bouvet's journals mention icebergs between two and three hundred feet high and half a league to two or



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three leagues in circumference. Buache included *Cap de la Circoncision*, sighted by Bouvet, on his original map and it is included here. Farther west is the *Port de Drack*, a reference to Francis Drake and his privateering circumnavigation in 1577-80.

Thematic maps

Buache was an academic geographer who researched his material thoroughly, relying on the most up-to-date information from the voyages of discovery. As previously stated, he was Guillaume Delisle's son-in-law and served as *premier géographe du roi, géographe adjoint* to the *Académie*. He was the first geographer to survey a river basin and suggested that the basin had topographical unity in a paper given to the *Académie* in 1752, as mentioned in the title of this map. Although the word watershed did not come into use until the early nineteenth century, based on the German *wasserscheide*, Buache pioneered the important concept.

This map was one of the earliest thematic maps. Scholars disagree as to which map is the first thematic map, and some say examples come from as early as the Middle Ages. In telling the story of thematic mapping, most histories usually cite Halley's maps on the trade winds and magnetic variation. Scholars also like to focus on John Snow's cholera map. There are other examples, however, including this one, which are less integrated into the history of thematic maps. With Buache's prominence in the world of cartography and science, this map would have been an influential example of thematic mapping. By the end of the eighteenth century, the genre was growing fast and maps were being used to illustrate many spatial phenomena.

The Schenk family of engravers

This example of Buache's watershed map was published as part of the Amsterdam imprint of the *Histoire de l'Académie Royale des Sciences*. Although the Society itself published its proceedings in Paris, they were also printed across Europe, for example in Berlin. In Amsterdam, they were produced by Pierre Mortier and associates. The proceedings for 1752, when Buache presented his original map to the *Académie*, were printed in 1756.

This map was engraved by L. Schenk Jansz, as written in the bottom left corner. This refers to Leonard Schenk of the Schenk family of engravers. His father, Peter Schenk the Elder (1660-1711) moved to Amsterdam in 1675 and began to learn the art of mezzotint. In 1694 he bought some of the copperplate stock of the mapmaker Johannes Janssonius, which allowed him to specialize in the engraving and printing of maps and prints. He split his time between his Amsterdam shop and Leipzig and also sold a considerable volume of materials to London.



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Peter Schenk the Elder had three sons. Peter the Younger carried on his father's business in Leipzig while the other two, Leonard and Jan, worked in Amsterdam. Leonard engraved several maps and also carried on his father's relationship with engraving plates for the Amsterdam edition of the *Histoire*, as this map shows.

Detailed Condition: