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La Californie ou Nouvelle Caroline, Teatro De Los Trabajos Apostolicos De Compa. E. Jusus En Americae Septe. . . . 1720

Stock#: 54093
Map Maker: de Fer
Date: 1720
Place: Paris
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG
Size: 26 x 18 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Largest Separate Representation of the Island of California

Striking large-format map of the island of California—the largest separate representation of the island of California on a printed map. It is a later representation of the island (1720), from a period when mapmakers were beginning to question the island's existence. The maps ironically derive from information provided by Father Eusebio Kino in 1696; by 1720 Kino's later works had largely disproved the California as an island myth.

De Fer's arresting map is far and away the largest representation of California as an island ever issued in regional format and it rivals several immense, rare wall maps as the largest representation of all time. The map is essentially a dramatically enlarged edition of De Fer's map of 1700, "*Californie et Nouveau Mexique*," published in *L'Atlas Curieux ou le Monde*. This map was included in the *Atlas ou recueil de cartes geographiques*.

The title, which translates as "California or New Carolina, Place of the Apostolic Works of the Society of Jesus in North America," derives from Kino's original summaries of his expeditions to California. The inset text below the title provides a history of California up to 1694. De Fer notes that the map is drawn from a map previously transmitted by the Viceroy of New Spain to the *Academie de Sciences* in France.

The title is bordered by filigree and grapes. Three scenes of indigenous people at work and play underline a sense of utopia and plenty. In the lower left corner is another delicate frame, which contains the scale. Flanking this frame are a pair of birds, an aardvark, and a sloth.



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Besides the giant California, there is also a nice regional depiction of the Southwest. Unlike the 1700 map by de Fer, the place names in what is now New Mexico are engraved on this map, not just numbered. California is split from the mainland by the *Mar de las California or Carolinas*. Reflecting a lack of reliable information, there are no place names on the northern portions of the mainland and the island, with the exception of a *C[ab]lo S. Fran[cis]co Xavier*. The outer coast, however, has many place names, including *P[unt]o de S. Fran[cisc]o*.

On the mainland, to the north, is the toponym *Gran Quivira*. This is another great cartographic myth of the early modern period. 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 Quivira. Although he never found the cities or the gold, the name stuck on maps of southwest North America, wandering from east to west.

California as an Island

By far the most important feature of the map is the island of California itself. From its first portrayal on a printed map by Diego Gutiérrez, in 1562, California was shown as part of North America by mapmakers, including Gerardus Mercator and Ortelius. In the 1620s, however, it began to appear as an island in several sources.

This was most likely the result of a reading of the travel account of Sebastian Vizcaino, who had been sent north up the shore of California in 1602. A Carmelite friar who accompanied him later described the land as an island, a description first published in Juan Torquemada's *Monarquia Indiana* (1613) with the island details curtailed somewhat. The friar, Fray Antonio de la Ascension, also wrote a *Relacion breve* of his geographic ideas around 1620. The ideas spread about New Spain and, eventually, most likely via Dutch mariners and perhaps thanks to stolen charts, to the rest of Europe.

By the 1620s, many mapmakers chose to depict the peninsula as an island. These included Henricus Hondius, who published the first atlas map to focus solely on North America with the island prominently featured in 1636. Hondius borrowed his outline of California from another widely-distributed map, that of Henry Briggs and printed in Samuel Purchas' *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas his Pilgrimes* (1625).

Other prominent practitioners like John Speed and Nicolas Sanson also adopted the new island and the practice became commonplace. Father Kino initially followed along with this theory, as previously stated, but after extensive travels in what is now California, Arizona, and northern Mexico, he concluded that the island was actually a peninsula. Even after Kino published a map based on his travels refuting the claim



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(Paris, 1705), California as an island remained a fixture until the mid-eighteenth century, as this map illustrates.

A scarce and sought-after map, this item appears only infrequently on the market. It would be an impressive addition to any collection of Western America or California maps.

Detailed Condition:

Old folds expertly flattened and stabilized on verso.