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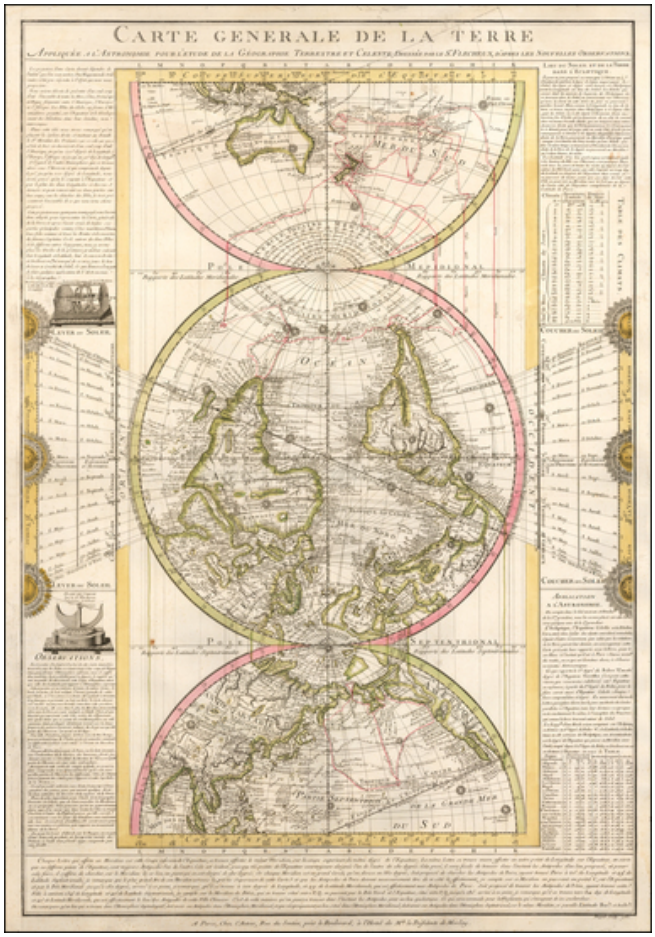
Carte Generale De La Terre Appliquee A L'Astronomie pour L'Etude de La Geographie Terrestre et Celeste, Dressee par Le Sr. Flecheux, D'Apres Les Nouvelles Observations.

Stock#: 56844hs
Map Maker: Flecheux

Date: 1782
Place: Paris
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG+
Size: 21 x 30.5 inches

Price: SOLD



Description:

Striking World Map with Astronomical Instruments by Renowned French Inventor and Astronomer -- Includes A Remarkable Note on the Existence of Antarctica

Fine, innovative world map by the astronomer, mathematician, and inventor Louis Flecheux. The map is surrounded by Flecheux's theories about celestial phenomena and their courses relative to the earth's surface, as well as descriptions of two of his inventions, the *Loxocosme* and the *Quart de Cercle*.

The map is a dual-hemisphere depiction of the world, with the Pacific hemisphere bisected. The hemispheres are displayed vertically, rather than horizontally, making this map quite distinct from other contemporary projections. Flecheux is aware of the novelty and remarks in the Observations that the

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arrangement and his inversion of the usual arrangement of north and south makes this projection "contrary to all other maps."

The purpose of the map is to show the mutual dependence of geography and astronomy. The world map is detailed and information-dense. Rhumb lines radiate from several coastal points, including the Cape of Good Hope. Political entities are separated by dotted lines, while rivers and significant towns fill the interior of the continents. At sea, several explorers' tracks wend their way around the world, including James Cook's three voyages and the Spanish treasure galleon of 1743, which was captured by Commodore George Anson.

Toward the North Pole, Flecheux includes a note about prospective Arctic islands as indicated in the letters of Admiral de la Fonte. As described in two letters originally published in London in 1708 and discussed throughout the eighteenth century, Fonte supposedly sailed from the Pacific northeast across waterways in the interior of what is today Canada. Later, the voyage was found to be apocryphal, but the veracity of the letters was still a matter for debate in Flecheux's time.

At the South Pole, Flecheux suggests the existence of Antarctica when he says:

> *The ice can only be formed by rivers that feed them from neighboring lands. We must therefore think that there is an immense cap of land enclosed by this Polar Circle and which, according to the configuration of the ice, announces that the diameter of this cap cannot be less than 40 degrees, which would make more than 3000 leagues of circumference.*

Whereas the existence of a large southern continent had long been hypothesized, Cook's second voyage (1772-5) into far southern latitudes had gone a long way toward reducing the expectations that such a landmass would ever be found. In 1782, Flecheux still believed that the evidence suggests a continent over the south pole and, after Bellingshausen's voyage in 1820, Flecheux would be proven correct.

Geographic hypotheses and features are far from the only information shared on this map. At left and right of the equator are zodiac signs, some marked with suns, and the height of the sun at various times of year. In the left column are two sketches of inventions. The top instrument is a loxocosm, which is designed to show how the inclination of the earth's axis causes the days to lengthen and shorten according to the season. The other drawing is of a quarter circle, a type of quadrant used to measure altitude.

To the right of the projection is an explanation of the placement of the sun and earth in the ecliptic, followed by a climate table. Then, there is an explanation of the course of fixed celestial bodies across the earth due to its rotation, followed by a table illustrating the concept. At bottom, Flecheux explains

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antipodal points on the globe.

The map was engraved by Charles Picquet in Paris in 1782. It is highly original and an excellent example of Enlightenment geography and astronomy.

Please see the biographical note below on Flecheaux's life story.

Rarity

The map is extremely rare. We locate only the copies in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek (Munich), Library of Congress and New York Public Library.

Detailed Condition: