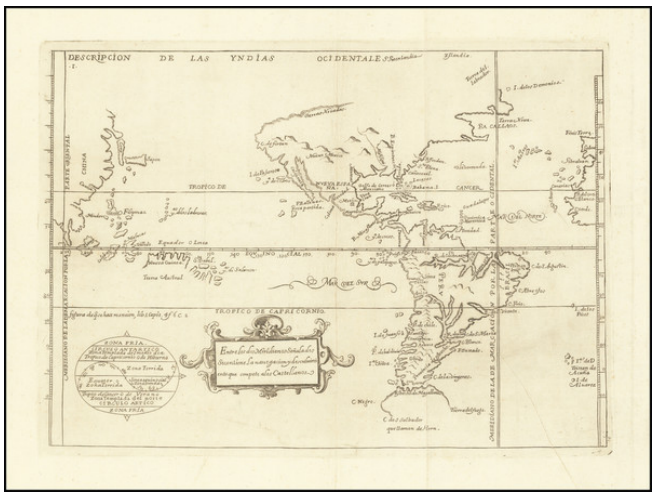
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Descripcion De Las Yndias Ocidentales



Stock#: 66706
Map Maker: Herrera y Tordesillas

Date: 1601 (1726)
Place: Madrid
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG+
Size: 12.5 x 9 inches

Price: SOLD

Description:

Rare Edition of an Important Map of the Pacific and the Line of Demarcation

Scarce 1726 edition of Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas' general map of America, the Pacific Ocean and the Eastern part of Asia, from his *Descripción de las Indias Ocidentales,* first published as part of his important *Historia general* in Madrid in 1601.

Herrera's general map is derived from the manuscript map of Juan Lopez de Velasco (ca. 1580), housed at the John Carter Brown Library. Originally suppressed as part of Spain’s secretive approach to geographic knowledge, Velasco’s manuscript map was latter printed with official approval in Herrera’s landmark work as part of an opening of publication protocols under Spain’s King Philip III.

The map illustrates the Line of Demarcation and the antemeridian between the Spanish and Portuguese colonial claims (running through Brazil in South America and through China and the Malay Peninsula in Asia respectively). The islands of Maritime Southeast Asia are shifted tens of degrees to the east, placing them (not surprisingly) under Spanish control. These include the Moluccas, so important for their spices and under Portuguese control, as well as the Philippines, which were claimed and occupied by Spain.

Farther east are the Ladrones, or the Marianas as they are today known. New Guinea remains only partially and roughly outlined, with an open coastline toward the south. The Solomons, which had been contacted but not accurately charted by the Mendaña expedition of 1567-9, are near New Guinea. They also have open southern coastlines.

Korea is shown as an island, a common geographical hypothesis at this time. Japan is shown as a single

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large horizontal island with several tiny attendant islands; this horizontal orientation was also quite common in European maps well into the seventeenth century. In China, the only toponym is Canton, which was already an important trade port for Europeans.

The Americas contain many more place names and features, including the Andes and a few mountains scattered in the North American West. The Sierra Nevada Mountains act as a northern border of North America. California is named, as are the Isle of Cedro and C. de Fortun. Florida is named to the east, as is the Mississippi River. Mexico City is marked with a small building symbol, the only settlement to have this designation. To the south, the Straits of Magellan separate the continent from a large and unfinished island; Tierra del Fuego is suggestively part of a larger southern continent here, although the conservative cosmographer does not exaggerate what is known.

There is no sign of Australia, as Europeans had not yet contacted its shores when the map was originally drawn ca. 1580. There is a decorative cartouche in the South Seas with the title, “Between the two meridians indicated here are contained the navigation and discoveries for which the Spanish competed.” Next to this is a diagram showing climactic zones.

Demarcating the Spanish and Portuguese Empires

The most important features on this map are the inclusion of the two meridians that supposedly enclosed the Spanish Empire. In the late-fifteenth century, Portugal and Spain were the leading imperial powers who pioneered European expansion to the surrounding continents. They were especially interested in the East Indies and, of course, in the Americas.

This brought Spain and Portugal into conflict. In May of 1493, Pope Alexander VI, who was Spanish by birth, issued a papal bull that granted all land one hundred leagues west and south of the Azores to Spain. Portugal strenuously objected, not least because they had already encountered land in what is today Brazil.

To address Portuguese claims, Spain signed the Treaty of Tordesillas with their neighbor. This created a new line of demarcation 370 leagues west of the Cape Verde Islands, which were Portuguese. This granted Spain the majority of the Americas, but allowed for Portugal to claim the eastern thrust of Brazil. They were also allowed to claim land to the east, as they had already made significant strides in navigating around the coasts of Africa.

However, the line of demarcation was not enshrined in longitude and was therefore open to a wide degree of interpretation. Additionally, the line applied principally to the western hemisphere; it extended from pole to pole, not around the world. Particularly after Magellan’s circumnavigation, although Magellan

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himself died in the Philippines, it became clear to the Iberian powers that they would have to revisit demarcation yet again.

By the 1520s, the main prize was the Spice Islands, or the Moluccas. Both countries laid claim to this archipelago. Charles V of Spain, however, needed money to finance his European wars. He married Isabella of Portugal in 1526. In 1529, he signed the Treaty of Zaragoza, which established an antemeridian to the line of demarcation decided by the Treaty of Tordesillas. Portugal paid Spain 350,000 ducats for the islands and the antemeridian was set seventeen degrees east of them.

However, these treaties did not settle the matter. By the Treaty of Zaragoza, the Philippines were within the Portuguese sphere, but these were occupied by the Spanish. Additionally, there was continued uncertainty and debate over the precise location of the original line of demarcation due to differences in longitude calculations. These continuing debates are reflected in this map, which locates the islands far to the east to benefit Spain.

Velasco, Herrera, and the management of geographic knowledge in Spain

Juan Lopez de Velasco was a humanist who worked for the Spanish Crown. In 1571, he was appointed *cosmógrafo-cronista* of the *Consejo de Indias.* Earlier in his career as a secretary to the *Consejo*, Lopez de Velasco had begun compiling geographic descriptions of the colonies that had been sent to Spain as part of audits. A requirement of his new post was to write a general and natural history of the Spanish empire, while also reviewing and censoring other extant histories.

Velasco finished his main task in 1574 and the work was titled *Geografía y descripción universal de las Indias*. This nearly 700-page tome, however, remained in manuscript until the late nineteenth century. It was considered to contain highly valuable knowledge about the location and description of Spanish holdings, secrets that were tightly guarded by the officials and savants of the Council of the Indies (the *Consejo*) and the *Casa de Contratación* (the cartographic repository and dispensary).

In his *Geografía y descripción universal,* Velasco explains how hard it is to discuss the boundary demarcating Spanish and Portuguese imperial possessions. This is because the inland and precise coordinates of the coastline of Brazil was little known, and the precise longitude of the Moluccas and other islands was subject to debate. Velasco places Maritime Southeast Asia too far east by nearly forty degrees. While informed by several sources, this is also a political calculation on Velasco’s part; it grants even more land and resources to Spain, his employer and country of origin.

To accompany his work, Velasco made several maps and charts, most likely including a version of the manuscript map upon which this printed version is based, a map of the entire Spanish empire that was

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meant as a general reference chart. The other maps included general maps of the North and South American continents, as well as maps of the *audiencias*, or administrative and judicial units, and *gobernaciones*, or subordinated provinces. María Portuondo explains that these maps, "constituted in effect the first political atlas of the New World" (177).

Unfortunately, the 23 maps that accompanied the original manuscript have since been lost. We know of them via the critique of the *Geografía y descripción universal* by Juna Bautista Gesio, a fellow cosmographer, and the captions Velasco intended to accompany the maps.

Velasco later wrote a shorter version of the *Geografía y descripción universal* called the *Sumario* or the *Demarcación y división de las Indias* (ca. 1580). Intended as a primer for new members of the *Consejo de Indias*, two copies of this manuscript survive, one at the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid and the other at the John Carter Brown Library in Providence. Many more copies were available in the late sixteenth century, however, and Velasco wrote several letters expressing his desire to keep the *Sumario* from circulation beyond the King's circle and the Council of the Indies.

The John Carter Brown Library example includes a set of maps; there are 14 reduced maps in all, a sampling of the original 23 mentioned in the *Geografía y descripción universal.* First among these is the *Carta de Marear*, a universal map of the Spanish Empire and the parent manuscript map of the present item.

The maps became well known through the work of Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas. Herrera was the chronicler (historian) of the Council of the Indies from 1596. The position of cosmographer (geographer) had been split from that of chronicler since Velasco held the position.

Herrera's *Historia general de los hechos de los castellanos en las Islas y Tierra Firme del Mar Océano*, better known as the *Décadas* (Madrid, 1601-1615), was the official history of the Spanish conquest and possession of its American and Pacific holdings. Working under Philip III, Herrera and his fellow cosmographers were encouraged to publish their projects, in order to trumpet the achievements and claims of the Spanish Empire.

Herrera was even allowed to include maps, converting Velasco's manuscripts into printed schematic maps. They are part of the geographical introduction to the work, called the *Descripción de las Indias Ocidentales*. As with Velasco, they were meant to compliment the wider text, not to act as stand-alone or mathematically precise guides; indeed, they are not drawn to any scale. The *Décadas* were popular and reprinted several times; the map was re-issued with these later editions and became a well-known visual of the Spanish Empire.

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States and rarity

This late edition of the map was unknown to Burden at the time of the printing of volume I of his *Mapping of North America.* Burden notes in his “Addenda and Corrigenda” to volume II that this rare edition, with shading in the Gulf of California, appeared in Nicolas Rodriguez's *Historia General de los Hechos de los Castellanos*, published in Madrid (1726-30).

The known plates of the map are as follows:

1601 Herrera, text in South Pacific within cartouche, size 225 x 320 mm.

1622 Herrera, text in South Pacific without cartouche, size 220 x 315 mm.

1623 De Bry, two sections of text in both German and Latin in the South Pacific, size 175 x 300 mm.

1623, Hulsius, reduced in size, size 130 x 185 mm.

1723, Torquemada, diagram of climatic zones lower left & signature added below lower right corner, size 225 x 320 mm.

1726 Rodriguez, signature removed & shading added in the Gulf of California, size 240 x 300 mm.

The 1726 edition is very rare. Burden notes only two appearances of the map on the market in the decade before vol. II was issued, at Reiss & Sohn, April 1998, lot 221 (map only) and Sotheby’s London, June 12, 2000, lot 247 (complete book). We have seen the map on the market only a handful of times.

Detailed Condition: