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Hemisphere Septentrional pour voir plus distinctement Les Terres Arctiques . . . 1714

Stock#: 68116
Map Maker: De L'Isle
Date: 1714
Place: Paris
Color: Outline Color
Condition: VG+
Size: 18 x 18 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

First Edition of De L'Isle's Influential Map of the Northern Hemisphere

Fine example of the first state of De L'Isle's polar projection, focused on the Arctic.

This map would become the prototype for a number of other eighteenth-century maps of the Northern Hemisphere and would be re-issued by De L'Isle and his successors for the next seventy years.

The map shows the entire Northern Hemisphere. The projection has the opposite effect of a Mercator projection, which tends to stretch and distort landmasses that are close to the poles. Here, it is territory close to the equator that is stretched, allowing the Arctic to come into sharp focus.

California is shown as a peninsula, although other contemporary maps still featured it as an island. Greenland is connected to Northern Canada in Baffin Bay, a common hypothesis at this time. Japan too is shown in what appears a rudimentary form; a more horizontal orientation of the archipelago was typical on maps until slightly later in the eighteenth century.



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In the North Pacific, an unfinished island extends eastward. This *Terre de la Compagnie* is near *Terre d'Yedso*, an exaggeration of Hokkaido. Nearby, a note ties the former to the voyage of *Dom Jean de Gama*, who supposedly discovered a large coastline in the area. All three of these proved to be chimeras which shrank over the course of the century and eventually disappeared from maps.

The unfinished shores of North America and Greenland suggest that further exploration is necessary to better understand the Arctic. Indeed, the map seems to imply that there may be a navigable route north of Asia or around Baffin and Hudson's Bay, a nod to the much-sought and still-elusive Northwest Passage.

Detailed Condition: