Engraved map, hand-coloured in outline, mounted on board and dissected into a jigsaw, lacking the Norway piece.

DOUBLE HEMISPHERE PUZZLE MAP

[Jigsaw map of the world].

Author
?[CHAMPANTE AND WHITROW]

Publication date
c1790].

Publisher

Publication place
[London,

Physical description
Engraved map, hand-coloured in outline, mounted on board and dissected into a jigsaw, lacking the Norway piece.

Dimensions
365 by 700mm. (14.25 by 27.5 inches).

Notes
The emerging children’s culture of the mid-eighteenth century produced toys and games that were often as ornamental as they were practical, and the demand for increasingly unique and interesting items had eventually resulted in jigsaw puzzles.

The invention of these is widely attributed to John Spilsbury (1739-1769), a British cartographer, engraver and map-seller who, in 1766, affixed a world map to a wooden board and carved each country out. There are, however, earlier references to these sorts of geographical games made by a Madame de Beaumont in Paris. Her sets were typically expensive, and were of the style popular among the elite, for whom these items were made into symbols of status. In Jane Austen's 1814 novel 'Mansfield Park', for example, the poor protagonist is mocked by her wealthy cousins because she "cannot put the map of Europe together".

The present jigsaw is in the form of a double hemisphere world map. An identical puzzle map exists with a box bearing the label of Champante and Whitrow, stationers, wax chandlers and playing card makers active in London during the late eighteenth century. Champante and Whitrow are not recorded as making or selling any maps, however, which may suggest that a more prominent cartographic publisher was issuing such jigsaws wholesale at the time, selling them to shops which then put their own label on the boxes. If this were the case, Laurie and Whittle would be a good contender, as they published prolifically and were known to sell their maps in puzzle form.

Bibliography

Provenance

Price:

Inventory reference: 15004

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