

Double-page engraved map of the world, with fine hand-colour in full.

THAT IS THE QUESTION

Orbis Terrarum Typus De Integro In Plurimis Emendatus Auctus, Et Icunculis Illustratus.

Author
VISSCHER, Nicolaes [before, or maybe after]

Publication date
maybe from 1648, but probably from 1657].

Publisher
possibly Gedruckt by Theunis Jacobsz ende Jan Fredericksz Stam,

Publication place
[Amsterdam,

Physical description
Double-page engraved map of the world, with fine hand-colour in full.

Dimensions
322 by 475mm (12.75 by 18.75 inches).

Notes
An interesting hybrid double-hemisphere map of the world. The cartography is based mainly on Willem Janszoon Blaeu's wall map of the world of 1648, and reuses the plate for Claes Visscher's world map of 1614 (Shirley 288), although the hemispheres have been re-engraved to include the discoveries of Abel Tasman, and remove the northern coastline of a great southern landmass, which is still just visible. Nevertheless, the outlines of Australia and New Zealand, remain unfinished and

are amongst the earliest on a world map to be based on the discoveries of Abel Tasman in 1642 and 1644. The coastlines of western America and eastern Asia and similarly open-ended, perhaps still allowing for the possibility that they are contiguous. California is shown as an island, and Alaska and the lakes of Canada do not appear at all.

The very elaborate and decorative border is the same as that for Nicolas Visscher's 'Orbis Terrarum Nova et Accuratissima Tabula' (1657), by Nicolaes Berchem, a painter of pastoral landscapes. As with Visscher's map, there are two smaller hemispheres in the cusps of the larger one, but they are quite different.

The map is unsigned, but an example has been found bound into an example of the 'Het Nieue Testament ofte alle Boeken des Nieuwen Verbondts onses Heeren Jusu Christi, (164?). A version of the map exists, but with a different border, bound into Dutch bibles published by Paulus van Ravesteyn, from 1657. Shirley writes: "the attribution of the original map to either Danckerts or Savry is still tentative, as is the provisional date… The double-hemispherical map was found in a 164[8]? Bible published by Theunis Jacobzs and Frederick Stam in company with five Holy Land maps either signed by Cornelis Danckerts, or dated 1648" (372A).

The map is significant for its magnificent border by Nicolaes Berchem, and is amongst those early maps which set the precedent for the famously intricately decorated Dutch maps of the later seventeenth century. In the border of this map, Berchem weaves together classical mythology and the elements: the corners show the rape of Persephone (fire), Zeus enthroned (air), Demeter amongst the harvest (earth) and Neptune in his chariot (water). The whole is presided over by personifications of the elements supporting the two polar projections. The cycle also roughly corresponds to the passage of the seasons.

Bibliography

Literature: see Clancy, 'The Mapping of Terra Australis', 6.11; cf. Schilder, 'Australia Unveiled', page 202; Shirley, 'The mapping of the world: early printed world maps, 1472-1700', 372(A) and 406; Woods, National Library of Australia, 'Mapping our World: Terra Incognita to Australia', page 149.

Provenance

Price: £2000

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