

antiquariaat

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## *A Breath taking, 17th Century Dutch Wall Map of the World*

### *Unrecorded, first (?) state*

Double Hemispheres. Frederick de Wit.

Amsterdam, c. 1689.

**'Nova Totius Terrarum Orbis Tabula auct. F. de Wit'**

135 x 167 cm

This impressive, dramatically beautiful wall map by Frederick de Wit is printed on 8 sheets.

The text under the map is in Latin and French on joined sheets. The map has undergone full, modern conservation. It has been cleaned, some small losses, especially in the text, have been restored. Original colour, excellent condition for a wall map of its kind.

The map is extremely rare. We could not trace another copy with this original Latin title. This map is an earlier state than the one described by Shirley and could be the first state. Shirley: *"No example of de Wit's map in its first state has been recorded, and it is only known through later states with the imprint of Joachim Ottens"*.

Of special interest is de Wit's dedication *Gloriosissimus Monarchis Regi et Reginae Angliae...* to the joint rulers of England, William III of Orange and Mary II of England, who both appear in the double portrait in the centre of the map. From 1689 on William III reigned over England and Ireland.

The elaborate pictorial borders depict the regions of the world, the four continents exemplified by means of symbolic figures, by landscape vignettes and by lively picture of animals indigenous of each area.

One can readily see how splendid wall maps, especially those of the more remote corners of the known world of the time, would have resonated with the merchant princes of Holland's Golden Age of the 17th century, who were the primary market for such works. At the time, the leading commercial men of this small country extracted enormous wealth from very distant parts of the world, including the East Indies, Africa, and the Americas. A map, particularly a large one, with its suggestion of commanding vision, would express something of the reach and achievements of its owner. And for the pragmatic Dutch merchant, even a highly decorative wall map retained its practical value as a tool for reflection and planning. Moreover, the elaborately wrought beauty of the maps also made a statement about the owner's sophistication and affluence.

The map's ornamentation displays de Wit's engraving skills at their very finest and can also be of great interest in and of itself.

It was in the 17th century a usual practice among the major Dutch map publishers to produce large and visually spectacular works of this kind. In addition to providing wall-filling, imposing decoration for an evidently ready market, these maps, it seems, also served as demonstrations of the talents of the map engraver/publisher. Not only were they impressive in scale, but they also usually contained more sophisticated and ambitious engraving than was found on smaller maps. Perhaps by proving his mettle through wall maps, a young map publisher paved the way for the lucrative sales of his atlases that would follow. This was certainly the case with de Wit, who became a map publisher, engraver and seller of extraordinary productivity. His *"work encompassed the full range of cartographic production, including sea and world atlases, wall maps, and 'town books' containing plans and views of Dutch and other European towns and cities."* (Dictionary of Mapmakers).

Born in Gouda, de Wit lived in Amsterdam as early as 1648 and spent most of his life (from 1655 to 1706) on the Kalverstraat, calling his residence "de Witte Pascaert," as it appears on the imprint of this map.

Ref.: See Shirley, 453 (Rarity: RR)