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Asie . . . 1650 [with unusual depiction of the West Coast of North America and the Island of Corey]

Stock#: 102556
Map Maker: Sanson
Date: 1650
Place: Paris
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG
Size: 22 x 15.5 inches
Price: \$ 975.00



Description:

The Island of Korea and Mythical Straits of Anian

Influential map of Asia by Nicolas Sanson, mapmaker to the King of France and the most influential mapmaker of the mid-17th Century.

First published in 1650, Sanson's map provides a fine overview of European geographic knowledge of the era while also offering a glimpse into the speculative elements of early modern exploration and discovery. The map portrays the entire Asian continent, extending from the eastern fringes of Europe to the Pacific Ocean, and from the Arctic regions to the islands of Southeast Asia. With precise engraving and elegant lettering, this map stands as a testament to Sanson's reputation as the 'father of French cartography'.

One notable detail is the depiction of the island of Korea (here named Corey). Korea was largely absent from maps until the beginning of the 17th Century, when it first began appearing on maps and was thought to be an island (see below).

Sanson depicts a fascinating narrow Strait of Anian, a speculative body of water that supposedly separated the Northwest coast of Asia from the West Coast of North America. This strait, largely mythical, was believed to facilitate a shortcut to Asia from arctic waters, encapsulating the fervent quest for a Northwest Passage during this time as well as the search for a Northeast Passage which had dominated exploration in the late 16th and early 17th Centuries.

The map also denotes the 'Royaume de Quivira' and 'Nouvelle Albion', reflecting exploratory narratives



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from the period. Quivira was a mythical city of gold sought by early Spanish explorers in North America, while Nouvelle Albion was the name Sir Francis Drake gave to the lands he claimed for England along the North American West Coast in 1579.

Interestingly, the cartography of China, drawn from Jesuit source, immediately predates the reports of Martino Martini, a Jesuit missionary, whose cartographic information would first appear through the Blaeu/Martini atlas of China in 1655. Sanson's depiction of China, while lacking the detail and accuracy of Martini's later work, is a valuable record of pre-Martini Western perceptions of the Middle Kingdom.

The depiction of the Philippines is noteworthy for its intricate detail, showcasing the archipelago's significant islands. However, like many maps of this era, it combines accurate geographical features derived from navigational charts with speculative elements, reflecting the partial and sometimes erroneous information available to cartographers in the mid-17th century.

Detailed Condition: