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Asia Divisa nelle sue Parti secondo lo stato presente

Stock#: 62259
Map Maker: Coronelli
Date: 1690 circa
Place: Venice
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG+
Size: 34.5 x 24 inches (if joined)
Price: SOLD



Description:

Striking Example of Coronelli's Striking Two-Sheet Map of Asia

Fine example of Coronelli's detailed map of the Asian continent. The map shows the latest discoveries in Southeast Asia and the Pacific, and is dedicated to the Jesuit missionaries at work in China and elsewhere in Asia.

The two sheet map shows Asia in its fullest extent, from Central Europe to New Zealand. The lands and seas are thick with annotations and toponyms, showing the extent to which Europeans were interested in the Far East. In northern China, the Great Wall is drawn in. Not all is known, however, as Australia is shown as connected to New Guinea and is incomplete in its outline.

Within Africa, which is left blank, there is a large dedicatory cartouche. It lauds the work of the Jesuits, or the Society of Jesus, who were then the leading Catholic missionaries in Asia. In the middle of the map, the lower right corner of the western sheet, is an elaborate title cartouche. It shows the title, written on a large rock, which is placed in front of a tent. Next to the rock are exoticized versions of Asian men wearing elaborate turbans, riding camels, and smoking pipes. In the upper right corner of the eastern sheet, the scale is printed on a piece of fabric, which is draped over a pedestal.

Sweet, in his catalogue on Asia, states that Coronelli probably collaborated with Tillemont, producing this exceptionally accurate and up to date map. It is odd therefore that Quiros' discovery of the New Hebrides is not shown and that the map notes that New Zealand was discovered in 1654 and not the correct date of 1642. These inconsistencies reveal the compilation method by which early modern maps were made.

The Line between Known and Unknown: Jesuit missionaries



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This map, like all maps, is a mixture of known and unknown. The outlines of Asia seem familiar and the density of place names suggests knowledge and mastery. However, details reveal stories that were passed down and repeated throughout early modern mapping. For example, the map shows the long-held European assumption that all rivers in Southeast Asia had a common source. Here, it is the L. Di Chiamay, which gives rise to four rivers that flow south into Indochina. John Speed showed the lake similarly. Other geographers had the lake doing even more fluvial work; Blaeu had Lake Chiamay, near Tartary, as the start of six rivers. A major catalyst for this particular cartographic configuration was Matteo Ricci, the Jesuit cartographer. He includes Lake Chiamay on his maps, an idea he probably picked up from European maps he carried with him to China, as well by reading Bon Po and Buddhist doctrines.

Ricci points to the influence of missionaries in this map. Coronelli has dedicated this map to the Jesuit missionaries, in particular the Superior General of the Society of Jesus, Thyrsus González de Santalla. Gonzalez, a Spaniard, was the thirteenth Superior General of the order founded by St. Francis Xavier and St. Ignatius of Loyola.

St. Francis Xavier had traveled extensively in Asia and had first attempted to reach China in 1552, but he died on the island of Shangchuan. Three decades later, Matteo Ricci and others established missions on the Chinese mainland. Ricci made the first Western style map of the world in China in 1602 and derivations of this map affected Asian cartography for the next two centuries. Most of what Europe knew of China was mediated by the Jesuit missionaries of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The Line Between Known and Unknown: Dutch voyages

Another example of received wisdom and the perpetuation of myths is east of Japan, where a large landmass is labeled as *Terra d'Iesso*. This island is on many eighteenth-century maps. Historically, Eso (Yedso, Yesso) refers to the island of Hokkaido. It varies from a small island to a near-continent sized mass that stretches from Asia to Alaska. Here, however, Coronelli tells the reader that the Dutch discovered the island in 1643, which indicates that he is eliding Yesso with two other North Pacific chimeras, Gamaland and Compagnies Land.

Juan, the grandson of Vasco de Gama, was a Portuguese navigator who was accused of illegal trading with the Spanish in the East Indies. Gama fled and sailed from Macau to Japan in the later sixteenth century. He then struck out east, across the Pacific, and supposedly saw lands in the North Pacific. These lands were initially shown as small islands on Portuguese charts, but ballooned into a continent-sized landmass in later representations. Several voyagers sought out de Gama's lands, including the Dutchmen Matthijs Hendrickszoon Quast in 1639 and Maarten Gerritszoon Vries in 1643. After this map's publication, Vitus Bering, a Danish explorer in Russian employ, and James Cook would both check the area and find nothing, finally putting to rest the myth of Gamaland.



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Compagnies Land, along with Staten Land, were islands sighted by Vries on his 1643 voyage. He named the island for the Dutch States General (Staten Land) and for the Dutch East India Company (VOC) (Compagnies, or Company's Land). In reality, he had re-discovered two of the Kuril Islands. However, other mapmakers latched onto Compagnies Land in particular, enlarging and merging it with Yesso and/or Gamaland. It is clear Coronelli had Vries and his voyage in mind, as a strait to the east of Yesso is named *Stretto Vriez*.

Farther south, more Dutch voyages are chronicled. These include Tasman's voyages to Van Dieman's Land and New Zealand in the 1640s. In Australia, Coronelli discusses the transfer of knowledge. Some thought, he writes, that Australia was mentioned by Marco Polo as the kingdoms of Maletur (Malatur) and Lucach (Lochac). However, more recent compilers had questioned this designation.

Coronelli decided to plot Australia based on what was known from the Dutch encounters with the continent. For example, in the north is Terra di Arnhem, which refers to Jan Carstenz's voyage in the *Arnhem* in 1623. On the southern coast, Terra di Pietro Nuyts refers to the voyage of the *Gulden Zeepaard*, commanded by Nuyts, in 1627.

Coronelli

Vincenzo Maria Coronelli (1650-1718) is one of the most influential Italian mapmakers and is known especially for his globes and atlases. The son of a tailor, Vincenzo was apprenticed to a xylographer (a wood block engraver) at a young age. At fifteen he became a novice in a Franciscan monastery. At sixteen he published his first book, the first of 140 publications he would write in his lifetime. The order recognized his intellectual ability and saw him educated in Venice and Rome. He earned a doctorate in theology, but also studied astronomy. By the late 1670s, he was working on geography and was commissioned to create a set of globes for the Duke of Parma. These globes were five feet in diameter. The Parma globes led to Coronelli being named theologian to the Duke and receiving a bigger commission, this one from Louis XIV of France. Coronelli moved to Paris for two years to construct the King's huge globes, which are 12.5 feet in diameter and weigh 2 tons.

The globes for the French King led to a craze for Coronelli's work and he traveled Europe making globes for the ultra-elite. By 1705, he had returned to Venice. There, he founded the first geographical society, the *Accademia Cosmografica degli Argonauti* and was named Cosmographer of the Republic of Venice. He died in 1718.

Detailed Condition: