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[El Dorado] Guaiana

The concept of El Dorado underwent several transformations, and eventually accounts of the previous myth were also combined with those of a legendary lost city. The resulting El Dorado myth enticed European explorers for two centuries. Among the earliest alleged stories was the one told on his death bed by "Martinez", ammunitioner for Spanish adventurer Diego de Ordaz, who claimed to have been rescued from shipwreck, conveyed inland, and entertained by "El Dorado" himself (1531). The fable of Juan Martinez was founded on the adventures of Juan Martin de Albuja, well known to the Spanish historians of the Conquest; and who, in the expedition of Pedro de Silva (1570), fell into the hands of the Caribs of the Lower Orinoco.

In the 16th and 17th centuries, Europeans still believed that a hidden city of immense wealth existed. Many searched for this treasure, in quests that ended in the loss of countless lives. The illustration of El Dorado's location on maps only made matters worse, as it made some people think that the city of El Dorado's existence had been confirmed. The mythical city of El Dorado on Lake Parime was marked on maps until its existence was disproved by Alexander von Humboldt during his Latin-America expedition.

The present map identifies "Guiana ou Roiaume du Roy doré."

This map is extremely rare. A later edition by Jollain (1668) is also known. Copies of this map reside in the Bibliotheque Nationale de France and the Collection of George III (British Library) and the Clements Library.

Detailed Condition: