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Guiana Sive Amazonum Regio

Stock#: 44336
Map Maker: Blaeu
Date: 1640 circa
Place: Amsterdam
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG+
Size: 19.5 x 14.5 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

El Dorado on Lake Parimus -- The Fabled City of Gold

Nice old color example of Blaeu's decorative map of the coast between the Orinoco River and the Amazon, centered on Parime Lacus.

The map tracks the Amazon River into the interior and, most notably, locates the mythical city of El Dorado or Manoa.

The Legend of El Dorado

El Dorado is applied to a legendary story regarding a city paved with gold and precious stones. 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 stories was the one told on his deathbed by Juan Martinez, a captain of munitions for Spanish adventurer Diego de Ordaz, who claimed to have visited the city of Manoa. Martinez had allowed a store of gunpowder to catch fire and was condemned to death, however his friends let him escape downriver in a canoe. Martinez then met with some local people who took him to the city. He reported that:

The canoa was carried down the stream, and certain of the Guianians met it the same evening; and, having not at any time seen any Christian nor any man of that colour, they carried Martinez into the land to be wondered at, and so from town to town, until he came to the great



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city of Manoa, the seat and residence of Inga the emperor. The emperor, after he had beheld him, knew him to be a Christian, and caused him to be lodged in his palace, and well entertained. He was brought thither all the way blindfold, led by the Indians, until he came to the entrance of Manoa itself, and was fourteen or fifteen days in the passage. He avowed at his death that he entered the city at noon, and then they uncovered his face; and that he traveled all that day till night through the city, and the next day from sun rising to sun setting, ere he came to the palace of Inga. After that Martinez had lived seven months in Manoa, and began to understand the language of the country, Inga asked him whether he desired to return into his own country, or would willingly abide with him. But Martinez, not desirous to stay, obtained the favour of Inga to depart.

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.

During the 16th and 17th centuries, Europeans, still fascinated by the New World, 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 English and other maps until its existence was disproved by Alexander von Humboldt during his Latin-America expedition (1799-1804).

Detailed Condition: