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A Chart of the Channel in the Phillippine Islands through which the Manila Galeon passes together with the adjacent Islands.

Stock#: 49798
Map Maker: Anson / Seale

Date: 1748
Place: London
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG
Size: 38 x 21 inches

Price: SOLD

Description:

Chart of Philippines from Anson's *Voyage round the World,* Part of His Plan to Capture a Spanish Treasure Galleon

Fine example of George Anson's chart of the Philippine Islands, showing the area from Luzon to Leyte, Zebu and Ysle De Negros[sic.]. The track of the galleon is noted and ends near the island of Samar, written here as Samal, where the galleons enter into open water. Anson captured one of the galleons, the *Nuestra Señora de Covadonga,* in 1743. The chart was one of three featured in Anson's much-anticipated and very successful voyage account, *Voyage round the World* (1748).

The map illustrates the track of the Manila Galleon trade from the Mole of Cabite until clear of land. From Manila, the galleons passed above Mindoro, below Marinduque and Burias, above Tiaco and past Capul and San Bernardino Islands, before making the open waters north of Samal [Samar].

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It was not intended to illustrate the entirety of the Philippines; rather, it was supposed to offer a geographic snapshot of the route of the galleon from Manila. Interestingly, Anson did not capture a Manila galleon, but an Acapulco ship, laden with silver. He captured it near the Cabo de Espiritu Santo off the island of Samar. The chart, drawn by Richard William Seale, was also intended to communicate British knowledge of the Spanish controlled archipelago, yet the stylized and blocky representation of the islands reveals that there was still much to learn about the coastlines of the Philippines.

The Manila-Acapulco galleon route

In the sixteenth century, the Spanish were expanding their empire around the globe. They had invaded and taken control of vast parts of South America and also had a strong presence in the East Indies. Ferdinand Magellan, sailing under the Spanish flag, arrived in the Philippines in 1521. He was killed on the island of Cebu, written here as Zebu. For the next forty years, Spanish expeditions attempted to colonize the islands. In 1564 Miguel López de Legazpi command a squadron destined for the Philippines. One of his men, Andrés de Urdaneta, set out east toward New Spain and managed the first known crossing of the Pacific from west to east.

After Urdaneta's voyage, an annual trade began which brought silver from New Spain and South America west to Asian markets. These galleons docked at Manila to offload their bullion and take on Asian trade goods destined for Latin America. The Manila-Acapulco galleon route lasted from 1565 until 1820 and involved 120 ships (112 built in the Philippines, 8 built in Mexico). These ships varied in size—the *Covadonga* was a vessel of 700 tons—but the largest were the greatest ships afloat at the time, averaging between 1,700 and 2,000 tons. However, the passage was a dangerous one, even for such formidable ships. Over thirty vessels were lost, including several to British privateers and naval vessels. Thomas Cavendish captured a Manila galleon in 1587, and Woodes Rogers overcame a galleon off the coast of Mexico in 1709. A third, and the most famous, galleon raid took place in 1743, that of Anson and the *Covadonga*.

Anson's expedition and the capture of the *Covadonga*

In 1739, resentment over Spanish raids of British ships in the Caribbean sparked the War of Jenkin's Ear, which would widen into the larger War of Austrian Succession. The Commissioners of the British Admiralty planned a global strategy to harass Spanish trade and weaken its over-stretched navy and merchant marine. Anson's voyage was part of this strategy. He set out in 1740 with a squadron of six ships and 1,900 men.

By 1743, Anson had crossed the Pacific after raiding the west coast of South America. Prior to crossing he

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had waited off the Mexican coast for the Acapulco galleon, full of silver, to appear, but he only succeeded in blocking the ship from leaving port. Meanwhile, he had also lost five of his ships and 1,400 of his men, primarily to scurvy; only his own ship, *Centurion*, remained intact. After repairing at Macao, Anson let Chinese officials know that he was headed for Britain; in reality, he sailed to the Philippines to await the entrance of the Acapulco galleon. Remarkably, considering the voyage prior to that point, the *Centurion* took the *Nuestra Señora de la Covadonga* with only light casualties.

The publication of the *Voyage round the World*

Anson returned home rich and quickly became famous as well, a bright spot in an otherwise dismal war devoid of triumphant victories. Named a Commissioner of the Admiralty, Anson set about arranging the publication of his experiences in the Pacific. The work was written by the *Centurion's* chaplain, Richard Walter, and Benjamin Robins, a Fellow of the Royal Society and a military engineer. It took four years to compile Anson's and his officer's papers and a *Voyage round the World* finally debuted in May 1748.

The account was immensely popular; it was published in folio with 42 plates, including this map, while a simultaneously published octavo edition, with only three plates (not including this map) also flooded book sellers' shops. The charts for the account, three in all including this one, were engraved by Richard William Seale. Among other clients, he engraved for the *Universal Spectator*, in which the Anson expedition was serialized after it returned in 1744.

The Anson account was one of the bestsellers of the eighteenth century; it appeared in at least sixteen editions in the eighteenth century alone. The map of the Philippines, meant to trumpet Anson's naval triumph, was only published in the folio editions, however: the first, fifth, ninth, twelfth, and fifteenth editions. It is therefore rarer than several other of the Anson charts which were included in the octavo editions. This chart is an important historical artifact which tells the story of a significant moment in British imperial history.

The map has narrow margins, as issued, but they are sufficient for framing. This is a nice example of the map, which rarely appears on the market in such a nice condition.

Detailed Condition:
Soiling along centerfold and elsewhere. Old library stamp above Leyte. Minor restoration at left neatline, to the left of Luzon.