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Nuove Scoperte de' Russi al Nord del Mare del Sud si nell'Asia, che nell'America . . . 1776 . . .

Stock#: 50241
Map Maker: Zatta
Date: 1776
Place: Venice
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG+
Size: 15.5 x 12 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

An Ostrich, An Elephant and the Northwest Passage!

Striking example of Zatta's map of the northern Pacific Coastal regions and one of the best illustrations of a late rendition of the Northwest Passage, here illustrating two wide passages from the Pacific to Hudson's Bay, based upon the mythical voyages of Admirals Cluny and de Font.

The map depicts the NW coast of North America and NE coast of Asia and utilizes the Russian discoveries reported by J.N. De L'Isle. The map is noteworthy for the odd archipelago of islands off NE Asia, the rivers extending from the Pacific Coast to the interior of North America and the odd projection of the western coast of North America.

This conical projection shows the western coast of North America from the Baja Peninsula, along the coast of California to Alaska and thence to the Bering Strait and the Kamchatka Peninsula. The map is filled with hypothetical cartography based on misunderstood or mythical reports about the northern Pacific shores. Alaska is represented by a group of islands clustered off the coast of Russia, and the northwest coast of North America is filled with the fictitious system of rivers and lakes of the mythical Northwest Passage and discoveries of Admiral de Fonte. The map shows locations of ethnic groups and communities, and mentions the legendary Quivara (an alternative name for southwestern North America). Canada is broadly conceived, with waterways across the north related to the search for a Northwest Passage. The erroneous belief that that Chinese mariners colonized America in the late 5th Century led to the mythical "Fou-Sang"



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(colony of the Chinese) and the so-called Straits of Anian noted on the map in what is now Vancouver, British Columbia. Wagner declares the map to be "A Vaugondy mixture of old and new names as far south as the end of the peninsula."

All of this unscientific mapmaking would change quickly in the ensuing decades, as cartography benefited from a large number of expeditions in Arctic latitudes, beginning with the great English circumnavigator James Cook.

As with many maps by the famous mapmaker, the large decorative title vignette dominates. The pictorial cartouche includes a mythical desert island on which live several incongruent animals, all more suited to tropical climates - a crocodile, an elephant, a rhinoceros and an ostrich. The ship depicted in the vignette almost certainly is Captain Cook's ship, the Endeavour.

Antonio Zatta was a leading European cartographer and publisher, and his *Atlante Novissimo* (Venice, 1775-1785) - from which this map hails - was one of the most beautifully produced of all 18th Century atlases, with much space devoted to the new discoveries of Captain Cook. Along with his contemporary, Giovanni Battista Pasquali, Zatta was responsible for the revival of taste in Venetian fine printing. Famous for his sardonic tone and as something of a controversialist, he was also well known for producing lavish editions of Italian classics and raccolte (collections of poems for special occasions).

Zatta's map is one of the better examples of 18th Century speculative cartography, making it one of the most sought after regional maps of the period and without doubt the most decorative.

Detailed Condition: