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Carte Reduite Des Detroits De Malaca, Sincapour, Et Gouverneur . . . M DCC LV

Stock#: 54664
Map Maker: Bellin / Depot de la Marine
Date: 1755
Place: Paris
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG+
Size: 35 x 22 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Notable Navigational Chart of the Strait of Malacca and Singapore

Exceptionally-rendered early sea chart of the Strait of Malacca, showing the southern part of Malaysia, the island of Singapore and the eastern part of Sumatra.

This chart was created by the greatest French hydrographer of the eighteenth century, Jacques-Nicolas Bellin, and first appeared in 1755.

The chart contains several illustrated profile views of land as seen from the straits. These views are centered at the top of the chart, providing important context for original viewers and adding to the chart's visual interest today. The illustrations are notated with their place names and navigation directions from known landmarks, making their locations easily traceable on the chart.

The Malaysian coastline on this chart is extraordinarily detailed, a testament to the diligence of Bellin and his fellow cartographers at the *Dépôt de la Marine* (French Hydrographic Office.) The seal of the French Hydrographic Office can be seen at bottom right, consisting of an anchor surrounded by three *fleurs de lis*.

The cartouche located at bottom left includes several lovely botanical illustrations. Included in the cartouche is a note that the map has been drawn from the records and manuscript map of "Sr. Dauge, Pilote du Service de la Compagnie des Indes," a ship captain in service to the *Compagnie française pour le commerce des Indes orientales* (also known as the French East India Company) who had travelled through the region.

Rhumblines (lines of constant compass bearings) and water depth soundings are included throughout this chart marking its purpose as a navigational tool. The chart is bordered by neat longitude and latitude



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scales. Separate longitude scales are included for major prime meridians, including London, the island of Tenerife, Cap Lezard (Lizard Point, Cornwall), and l'Isle de Fer (El Hierro) in the Canaries.

Several annotations provide crucial navigational information. South of "*Pulo ou Isle Panjang*" (Malay for "Long Island," modern-day Singapore), Bellin warns there are "a large number of small islands whose location is unknown." Other annotations include two "sandbanks to be wary of" in the Malacca Strait, and a warning that "all the islands" south of the Governor's Strait "seem to make one large land."

Navigating through the Strait of Malacca and past Singapore was a treacherous endeavor in the eighteenth century, and this chart and its accompanying atlas would have been the prized possession of any sailing vessel attempting this journey.

Voyage of the *Oiseau* in 1687

This map includes the route of the vessel *Oiseau*, known to have completed two trips from France to Siam (Thailand) between 1685 and 1688. In 1685, the ship carried six Jesuit monks from France headed to China. The monks disembarked at the Siamese capital, and the following year the ship returned from Siam with members of a diplomatic mission to the French court.

In 1687, the Siamese diplomats returned home aboard the *Oiseau*, accompanied by M. de la Loubere, French envoy to the King of Siam. The ship returned to France later that year. The 1687 voyage is shown here, providing an example of a successful route to sailors viewing this chart.

It can be assumed the earlier voyages in 1685 and 1686 took similar routes as the one depicted for 1687. The ship is shown as sailing through both the *Detroit du Gouverneur* (Governor's Strait) and the *Nouveau Detroit de Sincapour* (New Sincapour Strait), just south of Singapore. The northern route around Singapore, labelled *Vieux Detroit de Sincapour* (Old Sincapour Strait, known today as the Johor Strait) does not appear to have been in use by the time this chart was created.

The Malacca Strait as a trading gateway

The Malacca Strait has historically served as a gateway connecting Europe to trade opportunities and luxury resources in East Asia. Since the seventeenth century, the strait has been the main shipping channel between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean.

Today, the Malacca Strait remains one of the busiest and most important shipping routes in the world, and this chart reveals its historical legacy as well. It was one of the most sophisticated charts of the region from the eighteenth century and remains a fine example of French hydrography.



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Detailed Condition: