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[California & Western North America] America Settentrionale Colle Nuove Scoperte Sin All Anno 1688

Stock#: 64019
Map Maker: Coronelli

Date: 1688
Place: Venice
Color: Color
Condition: VG
Size: 17 x 24 inches

Price: SOLD



Description:

Landmark Map of Western North America by Coronelli with California as an Island

Finely colored example of the western half of Coronelli's cornerstone map of North America, one of the most influential maps of this part of the continent published in the late seventeenth century.

The map is cartographically similar to Coronelli's esteemed globe of 1688 and is richly embellished in his characteristic style. In the upper left is an elaborate title vignette featuring several gods who find themselves in the New World. They have sumptuous robes and voluptuous hair, but also a map, compass, ship, and other modern instruments. The title states not only the maker of the map, and his position as cosmographer of the Republic of Venice, but also lists the dedicatee, Felic Antonio Marsily, Archdeacon of the Cathedral of Bologna.

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In terms of geography, the map was one of the most updated representations of North America available at that time, even if some of that geography later proved chimerical. Much is still to be understood about the Arctic region, while the interior of the continent reflects the political divisions of the Spanish, French, and English empires.

Particularly here in the west, Coronelli's map contributes a significant amount of new information. It draws heavily from the manuscript map by Diego Dionisio de Peñalosa Briceño y Berdugo, which included numerous previously unrecorded place names and divided the Rio Grande into the Rio Norte and the Rio Bravo in the south. The manuscript map was prepared by Peñalosa between 1671 and 1687 as part of his attempts to interest the French King Louis XIV in a military expedition against New Spain.

California as an Island

The most prominent geographical detail of the map is California's appearance as a massive island, this map being one of the best renderings of this beloved misconception. A small text block in the Pacific Ocean is surrounded by a laurel and leaves. It explains how, even though some had thought California to be a peninsula, multiple Spanish voyages have shown it to be an island. From its first portrayal on a printed map by Diego Gutiérrez, in 1562, California was shown as part of North America by mapmakers, including Gerard Mercator and Abraham Ortelius. In the 1620s, however, it began to appear as an island in several sources.

This was most likely the result of a reading of the travel account of Sebastian Vizcaino, who had been sent north up the shore of California in 1602. A Carmelite friar who accompanied him later described the land as an island, a description first published in Juan Torquemada's *Monarquia Indiana* (1613) with the island details curtailed somewhat. The friar, Fray Antonio de la Ascension, also wrote a *Relacion breve* of his geographic ideas around 1620. The ideas spread about New Spain and, eventually, most likely via Dutch mariners and perhaps thanks to stolen charts, to the rest of Europe.

By the 1620s, many mapmakers chose to depict the peninsula as an island. These included Henricus Hondius, who published the first atlas map to focus solely on North America with the island prominently featured in 1636. Hondius borrowed his outline of California from another widely-distributed map, that of Henry Briggs and printed in Samuel Purchas' *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas his Pilgrimes* (1625).

Other prominent practitioners like John Speed and Nicolas Sanson also adopted the new island and the practice became commonplace. Father Eusebio Kino initially followed along with this theory but after extensive travels in what is now California, Arizona, and northern Mexico, he concluded that the island was actually a peninsula. Even after Kino published a map based on his travels refuting the claim (Paris,

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1705), California as an island remained a fixture until the mid-eighteenth century.

Atlante Veneto

Coronelli's map of North America featured in his famous *Atlante Veneto*, published in Venice between 1690 and 1701. The atlas was Coronelli's attempt to carry on the work of Blaeu and the *Atlas Maior*. The work was impressive in size (folio), detail, and length; it included many distinctive maps.

This is a significant map in the history of North American cartography, California as an island, and Italian mapmaking. It would be a foundational map in any collection of North America and would be an important addition to anyone interested in Coronelli, California, or early North American exploration.

Detailed Condition:
Minor soiling and abrasion at centerfold.