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Parte Occidentale della China . . . [with] Parte Orientale della China . . .

Stock#: 64242
Map Maker: Coronelli
Date: 1690
Place: Venice
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG
Size: 35 x 24 inches
Price: Not Available



Description:

Coronelli's Map of China—Rare Original Color Example

Fine example of Coronelli's striking two-sheet map of China. The work is in original color, a rarity for a map that is one of the most sought after of large-format maps of China.

The map covers all of modern China and the Korean peninsula, reaching to the Great Wall in the northernmost part of the map. It includes the island of Formosa (Taiwan) and Northern Hainan Island. The city of Peking is written here as Xuntien, while Shanghai is Xanghei. In the south both Macao and Guangzhou (Quangcheu, or Canton) are shown.

The map is divided into provinces and shows exceptional detail along the coast and in the interior. The topography, rivers, and lakes are well developed. There are even canals marked, along with fortresses, and towns. To the north is forbidding desert; to the south, high mountains reach skyward.

In addition to the considerable amount of geographic information included on the map, there are many decorative embellishments surrounding China. In the upper right is an elaborate set of scale bars circumscribed in a compass circle with a quadrant and dividers. In the lower right is another cartouche, with a dedication, also surrounded by navigational equipment.

The map is dedicated to Antonio Baldigiani (1647-1711), a Jesuit and Professor of Mathematics at the Roman College. From 1691 he served as consultor to the Congregation of the Index, the church body responsible for examining books condemned by the Inquisition and reporting their findings to the Pope. He was therefore an important figure in the encounter between Catholic doctrine and the new science



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propounded by Galileo and others.

The most elaborate cartouche is in the upper left, with laurels; navigational, mathematical, and cartographical instruments, and another set of scale bars. Baldigiani, as with many fellow Jesuits, was greatly interested in China. In fact, as indicated by the IHS included at the top of the cartouche, the Jesuits were the main source of information for this map.

The Jesuits in China

The Jesuits had already been in China for a century when Coronelli gathered the materials to make this map. While they hoped to convert people to Christianity, the learned order also became fascinated with the vast stores of information they encountered. Additionally, they used developments in science, including cartography, to show their own intellectual prowess.

The Jesuits first attempted to enter China in the mid-sixteenth century, led by Francis Xavier, a founding member of the Society of Jesus. Thirty years later, in 1582, the Jesuits tried again. Jesuit priests like Michele Ruggieri and the famous Matteo Ricci learned Chinese at Macau, then held by the Portuguese, and then entered mainland China. Ruggieri, Ricci, and other missionaries like Martino Martini passed information back to Europe about China, fanning the West's interest in Asia.

One of these Jesuits was Philippe Couplet (1623-1693), who Coronelli cites as the main source of information for this map. In 1656, after becoming interested in the work of Father Martini, Couplet joined a mission led by Michal Boym.

As a missionary, Couplet traveled throughout China, but he had to take refuge in Canton during the 1665-1670 persecutions. Couplet was sent back to Europe in 1681 as Procurator of the China Jesuits in Rome. His mission was to obtain papal agreement for the liturgy to be sung in Chinese. On his visit to the Papal States, he gave the Pope a library of Chinese translations of Christian books. While in Europe, his visit to Louis XIV led to plans for five Jesuit mathematicians to visit the Chinese Court in 1685. The journey also allowed him to transfer information to Coronelli, who was then touring Europe making globes for the richest members of society.

Europeans in China: Fort Zeelandia and Canton

The Jesuits were not the only Europeans in China. European nations began trading with China in the early sixteenth century. They hoped to gain privileged access to Chinese markets, while China saw the Europeans as another tributary member of their empire.



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A text block at the bottom of the map mentioned Fort Zeelandia. The fort was built over the course of a decade (1624-1634), after the Dutch had trouble in establishing trade with China. Instead, the Dutch East India Company (VOC) established themselves on the island of Formosa. In 1661, the fort was placed under siege by Koxinga, a Ming loyalist. Batavia failed to reinforce their VOC fellows, resulting in the surrender of the fort early in 1662.

Trade relations between China and the West continued to be fraught. Besides Macau, the other European toehold was at Canton, or Quangcheu as it is written here. In 1757, the Chinese employed what became known as the Canton System, which made Canton the sole port of entry for Western goods into China. A cohort of Chinese merchants, the *Cohong*, mediated between the Chinese government and Western traders, and they operated out of the Thirteen Factories area, located near the waterfront.

This map represents early European-Chinese exchanges, and also underlines the importance of the Jesuits to early modern mapmaking in general, and to Chinese mapping in particular. This original color example is not only rare, but also historically significant.

Detailed Condition:

Original Color!