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La Nuova Francia

Stock#: 68403
Map Maker: Ramusio / Gastaldi
Date: 1556 (1606)
Place: Venice
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 14.5 x 10.5 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

The First Printed Map of New England and New France

A nice example of the first printed map devoted to New England and New France, showing the eastern seaboard from New York Bay to the Gulf of St. Lawrence. This map appeared in Ramusio's highly important work, *Navigazioni et Viaggi*.

The map is based on the information collected during Giovanni da Verazanno's 1524 and Jacques Cartier's 1534 voyages to the New World. Verrazano was particularly important in exploring the Atlantic coastline up to New Brunswick, while Cartier ventured into the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Verrazano's discovery of New York Harbor was a particularly important moment in the exploration of the Americas. The map reflects Giacomo Gastaldi's attempt to synthesize the information collected by these two voyages for the third volume of Giovanni Ramusio's *Navigazioni et Viaggi*, which was focused on the discovery of the Americas.

The map is the first to use the name New France and one of the earliest to delineate New York Harbor and Manhattan with any accuracy. Cohen and Augustyn call this the best surviving early map to illustrate Verrazano's discovery of New York Harbor, visible in the lower left of the map. Manhattan is pictured as a peninsula named Angoulesme. This name, which Verrazano bestowed on his discovery, refers to Francis I's title before he became king. This name never was picked up for general usage and soon disappeared from maps. From New York, Verrazano continued further north, visiting Newport Bay, here called Port Real, and Narragansett Bay, named as Port du Refuge. Verrazano skirted the New England coast further north, which is why the map is missing the familiar shape of Cape Cod and also the reason that the distance between the bays of southern New England and the islands around the Gulf of St. Lawrence are so



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foreshortened.

The northern region around the Gulf of St. Lawrence is based on Cartier's voyage. Terra Nuova (Newfoundland) is shown as comprised of several islands and the St. Lawrence River is depicted running west from the Gulf, eventually meeting with the Hudson River north of Angouleme. This may reflect an incorrect belief that Cartier and Verrazano met while exploring these rivers.

One unique feature of Ramusio's map is the long mass running across the bottom of the map and then upwards on the right side. The most likely explanation is that this is a depiction of the Grand Banks, but some have suggested that this may be the Gulf Stream.

The map also provides a rich tapestry of images depicting the indigenous Indians, showing scenes from their daily lives, along with a look at the cod fisheries in the northeastern portion of the map, perhaps the first European industry in the New World. Other Europeans can be seen throughout the North American coastline.

This map is based on Gastaldi's *Tierra Nueva*, with a strong resemblance particularly in the coastal geography, though this map possesses increased detail. Further, the earlier map is much smaller, and shows a much larger portion of the North American coastline.

The map's cartographic importance is simple: this is the first printed map to focus solely on New England and southeastern Canada, an area which would become important a century later. Further, the map provides a fascinating interpretation of some of the earliest voyages to the New World, at a time when this region was still all but unknown to Europeans.

To conclude, Coolie and Verner describe the map as such:

"No matter how the map is approached and interpreted, it raises puzzling and unanswerable questions. In fact, it is something more than a mere attempt at geographical description. It is also an illustration of the resources and inhabitants of a new country, and as such it points to the growing realization among Europeans that if Cathay could not be reached by a westward sailing, the country that intervened might itself hold promise."

States of the Map

The map is known to exist in 3 states. All of Ramusio's map printing woodblocks were burned in a fire in November 1557. As such the second and third states are from the second printing woodblock. The states



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can be identified as follows:

- 1556 (Block 1): Pages 424 and 425. Trees are rounded, with no weeping willows.
- 1565 (Block 2): Pages 424 and 425. Two weeping willows added at far left, above and below "Ponente."
- 1606 (Block 2): Pages 353 and 354. Signs of woodworm damage (blank spots) appear throughout the map.

Detailed Condition: