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Carte des rivières de la France, curieusement recherchée par Nicolas Sanson... 1641

Stock#: 75829
Map Maker: Sanson
Date: 1641
Place: Paris
Color: Outline Color
Condition: VG
Size: 20 x 16 inches
Price: Not Available



Description:

Delightful Sanson Map Curiously Focusing on French Rivers

Attractive example of Sanson's 1641 double-page engraved map of the rivers of France. This curiosity was published in a series of maps focusing on the geography of France. While most of Sanson's maps denoted political boundaries and show roads or cities, this map instead only denotes hydrological features. Sanson was the first great mapmaker of the golden age of French cartography and his maps are prized for their exacting standards and attractive qualities.

The concept of hydrological mapping was virtually unknown at the time of the publication of this map, and we were unable to find an earlier example of a map that solely focuses on the rivers of France. Crossing points are also shown for the rivers which would have proved important for understanding the defensive capabilities of various regions.

Names are given to all but the smallest tributary streams shown on the map. The "5 great rivers of France" (the Seine, Loire, Garonne, Rhone, and Rhine) are clearly shown and each is shaded in a different set of colors. Detail extends into the Low Countries, Switzerland (with its many lakes), Italy, and southern England.

The text in the upper right-hand side of the map explains to a potential confused reader the purpose of this map. Sanson defends his map as exactly precise, and states that many of the rivers found here are unlikely to be found on national or even regional maps.



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Old Color

We have not found another example of this map in which the coloring gives so much attention to the rivers themselves. Other colored examples have used the rivers solely to attempt to trace regional boundaries, showing the confusion that early artists may have had in comprehending the purpose of a hydrological map. This example, in contrast, colors only the major rivers along with their primary tributaries.

Detailed Condition:

Old color. Trimmed to neatline and backed on 17th-century paper. This preparation was done when the map was included in a 17th-century composite atlas.