Barry Lawrence Ruderman
Antique Maps Inc.

[First Postal Map] Carte géographique des postes qui traversent la France... 1632

Stock#:   84069
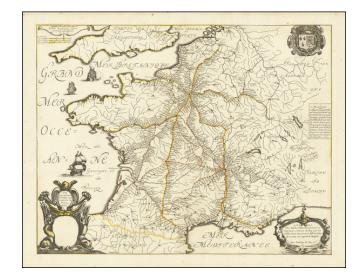**Map Maker:**   Tavernier / Sanson

Date: 1632
Place: Paris
Color: Outline Color
Condition: VG+
Size: 20.5 x 16 inches

Price: SOLD

Description:

Melchior Tavernier's nicely engraved map of the post roads of France at the beginning of the 17th century.

According to a Princeton University site on thematic maps :

> *This is the first postal road map -also the first important map issued by Sanson. The map shows all of the routes used by the royal posts of the time, identifying the stops along the way; it was reprinted many times during the seventeenth century. Curiously, the cartouche for the dedication has been left blank. The French postal system dates back to 1477, when King Louis XI set up a Royal Postal Service that employed mounted couriers. The timing of this map is relevant, for private mail delivery had just been legalized several years earlier (1627), so both services were operating over the same major routes. In 1672, France made postal service a government-only function.*

The post roads are shown here for the first time. Over the next 3 decades, this same map would be updated as routes were added.

The French Post

In 1477, Louis XI set up a Royal Postal Service, employing 230 mounted couriers, which was not intended for public use. The security and regularity of the service along certain routes, when compared to previous means of communication, inevitably resulted in an increasing amount of unofficial correspondence being

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carried. After initial attempts to prevent this practice, its fiscal advantages were realized, and private mailings were legalized in the early 17th Century. The basis of a real public service was not created until 1627, when fees and timetables were fixed and post offices established in the larger cities.

In 1672, France made postal services a controlled state monopoly. Previously granted private operators were allowed to continue, but over time they were forced out of business or acquired by the state. In 1719 the University of Paris, the most important private competitor, gave up its last postal privileges in return for substantial compensation.

Detailed Condition: