



**Barry Lawrence Ruderman  
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**[Historical Atlas Compiled by Charles Louis de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu]**

**Stock#:** 94156  
**Map Maker:** Montesquieu / Various Makers  
**Date:** 1640 - 1741 circa  
**Place:** n.p.  
**Color:** Outline Color  
**Condition:** VG+  
**Size:** 15 x 21 inches (binding)  
**Price:** SOLD



**Description:**

***Ex Bibliotheca Dom. Praesidis de Montesquieu - With Manuscript Notes on Roman Civil Society in the hand of Charles Louis de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu***

***A Unique Composite Atlas of the Ancient World, from the Library of one the Great Philosophers of the French Enlightenment.***

Remarkable custom assembled atlas of the classical world, from the library of famed French philosopher Charles Louis de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu (1689-1755), including annotations, index and ex-Libris in Montesquieu's hand, with a commentary on Roman civil society.

The present atlas is one of three classical atlases of the ancient world from the library of the Montesquieu, and the only one for which his library catalog describes notes in Montesquieu's own hand in the book. As described below, one of the notes includes a passage describing Montesquieu's observations on Roman civil society before Emperor Constantine.

Beginning with a map of the ancient world and maps of the 4 Continents, the atlas is a remarkable composite of classical history, quite possibly assembled from maps selected by Montesquieu himself. Even the map of America is viewed through a classical lens, with the title translating as follows:

*A new world, rather another continent, or the island of Atlantis: restored to antiquity by Nicolas Sanson: now finally delineated in a larger form, and distributed into ten kingdoms, according to the ten sons of Neptune: moreover the islands, and the regions of our continent over which the Atlantic kings ruled, or which they attempted by arms.*



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The atlas consists of an assemblage of maps published by the most important French and Dutch mapmakers of the 17th and 18th centuries, including Nicolas and Pierre Sanson, Guillaume de L'Isle, Pierre Duval, Philipp Clüver, Petrus Bertius, Pierre Mariette, Melchior Tavernier, and Jean-Baptiste Nolin and includes a finely selected set of maps published over the course of more than a century. The major areas of antiquity are often represented by maps from multiple epochs, with as many as six different maps telling the story of the region on a comparative basis over several millenia.

Intriguingly, the atlas's compiler (Montesquieu?) often includes maps of the same region by two different mapmakers. The sheer size, diversity, and extent of the atlas suggests that the compiler was a highly knowledgeable classical scholar with a broad interest in classical geography.

A number of the maps are also extremely rare, in some cases known only in a single example at the Bibliotheque National de France.

#### Montesquieu's Hand Written Commentary

In the left margin of the text accompanying the map of the Roman Empire, there is a handwritten note discussing Roman civil society prior to Emperor Constantine, which reads as follows:

*elles pourraiens bien avoir été Civiles en grande partie avant Constantin: ce qui me le ferait Croire, c'est qu'il yent plusieurs préfets du prétoire tres grands juris consultes. Salvianus sous aadrien, ulpien et paul sous alexandre Sévère. Papinien sous Septime Sévère et sous caracalla et geta.*

The following is the translation and interpretation of the above passage:

*Translation: They could well have been largely civil before Constantine: what would make me believe this is that there were several praetorian prefects who were very great jurists. Salvianus under Hadrian, Ulpian and Paul under Alexander Severus. Papinian under Septimius Severus and under Caracalla and Geta.*

The writer (almost certainly Montesquieu) states that the Roman Empire had a significant degree of civil society before the reign of Constantine, with evidence being the presence of several highly respected jurists serving as praetorian prefects under various Roman emperors. This note aligns with the kind of historical and philosophical analysis for which Montesquieu was known. Montesquieu was one of the great



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Enlightenment philosophers, who is best known for his works *Lettres persanes* (Persian Letters) and *De l'esprit des lois* (The Spirit of Law), in which Montesquieu extensively discussed systems of government and laws, with a particular interest in Roman history.

The hand written note discusses the nature of civil society before the reign of Constantine and the roles of various legal figures (jurists and praetorian prefects) who served under different Roman emperors. Montesquieu was known to often delve into historical events to draw broader conclusions about politics, society, and law.

*The Spirit of Law* is one of the most influential books of all time. This masterpiece of political philosophy was widely read throughout Europe, attracted an especially enthusiastic readership in England, and had a profound effect on the framers of the American Constitution.

### The Geographical Library of Baron de Montesquieu

Baron de Montesquieu, renowned for his contributions to political philosophy and the theory of separation of powers, had a keen interest in geography. This interest is evident in the sale of his library in November 1926, held at the Hotel Drouot, where various notable geographical works were listed among the items. These included a 1598 French edition of Ortelius's *Theatrum*, a six-volume French edition of Blaeu's *Novus Atlas* from 1648, two editions of the Mercator Hondius atlas of the world, and at least three ancient composite atlases.

The atlas offered here appeared as item #533 in the sale, which was catalogued as follows, specifically referencing that the Ex-Libris and manuscript table were in the hand of President Montesquieu (who was described by his hereditary title of President of the Parliament of Bourdeaux):

*533. Atlas de géographie ancienne. Paris, Mariette, 1666-1700. 80 cartes doubles, imprimées en latin et coloriées en 1 vol. in-fol., veau marb., dos orné, tr. mouch. (Rel. anc.).*

*Cartes dressées par les meilleurs géographes de l'époque ; Guillaume Samson, G. de l'Isle, Tavernier, etc., en tête se trouve une table manuscrite qui paraît avoir été établie par le Président de Montesquieu.*

*Ex-libris manuscrit du Président, à l'intérieur du 1er plat.*

The 80 maps referenced in the description included 78 double page maps, a 4 sheet map of the Empire of Charlemagne, and 2 sheet map of Greece (for a total of 85 map sheets). The book is described as bound in



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calf leather with marbled patterns, featuring an ornate spine and gilt edges, and containing a handwritten table at the beginning, which appeared to have been written by the President de Montesquieu himself. It is likely that the atlas was also assembled at his request, given the composite nature of the collection of maps and the relative rarity of a number of the maps.

Montesquieu's interest in geography aligns with his broader intellectual pursuits. His exploration of different societies and legal systems around the world influenced his theories on governance and the importance of balance of power. By studying maps and geographical works, Montesquieu sought to understand the intricate connections between physical geography, climate, and the development of human societies.

### Provenance

1. With 18th-century ink manuscript to front free endpaper reading: *Ex bibliothecâ Dom. Praesidis de Montesquieu Catalogo inscriptu*
2. Circa 1900 French bookseller's descriptive pastedown to front endpaper.

### Contents

1. *Orbis Veteribus Noti Tabula Nova . . . Guillelmo Del'Isle*
2. *Europa Vetus . . . Gulielmi Sanson N. Filii*
3. *Asia Vetus . . . Gulielmi Sanson N. Filii*
4. *Africa Vetus . . . Gulielmi Sanson N. Filii*
5. *Novus Orbis potius Altera Continens sive Atlantis Insula a Nicolao sanson Antiquitati Restituta . . . . . Gulielmi Sanson Nicolai Filii*
6. *Geographiae Sacrae ex Veteri, et Nuovo Testamento desumpta . . . N. Sanson*
7. *La Terrae Sainte Anciennement Nomme Terre de Chanaan . . . I.B. Nolin [single page]*
8. *Palestinae Sive Terrae Sanctae quae et Promissionis Nova Tabula S.S. Bibliorum Intelligentiam Delineata. . . ex Christiano Adrichomio*
9. *Terra Chanaan Ad Abrahami Tempora . . . Pierre Mariette*
10. *Geographiae Sacrae ex Veteri, et Novo Testamento desumptae. . . N. Sanson*
11. *Regnum Salomonicum Seu Tabula digesta ad Libros . . . Pierre Marriette*
12. *Regnum Iudeorum In Filios Herodis Magni Per Tetrarchias . . . Pierre Marriette*
13. *Pinax Geographicus Patriarchatus Hierosolymitani . . . Petrus Moullart-Sanson*
14. *Chodorlahomoris Aelamitarum Regis Et Confoederatorum Regna seu Aelamitarum Imperium. . . Petri Mariette (one example located -- BnF)*
15. *Assyria Vetus Divisa in Syriam, Messopotamiam, Babyloniam, et Assyrian*
16. *Graecia Foederata sub Agamemnone, ob Helenae Raptum . . . Gulielmi Sanson, Nicolai Filii*



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17. *Troianum Regnum, Novem Dinasteias Complectens . . . Gulielmi Nicolai Sanson Filii* [uncolored]
18. *Carte du Voyage D'Enee, Et de Tout les Lieux. . . du Val Geographe*
19. *Persarum Imperium In Viginti Satrapias Vectigales distibatum ut Eas Ordinaverat . . . Petri Moullart-Sanson* (extremely rare)
20. *Retraite des Dix Mille . . . Guillelmo Delisle*
21. *Alexandri Magni Imperium et Expeditio . . . Guillelmo Delisle* [folding]
22. *Graeciae Antiquae Tabula Geographica . . . Nicolao Sanson*
23. *Graecia Sophiani . . . de Mariette* [Uncolored]
24. *Graeciae Pars Septentrionalis . . . Guillelmo Del'isle*
25. *Graeciae Antiquae Tabula Nova. . . Guillelmo Delisle*
26. *Asia Minor. . . Petri Mariette* [Uncolored]
27. *Asia Minor In Epitomen contract . . . Nic et Gul Sanson*
28. *Paphlagonia Heroicis Temporibus Henetorum Populorum . . . Gulielmi Sanson Nicolai Filii*
29. *Ponti Pars, Ad Halym, Iridem Thermodontemq; Fluvios Sia . . . Gulielmi Sanson Nicolai Filii*
30. *Regionis Ponti Pars Orientalis quam Mosaicis temproibus Nobiliturunt . . . Petri Moullart-Sanson*
31. *Galatia cujus Populi Tolistobogi, Tectosages, Trocmi, mox Provincia . . . Gulielmi Sanson Nicolai Filii*
32. *Lycaonia et Isauria In Minores Regiones seu Tractus distinctae. . . Gulielmi Sanson Nicolai Filii*
33. *Cicilia Asiae Minoris pars orientalis quam Heroicis Temporibus. . . Petro Moullart-Sanson* [Eastern portion] (one complete example located / BnF)
34. *Pamphilia et Pisidia Conatibus Geographicis . . . Gulielmi Sanson*
35. *Armenia vetus In Quattuor Partes distincta ad Tempora Iustiniani Imp . . . Petrum Mariette*
36. *Colchis, Iberia, Albania, Quaeq, Caucasiae Gentes, Istmum quod Pontum Euxinum Caspium . . . Gulielmi Sanson Nicolai Filii*
37. *Cyprus Praestantia nulli cedens Insulae Singulae hujus Insulae Urbes . . . Petri Moullart-Sanson* (extremely rare)
38. *Creta Insula Plerumq; Deum Natalibus, Iovis Incunabulis. . . Gulielmi Sanson Nicolai Filii*
39. *Alcibiadis Expeditionum Tabula Geographica . . . P. Du Val*
40. *Tabula Italiae Antiquae in Regiones XI ab Augusto divisa . . . Guillelmo Del'isle*
41. *P. Cluverii Italia Antiqua cum Insulis adiacentibus. . .* (one example located / BnF)
42. *Regionum Italiae Mediarum Tabula Geographica . . . G. Dell'Isle*
43. *Siciliae Antiquae quae et Sicania et Trinacria dicta Tabula Geographica Auctore Guillelmo Dell'Isle*
44. *Pyrrhi Regis Epirotarum Expeditiones; per Macedoniam, Italiam, Siciliam. . . P. Du Val*
45. *Expeditiones Hannibalis per Hispaniam, Galliam, Italiam, Africam . . . Petrum Mariette* [uncolored]
46. *Rei Romanae Tabula Geographica . . . Petrum Mariette* [uncolored]
47. *Tabula Geographica Iustino . . . Petrum Mariette* [uncolored]
48. *Iesu Christi Salvatoris Nostri et Apostolorum Petri . . . N. Sanson Abbavilloeo*
49. *Romani Imperii qua Occidens est Descriptio Geographica . . . N. Sanson Abavillaeo* [with folding]



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text]

50. *Romani Imperii qua Oriens est Descriptio Geographica*. . . N. Sanson Abbavillaeo [with folding text]
51. *Theatrum Historicum ad annum Christi quadringentesimu in quo Imperii Romani . . . Pars Occidentalis Autore Guillelmo Del'Isle* [with folding text]
52. *Theatrum Historicum ad annum Christi quadringentesimu in quo Imperii Romani. . . Pars Orientalis Autore Guillelmo Del'Isle* [with folding text]
53. *Romanum Imperium ex Abrahami Ortelii parergo*. . . I.B. Nolin (extremely rare)
54. *Carte de L'Empire Romain et en Occident et en Orient* . . . P. Du-Val [uncolored]
55. *Tabula Geographica Provinciarum et Urbium Colonia Roma* . . . Guillelmi Delisle
56. *Gallia vetus ex Iulii Caesaris comentariis descripta* . . . N. Sanson Abbavillaeo
57. *Gallia in qua Fluvii Aquae afluentes in Oceanum et in Mare Internum* . . . Petru Moullart Sanson [uncolored]
58. *Gallia Antiqua, in Partes II. Regiones IV. Provincias XVII* . . . N. Sanson Abbavilloeo [uncolored]
59. *Gallia Antiqua, in Partes II. Regiones IV. Provincias XVII* . . . N. Sanson Abbavilloeo
60. *Celto-Galatia seu Celto Gallia, quae Gallia Transalpina, quae Gallia Transalpina* . . . Nicolai Sanson auctor
61. *Civitas Leucorum sive Pagus Tullensis aujordhui Le Diocese de Toul* . . . Guill Del'Isle
62. *Tabula Delphinatus et Vicinarum Regionum distributa in Principatus Comitatus Baronias &c.* . . Guillelmo de L'Isle
63. *Brtianicae Insulae in quibus Albium Sive Britannia Maior Iuernia Sive Britannia Minor*. . . N. Sanson [sic]
64. *Hispania Antiqua Quatuor modis distincta: scilicet* . . . N. Sanson [uncolored]
65. *Germania Antiqua* . . . N. Sanson
66. *Germano-Sarmatia in qua Populi maiores Venedi, et Aestiae; Peucini, et Bastarnae* . . . N. Sanson
67. *Baltia quae et Scandia, Finningia, Cimbrica Chersonesus &* . . . N. Sanson
68. *Illyricum Occidentis cuj Partes IV. Rhaetia, Noricum, Pannonia, et Illyris* . . . N. Sanson
69. *Illyricum Orientes In quo Partes II Moesia, et Thracia* . . . N. Sanson
70. *Anapulus Bosphori Thracii Ex Indagatonibus* . . . Gulielmo Sanson Nic Filio [uncolored]
71. *Cimmeria quae Postea Scythia Europaea seu Parua Scythia Ex Conatibus Geographicii* . . . Gulielmi Sanson, Nicolai Filii
72. *Bosporus Cimmerius et Regnum Bosporanum* . . . Guillelmo Del'Isle
73. *Orbis Romani Descriptio seu Divisio per Themata sub Imperatoribus* . . . Guillelmo Del'Isle
74. *Imperii Orientalis et Circumjacentium Regionum sub Constantino Porphyrogenito et ejus.* . . Guillelmo Del'Isle
75. *Gulielmi Sanson Nicolai Filii, Geographia Patriarchalis Tabula Geographica in Epitomen* . . . Petrum Mariette
76. *In Notitiam Ecclesiasticam Africae Tabula Geographica* . . . G. de L'Isle



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- 77. *Antiquorum Italiae & Illyrici Occidentalis Episcopatuui . . . M. Tavernier*
- 78. *Antiquorum Illyrici Orientalis Episcopatum Geographica Descriptio . . . M. Tavernier*
- 79. *Antiquorum Galliae Episcopatum Geographica Descriptio . . . M. Tavernier*
- 80. *Antiquorum Hispaniae Episcopatum Geographica Descriptio . . . M. Tavernier*
- 81. *Geographia Synodica Sive Regionum, Urbium, et Locorum ubi Celebrata sunt Concilia . . . Gulielmi Sanson Nicolai Filii*
- 82. *Empire of Charlegagne (4 sheets) Imperium Caroli Magi cum vicinis Regionibus . . . P. Bertio* [northeastern section; uncolored] (One example located / BnF)
- 83. *Imperium Caroli Magi cum vicinis Regionibus* [northwestern section; uncolored]
- 84. *Imperium Caroli Magi cum vicinis Regionibus* [southeastern section; uncolored]
- 85. *Imperium Caroli Magi cum vicinis Regionibus* [southwestern section; uncolored]

**Rarity**

The atlas is a unique composite, quite likely compiled by or at the request Charles Louis de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu, and bearing his hand written ex-libris.

The annotation, in the hand of Montesquieu, makes this an exceptional artifact of the French Enlightenment period.

**Detailed Condition:**

Folio. Contemporary full mottled calf. Spine in seven compartments, each with a gilt foliate design. Red morocco pastedown to the second compartment reading "CARTES | GEOGRAPH" Complete with 80 engraved maps on 85 sheets as called for in the manuscript index (including 1 two sheet map and 1 four sheet map), with original hand-coloring in outline to most of the maps. (Light restoration to some edges. Small internal dampstaining. A few small closed tears, mostly near the beginning around the centerfold.)