



34 volumes bound in 32. Octavo (160 by 98 mm), engraved title-page vignettes, 36 mostly folding engraved plates and maps (of 38, without portrait of Antoine Verjus, and map of Paraguay, 2 hand-coloured, a few old repairs at folds, some loss to map of 'Nouvelles Phillipines' in volume VI, and plate of Chinese inscriptions in volume X), occasional light foxing or browning, volume 1 with title-page shaved at lower margin touching imprint, and final leaf repaired with some loss of text, volume V with small loss to blank corners on 2 leaves, volume XV title-page with small hole touching imprint, volumes I-XXVIII uniform contemporary calf, spines gilt in compartments with two lettering-pieces, all edges red, volumes XXIX - XXXIV (slightly taller) in similar mottled calf, some rubbing and abrasions, minor worm trails to a few sides and joints, a few spine ends chipped, but generally attractive.

**RARE COMPLETE SET OF "THE MOST VALUABLE 18TH-CENTURY SOURCE ON JESUIT ACTIVITIES IN FRONTIER REGIONS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD" (HILL, 'COLLECTION OF PACIFIC VOYAGES')**

**Lettres édificantes et curieuses écrites des missions étrangères, par quelques missionnaires de la Compagnie de Jésus.**

**Author**

LE GOBIEN, Charles; Jean-Baptiste du HALDE; Father Patouillet; and Father Ambrose MARECHAL [eds.,]

**Publication date**

1702-1776.

**Publisher**

Jean Cusson [and others],

## **Publication place**

Paris,

## **Physical description**

34 volumes bound in 32. Octavo (160 by 98 mm), engraved title-page vignettes, 36 mostly folding engraved plates and maps (of 38, without portrait of Antoine Verjus, and map of Paraguay, 2 hand-coloured, a few old repairs at folds, some loss to map of 'Nouvelles Phillipines' in volume VI, and plate of Chinese inscriptions in volume X), occasional light foxing or browning, volume 1 with title-page shaved at lower margin touching imprint, and final leaf repaired with some loss of text, volume V with small loss to blank corners on 2 leaves, volume XV title-page with small hole touching imprint, volumes I-XXVIII uniform contemporary calf, spines gilt in compartments with two lettering-pieces, all edges red, volumes XXIX - XXXIV (slightly taller) in similar mottled calf, some rubbing and abrasions, minor worm trails to a few sides and joints, a few spine ends chipped, but generally attractive.

## **Dimensions**

## **Notes**

In addition to the vows of Chastity, Poverty, and Obedience, initiates to the Society of Jesus, founded by Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556), made a fourth vow, their foundation principal, to undertake missionary work anywhere in the world, as the Pope directed them; and then promise to write letters home to Rome detailing all that they found. Beginning with St. Francis Xavier's (1506-1551) first mission, from 1540, to India, Southeast Asia, and Japan, by the end of the sixteenth century, almost nine thousand Jesuits were sending their 'Lettres edifiantes et curieuses', from all corners of the known world.

Three of the Jesuits' most celebrated missions were to: China, led by Matteo Ricci (1552-1610); Paraguay, Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil (1609-1768), which established at least thirty large mission towns, each with a cathedral-sized church, school and workshop; and a relatively brief and bloody residence in Canada (1611-1649). From 1632, the letters of the North American missionaries were published in the 'Jesuit Relations'.

These 'Lettres édifiantes et curieuses...' (1702-1774), were first selected and collected for publication in Paris by Charles Le Gobien. First-hand, real-time accounts, they represent a wealth of historical, scientific, geographical, botanical, cultural, and ethnographic information, which has been mined by thinkers and scholars of all disciplines, and every scientific age, ever since.

## **Bibliography**

[Sabin 40697, "a set comprising the first edition of each volume is of uncommon rarity"; Sommervogel III, 1514, IV, 34-35, V, 536, VI, 353-354; cf. Hill 1024, second edition only], 8vo, Paris, Jean Cusson [and others], 1702-1776.

## **Provenance**

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"Domus probationis Parisiensis Societatis Jesu ad usum novit", contemporary inscription on the title of volume I, and similar inscriptions to title-pages of volumes II-XXVIII, placing these volumes formerly in the library of the Parisian Jesuit novitiate.

**Price:** £15000

**Inventory reference:** 17505

