Large engraved map of Asia on two double-page sheets.

CORONELLI'S MAP OF ASIA IDENTIFYING AUSTRALIA WITH MARCO POLO'S "LOCHAC"

Asia Divisa nelle sue Parti secondo lo stato presente Descritta, e Dedicata Al P. R:mo Tirso Gonzalez Preposito Generale della Compagnia di Giesu, dal P.M. Coronelli M.C. Cosmografo della Ser:ma Repub: di Venezia.

Author
CORONELLI, Vincenzo Maria

Publication date
1691.

Publisher
Girolamo Albrizzi,

Publication place
Venice,

Physical description
Large engraved map of Asia on two double-page sheets.

Dimensions
680 by 450mm (26.75 by 17.75 inches).

Notes
Vincenzo Coronelli has dedicated his large and decorative map of Asia to the Jesuits, or the Society of Jesus, who first arrived in Asia when Francis Xavier (1506-1552) landed in Goa in May of 1542.

Over the course of ten years, Xavier travelled across Asia, taking in much of India, as far as Sri Lanka, Malacca, the Molucca Islands, Japan and China. He died of a fever in 1552 on the island of Shang Chuan, while waiting for a boat to take him to mainland China. Thirty years later, Matteo Ricci an Italian Jesuit, began his mission in China, eventually spending twenty-eight years there. The Jesuits were the first, and for many centuries, the only, to bring knowledge of the far east to the attention of Europeans.

This highly decorative, and detailed map, shows the results of Dutch discoveries in Australia, and those of Abel Tasman, in particular. However, some parts of Southeast Asia are still tangled with those of the northern coast of Australia, and in this map, Coronelli adds a note, in the middle of "Het Niew Hollandt", that says that some think this land is Marco Polo's "Lochac", because Polo had reported that "it was on "terra firma" (i.e. continental), it was isolated, and because his text, particularly Ramusio's edition, implied a southerly location" (Suarez). Coronelli had been repeating this information on his maps and globe-gores since 1688, when he was so convinced that he included an elephant in the middle of the "red centre"

Maarten de Vries's exploration is shown in the shape of the north of Japan.

Published in Vincenzo Maria Coronelli's magnificent atlas 'Atlante Veneto, nel quale si contiene la descrittione… degl' Imperii, Regni, Provincie, e Stati dell' Universo', Venice 1691, but also possibly issued separately earlier.

The mapmaker
Vincenzo Coronelli (1650-1718) was an Italian cartographer and globe maker. He was apprenticed to a woodcut printer at ten years old, but then entered the Franciscan Order as a novice at thirteen.

In 1701, he was made Father General of the Order, but was removed from office by the Pope three years later after complaints from fellow clerics. Coronelli mainly lived and worked in Venice, but an opportunity arose to make his name when an early commission for two globes for the Duke of Parma brought him to the attention of the Cardinal d'Estrées, who summoned him to Paris to create two huge globes for Louis XIV. They each had a diameter of fifteen feet, and were built with trapdoors so they could be worked on from the inside. He was made royal cartographer to Louis XIV in 1681 as a result, and worked in Paris for two years. He collaborated with Jean Baptiste Nolin, who went on to become the French publisher for all of Coronelli's work.

On his return to Venice, Coronelli was made cosmographer to the Republic, and granted a stipend of 400 florins a year. He printed globe gores in the 'Libri dei Globii' as well as producing pocket globes, and his large globe over a metre in diameter was owned by royalty across Europe. He issued the 'Atlante Veneto' in 1691, which was intended to be an extension of Blaeu's atlas in three parts, covering hydrography and ancient and modern geography. One of the volumes was an isolario.

Coronelli was known as a careful scholar, and his work across Europe gave him access to the latest information. For example, he produced the first widely published European map of settlements in New Mexico, 'America Settentrionale' (1688), after being given the information by a former governor of New Mexico, Diego de Peñalosa.

Coronelli also founded the world's oldest surviving geographical society, the Accademia degli Argonauti, who produced a printed version of the Paris globes. They were named for Jason and the Argonauts, the adventurers who set out to find the golden fleece; their symbol was the globe surmounted by a ship in full sail. A list published in the 'Epitome cosmografica' in 1693 reveals that the society counted princes, ambassadors and cardinals amongst its members. They were to receive a minimum of six copper engravings a month, creating a a guaranteed market for his productions.

Before his death, he had managed to produce six volumes of what he hoped would be a comprehensive encyclopedia, the ‘Biblioteca universale sacro-profana’.

Bibliography

Literature: Clancy, ‘The Mapping of Terra Australis’, 6.22; Suarez, ‘Early Mapping of Southeast Asia’, 1999, pages 160-161; Tooley, ‘Mapping of Australia’, 351.

Provenance

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