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Tabula IX Asiae [Pakistan & India] (Title on Verso)

Stock#: 49098
Map Maker: Fries
Date: 1535 circa
Place: Lyon
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG
Size: 12 x 16 inches
Price: Not Available



Description:

Gorgeous Ptolemaic map of Pakistan and Western India, from Lorenz Fries' edition of Ptolemy's *Geographia*.

The 'Tabula IX Asiae,' a sixteenth-century map generally focused on Pakistan and northwestern India, encapsulates the essence of ancient geographical understanding. This map, a reduced version of Martin Waldseemüller's work from 1513, was initially published by Johannes Gruninger in Strasbourg in 1522. Significantly, this representation relies on the geographical data compiled by Claudius Ptolemy in the second century AD.

In this early 16th-century rendition, the depicted regions are structured by Ptolemy's groundbreaking coordinate-based approach to mapping. Ptolemy introduced a grid system, using a system of longitudinal and latitudinal coordinates, that enabled a standardized method to chart geographical spaces. While his method provided a coherent way to structure world geography, inaccuracies arose due to Ptolemy's underestimation of the earth's circumference, resulting in a condensed representation of east-west distances.

Despite these inherent distortions, 'Tabula IX Asiae' shows the geographical features of the region with remarkable coherence for its time. The map features the majestic sweep of the Indus River, entering at the right from its origin in the mountains to its delta into the Arabian Sea. Smaller tributaries such as the Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej are also indicated. Notably, however, the region's scale and complexity mean some of these tributaries are rendered with less than perfect accuracy.



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This map also includes a rudimentary depiction of the towering Himalayan and Hindu Kush ranges. These mountain systems' representations are significant as they demonstrate an early understanding of the topographical diversity of the Indian subcontinent.

Ptolemy's geographical data, forming the foundation of this map, primarily came from the accounts of sailors and overland traders and pilgrims. However, these accounts were often generalized and lacked detail, particularly for remote regions like the Indian subcontinent.

During the era of Ptolemy, the region covered by 'Tabula IX Asiae' was undergoing significant transformations. Once a part of the Mauryan Empire, it experienced shifts in control, including the Indo-Greek Kingdom and later the Kushan Empire. The region was an important cultural and commercial nexus, with connections to Persia in the west, Central Asia to the north, and the fertile Gangetic plains to the east.

Lorenz (Laurent) Fries was born in Alsace in about 1490. He studied medicine, apparently spending time at the universities of Pavia, Piacenza, Montpellier and Vienna. After completing his education, Fries worked as a physician in several places, before settling in Strassburg, in about 1519. While in Strassburg, Fries met the Strasbourg printer and publisher Johann Grüninger, an associate of the St. Die group of scholars formed by, among others, Walter Lud, Martin Ringmann and Martin Waldseemüller.

From 1520 to 1525, Fries worked with Grüninger as a cartographic editor, exploiting the corpus of material that Waldseemüller had created. Fries' first venture into mapmaking was in 1520, when he executed a reduction of Martin Waldseemüller's wall-map of the World, published in 1507. While it would appear that Fries was the editor of the map, credit is actually given in the title to Peter Apian. The map, *Tipus Orbis Universalis Iuxta Ptolomei Cosmographi Traditionem Et America Vesputii Aliorque Lustrationes A Petro Apiano Leysnico Elucubrat. Anno Dni MDXX*, was issued in Caius Julius Solinus' *Enarrationes*, edited by Camers, and published in Vienna in 1520.

Fries' next project was a new edition of the *Geographia* of Claudius Ptolemy, which was published by Johann Koberger in 1522. Fries evidently edited the maps, in most cases simply producing a reduction of the equivalent map from Waldseemüller's 1513 edition of the *Geographie Opus Novissima*, printed by Johann Schott. Fries also prepared three new maps for the *Geographie*: maps of South-East Asia and the East Indies, China and the World, but the geography of these derives from Waldseemüller's world map of 1507.

The 1522 edition of Fries' work is very rare, suggesting that the work was not commercially successful. In 1525, an improved edition was issued, with a re-edit of the text by Wilibald Pirckheimer, from the notes of Johannes Regiomontanus. After Grüninger's death in 1531, the business was continued by his son



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Christoph, who seems to have sold the materials for the Ptolemy to two Lyon publishers, the brothers Melchior and Gaspar Trechsel, who published a joint edition in 1535, before Gaspar Trechsel published an edition, in his own right, in 1541.

Detailed Condition: