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[India] Description de la Partie des Indes Orientales qui est sous la Dominations du Grand Mogol

Stock#: 75463
Map Maker: Thevenot / Baffin
Date: 1663
Place: Paris
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 14 x 11 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

The First French Edition of William Baffin's map of Mughal Empire, the first broadly accurate map of Northern India.

Melchisedec Thevenot's edition of William Baffin's revolutionary map embraces the entire Mughal Empire, and extends from Afghanistan and Kashmir in the north, down south to the middle of the Deccan, and from the mouths of the Indus in the east, to Burma in the west. While far from scientific, and featuring some obvious inaccuracies (notably, areas in the upper part of the map are placed way too far to the north), it is the first map of Northern India to evince a rough level of planimetric accuracy.

The original map on which the present edition is predicated was devised by the great English adventurer William Baffin, after information supplied to him by Sir Thomas Roe, England's first ambassador to the Mughal Empire.

The Indus River is shown to enter the Arabian Sea in the correct location. As opposed to the Gulf of Cambay, as shown on previous maps, and while the path of the Ganges River incorrectly shows it to flow in a general north-south direction, it is a vast improvement over previous maps, especially as the 'Jemni fluvis' (Yamuna River) is depicted with a relatively fine degree of accuracy.

The map divides the empire into the Mughal subhas (provinces), some of which have names that correspond to modern Indian states, including 'Chishmeere' (Kashmir), 'Penjab' (Punjab), 'Guuratte' (Gujarat), 'Orixia' (Orissa / Odisha), and 'Bengala' (Bengal).



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Near the center of the map is Agra (the capital of the Mughal Empire from 1556 to 1658), while many other cities familiar to the modern observer are labeled, including 'Delli' (Delhi), 'Lahor' (Lahor), 'Adsmear' (Ajmer), 'Gwalior' (Gwalior), Patna, 'Candahor' (Kandahar), 'Cabull' (Kabul), 'Dekaka' (Dacca), 'Suratt' (Surat), Diu, 'Chaul' (Chaul), 'Mesulapatnam' (Masulipatam).

The cartouche in the upper left features the modified seal of the Emperor Jahangir (reigned 1605-27), featuring roundels bearing his name and those of his eight dynastic predecessors going back to the great Turco-Mongol ruler, Timur (Tamerlane the Great). In the middle is the symbol of the Mughal Empire, featuring a lion at repose in front of a rising sun.

Sir Thomas Roe, the first English ambassador to the Mughal Empire, befriended Emperor Jahangir and was exposed to a wide variety of groundbreaking geographical intelligence. These included his own experiences travelling with the imperial court, and oral discussions with both Indian and foreign figures.

By good fortune, in 1619, during Roe's return sea voyage to England via Persia, he was accompanied by the highly accomplished explorer William Baffin. Baffin fashioned Roe's geographical information into a revolutionary map, which was first published in London, late in 1619, under the main title, *Indolstani imperii totus Asiae ditissimi descriptie*. It was reissued in 1625 as part of Samuel Purchas's *Purchas his Pilgrimes...* (London, 1625), an epic work on world exploration. Baffin's map remained highly influential for over a century, with the present Jansson edition being among the most important derivatives.

Sir Thomas Roe (c.1581-1644) was an English diplomat, scholar and collector of historically important manuscripts. From 1609 to 1611, he led an expedition to South America in search of 'El Dorado', the apocryphal city of gold. King James appointed Roe as England's first ambassador to the Mughal Empire, serving from 1615 to 1619. Roe developed a very close relationship with Jahangir, and he promptly secured imperial firmans protecting the English East India Company's (the EIC's) factories and trading interests. Roe subsequently served as the English ambassador to the Ottoman Empire.

William Baffin (c.1584-1622) was one of the great adventurers and mapmakers of his era. From 1612 to 1616, he served as a pilot on a series of expeditions to Greenland and the Canadian Arctic in search of the Northwest Passage. From 1617 to 1619, was engaged in the service of the EIC, as the master's mate of the *Anne Royal*. It was during this time that he befriended Sir Thomas Roe and drafted his revolutionary map of Northern India. Baffin subsequently conducted surveys of the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea.

A highly attractive edition of one of the most historically important maps of India.



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Detailed Condition:

Small amount of worming in the top and bottom margins around the centerfold. Five small wormholes in the image.