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Siam, o Iudia . . .

The present plan was the result of France's first embassy to Siam 1685, which was led by the Chevalier de Chaumont in the company of six Jesuit fathers. Louis XIV had long maintained an especially friendly correspondence with King Narai of Siam (ruled 1656-1688), and was eager to shore up their relationship. During Chaumont's visit, his Jesuit companions, who were well-versed in cartography, made manuscript plans of Ayutthaya which were soon dispatched to Paris.

However, shortly after Chaumont's embassy, there was an intense popular uprising against the growing foreign presence in Siam and the king's seeming obsession with everything European. King Narai even went as far as to make a Greek adventurer, Constantine Phaulkon, his de facto prime minister. This was all too much for Siamese officials and nationalists.

In what became known as the Siamese Revolution of 1688, forces loyal to the Mandarin Phetracha overthrew Narai's government. Phetracha ascended to the throne and immediately expelled the French from Siam, while severely limiting the activities of the Dutch and other foreigners. This ensured that following the publication of the present map very little new European mapping was executed in Siam during the 18th-century.

Ayuttaya was sacked by the Burmese in 1767, which led to the fall of the Ayutthaya kingdom, after which point Bangkok grew in importance. Today many fine ruins can still be visited in Ayutthaya.

The present map was issued by Vincenzo Maria Coronelli (1650-1715), a Venetian master who had been invited to Paris by Louis XIV to undertake cartographic projects, including the construction of the colossal 'Marly Globes'. Coronelli was given access to the Jesuit manuscripts of Ayutthaya, which they fashioned into the present map. This map is one of several groundbreaking Coronelli maps of many parts of the World, done during a time when France assumed a leading role in the exploration of America and Asia.

The Coronelli plan of Ayutthaya is one of the most important early maps relating to Thailand and Asian urban history, and is a cornerstone of any serious collection.

Detailed Condition: