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L'Inde deca et dela le Gange, ou est L'Empire du Grand Mogol Et Pays Circonvoisins Tiree de Purchas . . . 1654

Stock#: 50418
Map Maker: Sanson
Date: 1654
Place: Paris
Color: Outline Color
Condition: VG+
Size: 21 x 13.5 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Fine Map of South Asia and the Mughal Empire by Renowned Mapmaker Sanson

Detailed map showing a large swath of South Asia by the skilled mapmaker Nicolas Sanson.

The map is centered on the portion of Asia north of the Indian subcontinent. It stretches from Persia in the west to China in the east, with Bengal and India to the south and the northern portion of Mainland Southeast Asia to the southeast.

Political entities are separated with dotted lines. As the title indicates, the map shows the great empires of South Asia, most prominently the Mughal, or Mogul as Sanson and his contemporaries wrote it, Empire. The empire as it is shown here was on the rise and expanding. Other empires, kingdoms, and polities include Aracan, Tonkin, China, and Persia, as well as many smaller entities that ruled on their own or as part of one of the empires.

Mountain chains feature prominently, as do rivers. The most important river is discussed in the title: the Ganges. Sanson shows it as flowing into a delta in Bengal from the north, originating in the mountains near Tibet. A Himalayan source of the Ganges is indeed correct. To the east is a large lake that gives rise to several rivers; this is the mythical *Lac de Chiamay*.

The map is reserved in style with few embellishments. The cartouche, in the upper right corner, has the title projected onto a tapestry. It trumpets the many sources used to make the map, including Samuel Purchas' travel collection of 1625.



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Lake Chiamay

Lake Chiamay first appeared on a map in 1554 when it was included on the *terza tavola* in the second edition of volume one of Ramusio's *Delle navigationi et viaggi*. Drawn by Giacomo Gastaldi, this map of South and Southeast Asia shows a massive lake from which four rivers flow; these are commonly interpreted as the Chao Phraya, Salween, Irrawaddy, and a branch of the Brahmaputra, but also sometimes include other rivers.

Reports of the lake came from two Portuguese sources: a geographer, João de Barros, and an explorer, Fernão Mendes Pinto. Pinto wrote letters describing a great lake. Barros likely saw these letters. He, in turn, compiled a history of Asia, *Décadas da Ásia*, that mentioned the lake; Ramusio included Barros' work in his own compilation of travel and exploration.

Barros describes a lake that begat six rivers, but the map in Ramusio's work shows only four. However, Gastaldi's 1561 map, *Tertia Pars Asiae*, shows six rivers leaving and two entering the lake. After appearing in such an authoritative work, the lake was taken up by other mapmakers. Many used the Ramusio/Gastaldi model. Others innovated on the theme of this geographic chimera, as no such lake exists in the area.

Luis Jorge de Barbuda's 1584 map shows the lake farther to the north and with a different river pattern. His model was taken up by Hondius in *India Orientales* (1606) and thereafter by many others. The Jesuit Martino Martini gathered information from his travels in eastern and northern China to compile *Imperii Sinarum Nova Descriptio* (1655). Martini included the lake, but added the Red River and had the Chao Phraya originate from a different lake. Around 1570, other maps appeared that gave Lake Chiamay only two outlets.

As more Jesuit knowledge of Southeast Asia filtered back to Europe, mapmakers such as Guillaume Delisle began to question the veracity of the lake. It last was added to a map by Vaugondy in 1751; it was reprinted in map reissues, however, until at least 1783. By the early-nineteenth century, the feature was understood to be nothing more than a cartographic myth. By the early-twentieth century, expeditions had definitively proven that no such lake existed.

The Mughal Empire, Arakan, and Tonkin

While China and Persia may be familiar to today's reader, other powers shown on this map are less well known. The Mughal Empire began when Babur (r. 1526-1530), originally from Central Asia, established himself in Kabul, Afghanistan and marched south into India via the Khyber Pass. His descendants



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consolidated power and fought off rivals. Particularly under the rule of Akbar (r. 1556-1605), the Mughal Empire developed an imperial structure characterized by tolerance of religious differences and a competent administrative elite.

Later in the seventeenth century, the Mughal Empire developed not only as a center of arts and culture—the Taj Mahal was built during this time—but as a political and economic power house. By 1707, under the controversial ruler Aurangzeb (r. 1658-1707), the Mughal Empire reached its largest extent, encompassing much of the Indian subcontinent. A decade later, however, the empire entered into decline. Many of the areas that had been added by Aurangzeb were in open revolt and the dynastic line was in chaos. In 1719, four separate emperors ruled. The Mughal Empire began to lose land and influence, particularly in the face of Maratha opposition and the arrival of the British East India Company.

The kingdom of Arakan, or Aracan as Sanson has written it, was an Indianized kingdom nestled between the Indian subcontinent, the Bay of Bengal, and what was historically known as Burma. At a significant crossroads in trade routes to India, China, and Southeast Asia, Arakan was diverse religiously and ethnically. Islam came to the region in the eighth century. The Rakhine people migrated to the area around the ninth century; today, the area is Rakhine State in Myanmar. The area was also a site of conflict, with the Burmese and Bengal Sultanate just some of those who sought to control the strategic and economically-important region. Arakan was able to survive and had a formidable navy by the seventeenth century.

However, the Dutch and the Portuguese were also drawn to the trade center. The Dutch arrived in 1623; thirty years later, they completed a treaty that gave the Dutch East India Company duty-free trade rights. However, in 1665 the Mughals smashed the Arakan fleet, forcing the area into decline.

Tonkin (also Tongkin, Tonquin, Tongking) refers to the northern part of what is today Vietnam. It means “eastern capital,” in reference to Hanoi. In the first millennium CE, the area for a time was under the control of China. After 938, however, it was independent and ruled by the Ngô, Đinh, Early Lê, Lý, Trần, and Hồ dynasties. Disputes with China continued, with Lê Lợi as a notable leader who fought the Ming dynasty and established himself in Hanoi in the mid-fifteenth century. By the seventeenth century, Westerners were frequent visitors to the area. They traded with the Trinh lords who were then in power. The French took the area as a protectorate from 1884 to 1945.

Detailed Condition:

Old outline hand-color.