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[Guangzhou / Canton] Map of the City and Entire Suburbs of Canton. Made By Rev. D. Vrooman. 1855.

Stock#: 62631
Map Maker: Vrooman

Date: 1855
Place: Canton
Color: Pen & Ink with Wash Color
Condition: Good
Size: 53.7 x 28.5 inches

Price: $ 39,500.00

Description:

The Earliest Known Example of Rev. Daniel Vrooman's Monumental Manuscript Map of Canton, China.

Vrooman's exceedingly rare manuscript plan offers a little-seen view of Canton on the eve of the Second Opium War. Constructed by Vrooman using Chinese converts as spies to pace off and describe sections of Canton which were closed to foreigners, Vrooman's map is among the earliest surviving large western maps of Canton and contains intricate details of life and trade in the port city.

Hand drawn with individual block print letters, the map is extremely rare and substantially different than the later Vrooman maps issued after the seizure of Canton during the Second Opium War. Until recently, the 1855 plan was known in only one institutional example (British Library), but comparison with that example at the British Library reveals that this example pre-dates that model. Similarly, this example appears to also pre-date the example recently acquired by the Library of Congress. This, then, is the earliest known, and a previously unrecorded, example of the map. It shows the important port of Canton before it was attacked and damaged in the Second Opium War (1856-1860).

This earliest example, dated 1855, shows Canton with English labels. It is a large plan on a large scale, showing the city’s streets, the walls of the Old City, and the developed areas near the riverside. Other details on the map include ponds and the many rice paddies surrounding the city.

While the other surviving examples show the hills to the north in profile, with forts and pagodas perched on their summits, the present example provides a simpler more utilitarian presentation of this information. Notes on various structures and areas tell of their purpose, including pack houses, coal depots, flower gardens, lumber yards, and houseboats. Burial places are also marked, as is a house for a blind man, a

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home for elderly women, and a leper colony. Notably, many of these words are misspelled, strongly suggesting that the map was copied by a non-English speaker from Vrooman's original map. All the known examples include some misspellings, but this seems to have significantly more than the others.

The title is in the upper left, a simple arching notice with the title, the name of the maker (Rev. Daniel Vrooman), and the date of creation.

While all other surviving examples of this map include a note that the map was "*For Sale By Lee Mun Une Painter, Canton City South Street,*" this example lacks this inscription.

Many of the city's prominent buildings are also shown with careful detail. These include the compounds of officers and officials, temples, gates, and parade grounds. Several pagodas are also labeled. One of these, in the northwest of the Old City, is likely the Temple of the Six Banyan Trees. The Temple, first built in 537 AD, was rebuilt with an octagonal base in 1097 AD. Intricate drawings such as this pagoda allow readers to identify individual buildings and mark this map as an important document for historical research.

The most telling detail is the cluster of islands in the lower-left corner. On this example, these islands are labeled as, "Boats Rafts and Houses on Files (Piles)." Three forts are also housed there, protecting the approach to the city's docks from the west. ***On the only other known 1855 example, held at the British Library, this area has been consolidated into the wedge-shaped island of Shamin. Shamin was only created in 1859, indicating that the British Library example (Maps S.T.C.38.) is a second state, making this the earliest known state of the map.***

This map makes Canton's importance as a port evident. The factories, the only spaces in which Westerners were allowed, are shown—these would be destroyed soon after this map was drawn. They are near the Public Garden and labeled as "American" and "English." British, American, and French flags are planted nearby. The Dutch are stationed at the folly fort a little way to the east, in the river. This status as a port open to Western trade was an important part of Guangzhou's history, particularly around the time this map was made.

Canton and China's trade with the West

This map was finished just before a period of tremendous change for the city of Canton. The city has always been an important port city and administrative center. Ibn Battuta, the Moroccan intellectual, visited in the fourteenth century and wrote of the large shipyards at work there. Foreign visitors were banned, however, and trade restricted to formal delegations, in the late fourteenth century.

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The Portuguese made their way to the city in the early sixteenth century. After a half-century of tension and conflict, they were eventually allowed to trade, although they warehoused their goods at Macau instead of Canton. From the late seventeenth century, the Qing Dynasty loosened its restrictions on foreign trade somewhat, allowing a few ships each year from several Western Empires. However, Westerners were still not allowed within the Old City walls and were restricted to factories near the waterline.

From 1757, the Chinese employed what became known as the Canton System, which made Canton the sole port of entry for Western goods into China. A cohort of Chinese merchants, the *Cohong*, mediated between the Chinese government and Western traders, and they operated out of the Thirteen Factories area noted on this map. The factories were destroyed by fire in 1822 and rebuilt.

Though the Western empires tolerated the Canton System, they did not like it and wanted more open access to Chinese goods, especially tea, and markets. By the late-eighteenth century, the British had accumulated a massive trade deficit as China had no interest in Western goods; they only accepted silver as payment. The East India Company began to bring opium from its Indian plantations to China instead of silver, causing a massive increase in the number of Chinese addicted to the substance.

Although the Chinese banned the import of opium, the trade continued. When China attempted to halt the trade in 1839, the British responded with force. During this conflict, the First Opium War, the British captured the Thirteen Factories in March 1841. In May, the Chinese mounted a counter-offensive, retaking the British Factory. Stray fireboats meant to light the Royal Navy fleet afire instead set flame to the waterfront, which has been rebuilt as seen in this map. The British successfully countered and took control of the city on May 30, 1841.

The war ended with the Treaty of Nanking (1842), which forced the Chinese to allow British, and eventually other, traders to live in several Chinese ports unmolested. It also granted them the liberty to trade with whomever they chose. Additionally, Britain was granted a colony at Hong Kong.

Unsurprisingly, the Chinese government was dissatisfied with the Treaty of Nanking. The British too were not entirely satisfied, as they still did not have the ideal open trade conditions they desired. In 1856, only a year after this map was finished, the powers went to war again.

The Second Opium War actually began in Canton, where Chinese marines seized a British-registered ship, the *Arrow*, in October 1856. The British bombarded Canton in late 1856, causing many fires, and they took the city in late 1857, with the support of the French. Eventually, Anglo-French forces advanced and burned the Summer Palaces near Beijing. The Convention of Beijing, in October 1860, saw China grant

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diplomatic presence in Beijing to the Russian, French, and British; the payment of an indemnity, and the cession of Kowloon to Britain. The opium trade was also declared legal and Christianity recognized.

In Canton, the Thirteen Factories were destroyed for a final time. The 1860 state of this map reveals this changed circumstance, as well as shows the land reclamation that made possible the island of Shamin. This state can be seen here.

Daniel Vrooman and his mapping practice

Daniel Vrooman was an American missionary who was assigned to Canton in 1852, at a time when Westerners were still not allowed inside the walls of Canton's Old City. If Vrooman, as an American, was not allowed within the walls of the Old City, how did he produce such a detailed plan? Vrooman used local informants to give him details of architecture and the city's layout. He also trained a local man to pace out the distance between principal sites, with the city gates as anchor points. Vrooman then compared these measurements to his own, which were based on the angles provided by landmarks in the suburbs of the Old City. Later, when the city was finally opened to Westerners, the map was found to be remarkably accurate.

Several later maps based upon Vrooman's work, issued after the Second Opium War, are known to survive, including the aforementioned British Library example; an 1857 lithographical version of the map, known in a single example in the collection of the American Antiquarian Society; and an 1860 Vrooman map, which is substantially similar to the 1857 map, which was likely printed in Canton.

Rarity

Vrooman's manuscript maps are exceptionally rare, with all other traced examples (two at the British Library, and one at the Library of Congress) having been created after the Allied landings in Canton during the Opium War. The present example, however, dates from before the landings, which are not marked, and makes this the only known pre-Second Opium War example of the map.

The catalog of the *Bibliotheque Communale De Marsaille* listed a copy of the 1855 map in its 1866 catalog, but efforts to confirm its survival were unsuccessful. We are also aware of an example of the 1855 map which was offered for sale in recent years. It appears to have been unfinished, lacking all the hand-painted mountains, most of the building and fort illustrations, most of the place names and was almost entirely in black and white. Other differences and omissions confirm the conclusion that the maps were entirely drawn by hand (with the exception of individual block printed letters) and that the present example is far more embellished, complete and ornate in its decorations.

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A separate printed version of Vrooman's map was published by B.F. Butler in San Francisco in 1857. This is known in a **single example** at the American Antiquarian Society.

The 1860 map last appeared on the market at Sotheby's in 1989. This would appear to be the same map as listed in the Catalogue of the *Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs Collection at the United States International Exhibition, Philadelphia, 1876,* which was described at page 46 as "*Map of the City and entire Suburbs of Canton (Chinese and Roman).—Vrooman. Xylog. Canton, 1860*."

This exceedingly rare plan was previously unknown and offers a little-seen view of Canton prior to the Second Opium War. It is one of the earliest maps of Canton in the Western style and contains intricate details of life and trade in the port city. The map is of significant historical importance and would be an important and substantial contribution to any collection of Guangzhou, China, colonial, or missionary maps.

Detailed Condition:
Hand-drawn on thin paper and laid on a larger sheet of paper. Restorations, with minor areas of loss at old folds. Float mounted on a linen mat in an attractive modern black-painted wood frame with rounded edges.