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Carte Des Indes et de la Chine Dressee sur plusieurs Relations particulieres Rectifiees par quelques Observations Par Guillaume De L'Isle de l'Academie Royale des Sciences . . . 1705

Stock#: 64312op
Map Maker: De L'Isle
Date: 1705
Place: Paris
Color: Outline Color
Condition: VG
Size: 14.5 x 26 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

De L'Isle's Detailed Map of Eastern Asia

Updated example this noteworthy map of East Asia and the Indian subcontinent published by France's foremost eighteenth-century cartographer, Guillaume De L'Isle.

The map was foundational; it was studied and adopted by other mapmakers for a half-century after its publication.

The map covers much of Asia, from China and Japan, south to New Guinea and the Moluccas, west through Malaysia and Indonesia to what is today Vietnam and Thailand, and India. Dotted lines mark political boundaries. There is a simple title cartouche in the top center, with a quadruple scale bar in the upper right corner.

The map is thickly detailed with settlements, geographic features, and ethnographic notes. For example, on the island of Borneo, the third largest island in the world, a note reads, "*Pays de Mahometans,*" or country of Muslims. Islam arrived on the island in the tenth century via Muslim traders; it quickly spread around the island, especially under the sultanates of Brunei and Sulu.



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While most of the outlines of the continent appear familiar to the modern eye, the landmass north of Japan is curious. Here, it is called "*Terre de Yeco ou d'Eso*." Yeco is a reference to Jesso, a feature included on many seventeenth and eighteenth-century maps. Historically, Eso (Jesso, Yedso, Yesso) refers to the island of Hokkaido. It varies on maps from a small island to a near-continent sized mass that stretches from Asia to Alaska. Ever cautious, De L'Isle has left the southernmost tip of the land open, as is the northernmost tip of Japan, as contemporary geographers thought they might be connected.

The thoroughness of the information included here, and its density, is characteristic of De L'Isle style. However, the information available to De L'Isle in the early eighteenth-century was very different from the geographic information we have now.

Arakan

Many of the political units shown on this map, like Japan and China, are still active and similarly named today. Others, like Arakan, Siam and the Mughal Empire, are less recognizable. The kingdom of Arakan, or Aracan as De L'Isle 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.

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. This is why De L'Isle has written that Arakan is a "*Loge de Hollandois*", or trading house/lodge of the Dutch. However, in 1665 the Mughals smashed the Arakan fleet, forcing the area into decline.

Siam

What is modern Thailand is labeled as Siam. Siam comes from the Sanskrit word "*syam*," which the Portuguese adopted as a name for the region.

The extent of their territory varied over time, as shown here with Siam and Haut-Siam. During the



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eighteenth-century, the polity was on the rise and expanding. By the 1780s, the Chakri dynasty ruled all of Siam from Bangkok, their capital, in addition to parts of the Malay peninsula, Laos, and Cambodia.

However, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries Siam lost land to the French, who colonized much of Cochinchina. In 1932, the monarchy was toppled in a coup; it survived, but no longer ran the country. The new leader, Phibun, changed the country's name to Thailand in 1938.

The Mughal Empire

Another political entity that is unfamiliar to the modern eye is the Mughal Empire, in the north of the Indian subcontinent. By two years after this map was published, the Mughals controlled not only the area shown here, but much of the southern peninsula as well.

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 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 after this map was published, the empire was entering 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.

This map is a useful reference to Asia's past and was skillfully executed by France's foremost geographer. It is an important work, which would be copied by other mapmakers for more than fifty years.

Detailed Condition: