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Goa

Stock#: 70915
Map Maker: Merian
Date: 1650
Place: Nuremberg
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG+
Size: 14 x 10.5 inches
Price: \$ 450.00



Description:

A detailed birdseye view plan of Goa, showing the various streets and buildings of the city, the city's riverine harbor, and the fields surrounding the city. Several decorative features are added. The view includes a key naming forty-three points of interest, indexed in German. This view comes from Merian's *Archontologia Cosmica*.

The mapping of Goa as a single city is of particular interest. Goa now refers to a state in western coastal India which was a Portuguese colony until 1961, and the name Goa was conferred to several different cities historically. In modern times, the term Old Goa has been bestowed on several different areas, though historical use of this term within the state is limited. No modern Goan city has the same layout as that which is shown in this map, though clues can help identify what this view likely was meant to show.

Insula Dyvar is almost certainly Divar Island, which lies several miles upriver along the Mandovi of the modern-day capital of Goa, Panaji. An adjacent peninsula that lies upriver is named Narve, though its low topography and marshes could lead to it being confused for an island. Charao [likely Ins. Chora on the map] is another place name in the immediate area of the Mandovi. A modern view from across these islands would leave one looking at the area now known as Old Goa, "Velha Goa," which at present comprises several churches and other historic buildings scattered around an area mostly dominated by fields and forests.

Several landmarks in this map are recognizable, for example, there is a Church of St. Francis near the water, and a shrine sits on the hills to the east, though it is now dedicated to Our Lady of the Mount, not St. Bras as shown in the index. This area used to be one of the central trading hubs of Portuguese Goa,



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encompassing a population of up to 200,000, until it was abandoned in the 18th century due to a plague. The palace of the Viceroy of Goa (place 11 on the map, along the river) was moved in 1759 to Panaji, a city then known as "Nova Goa." Works such as this birdseye view, alongside a few surviving scattered buildings and archeological sites, are all that remain of this once great city.

The view extends to a river in the background, likely the Zuari which outflows near Vasco de Gama. A modern view such as this would pass through an area now confusingly known as Goa Velha, "Goa the Old." This was another old capital of Portuguese Goa, predating Velha Goa, of which even less is known. It is possible this second town was incorporated into this view.

The image includes a compass rose, an index of forty-three points of interest, the name of the city, and a coat of arms. The coat shows St. Catherine's wheel, with the saint herself portrayed above holding a sword and a book. This was the coat of arms of Goa from at least 1596 and perhaps even earlier, with some evidence suggesting that it was created during the brief sixty-year interval of Spanish rule in Goa.

Merian's map is drawn heavily on Linschoten's very rare 1596 view, based on his travels to the city during his time as a merchant. Artistic details have been changed, reflecting varying tastes in cartography over the course of the half-century between these maps.

Detailed Condition: