



View of Calicut from Varthema's Travels

VARTHEMA, Ludovico di.
Calicut.

Leipzig: Heironymus Megister, 1610. 75 x 115mm.

£300

Map of Calicut in Southern India, engraved by Heinrich Gross jnr. for a German edition of the travels of Ludovico di Varthema (or Barthema, c. 1470-1517), the first non-Muslim European to enter Mecca as a pilgrim. Born in Bologna, he travelled to Egypt and Syria in 1503, where he learned enough to enlist as a Mamluk in Damascus. Under this cover he made the pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina as one of the Mamluk escort of the Hajj caravan the same year. His account has satisfied later scholars, including Richard Burton, as authentic. From Arabia he travelled to India, Sri Lanka, Sumatra, Borneo & the Moluccas. In 1506, wishing to return home, he joined the Portuguese garrison at Kannur in India, with whom he stayed until he could join a ship returning to Europe in late 1507. His account then describes the east coast of Africa, the Cape of Good Hope, St Helena, Ascension and the Azores before landing at Lisbon. He returned to Italy, publishing this account for the first time in 1510.

Not in Tibbetts.

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