



The Rare First Edition of James Rennell's 'Bengal Atlas'

RENNELL, James.

A Bengal Atlas: Containing Maps of the Theatre of War and Commerce on that side of Hindoostan. Compiled from the Original Surveys; and published by Order of the Honorable The Court of Directors for the Affairs of the East India Company, By James Rennell, Late Major of Engineers, and Surveyor General in Bengal.

London: James Rennell, 1780. Folio, full calf gilt, with red morocco title label; pp. 8; engr. index map (with title & key), map on eight folding sheets with outline colour; and five further maps, all dated 1779.

£15,000

An important series of maps of Bengal, surveyed by James Rennell (1742-1830) for the East India Company under the patronage of Robert Clive & Warren Hastings. He began the first survey of Bengal in 1764, with a particular focus on the rivers, so important to trade in the absence of a regular road system, especially in the approaches to Calcutta. After over a decade of work he was forced to retire, having been seriously wounded in 1766, and retired to England, where he started work on his 'atlas'. The quality of his work was such that when it was first published in 1780 (not 1779 as is often quoted because of the date on the maps) it earned him a fellowship of the Royal Society (1781) and the sobriquet 'the father of Indian cartography'.

SHIRLEY: Maps in the Atlases of the British Library T.Renn-1a.



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