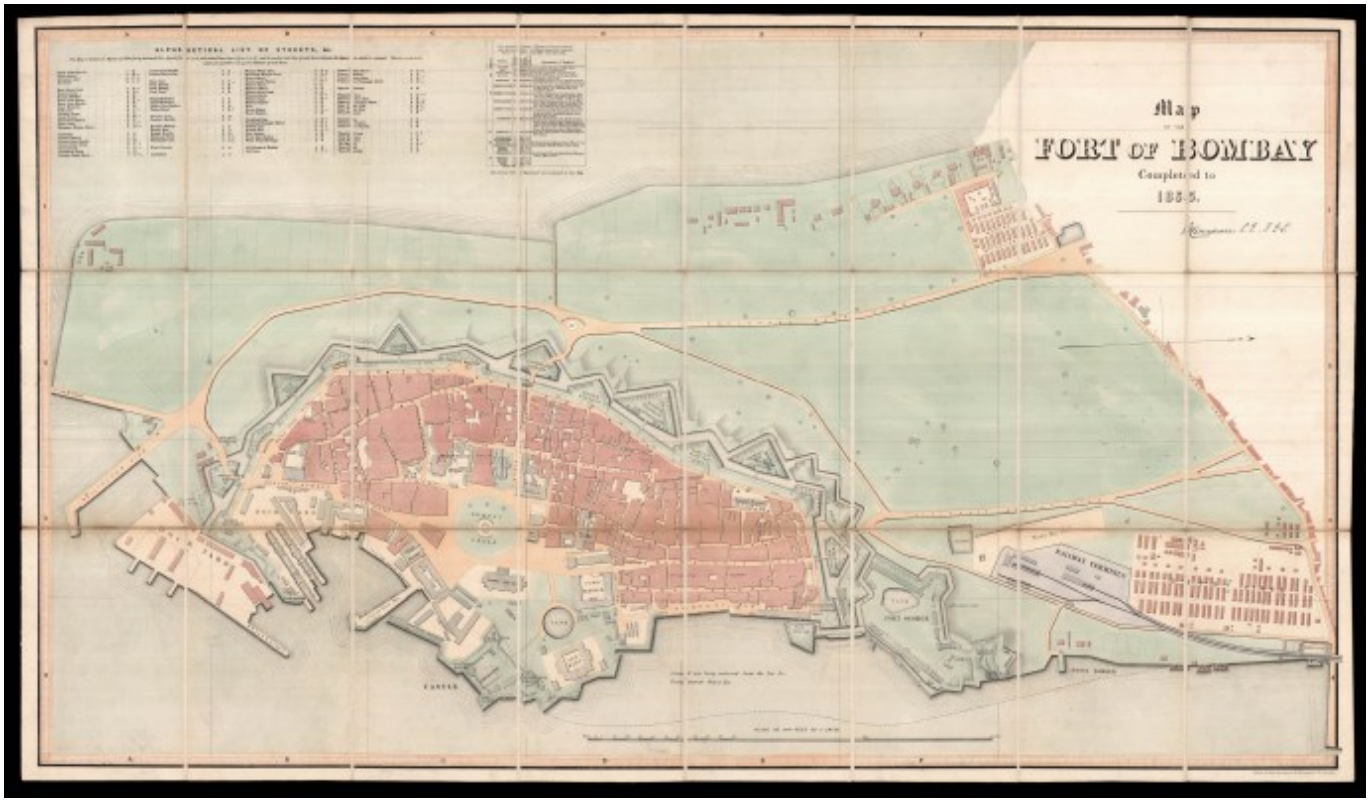


Engraved map with original hand-colour, dissected into 24 sections and laid on linen, in original cloth slipcase with gilt lettering.

MUMBAI AT THE BIRTH OF THE BRITISH RAJ

Map of the Fort of Bombay. Completed to 1855.

Author
CONYBEARE, Henry

Publication date
[1855].

Publisher
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Publication place
London,

Physical description
Engraved map with original hand-colour, dissected into 24 sections and laid on linen, in original cloth slipcase with gilt lettering.

Dimensions
750 by 1270mm. (29.5 by 50 inches).

Notes
After the English East India Company moved its headquarters from Surat to Bombay in 1687, the city underwent major and rapid development. The first priority for the British was to defend their territory, and so a fortified wall was constructed, spanning 50 metres and equipped with 20 cannons.

Between 1715 and 1722, the fort was greatly expanded, and the area within it thenceforth constituted the main city, surrounded by numerous but much less significant villages. In 1769, an extension named Fort George in honour of King George III, was added to the wall, with twelve bastions mounted with guns.

By the mid-eighteenth century, Bombay had flourished into a major trading hub, and the British consequently launched large-scale engineering projects to merge its seven islands into one navigable city, using land reclamation to form a single landmass. The project took many decades, but by the mid-nineteenth century it was complete, and in 1853, India's first passenger railway line was established, linking Bombay to the neighbouring town of Thana. The increased migration this brought to the city meant a necessary expansion of the urban layout, and the fort walls were demolished during the 1860s, although parts of the fortifications remain.

The present plan shows the Fort area of Bombay in 1855, with street names, principal buildings, railways, and dockyard installations all in evidence. At the centre of the city, administrative buildings ("Town Hall", "Secretariat", "Military Offices") stand alongside parks and green spaces ("Bombay Green"). Various bastions and bulwarks of the Fort are labelled by name. The railway terminus active from 1853 is shown on the right-hand side of the plan, next to the "Sepoy Lines", the barracks of the native Indian soldiers.

Extremely rare. We have been able to trace only one copy, held at the Universities of Oxford Libraries. Only around 250 copies were printed, to be supplied to Government departments and sold to the public.

Bibliography

Provenance

Price:

Inventory reference: 18618

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