



**Barry Lawrence Ruderman
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**To Her Most Sacred Majesty Caroline, Queen of Great Britain, France, and Ireland this
Mapp of Africa, after the latest Observations, Is most Humbly Dedicated . . .**

Stock#: 36783
Map Maker: Overton
Date: 1730 circa
Place: London
Color: Outline Color
Condition: VG
Size: 39 x 22.5 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Rare separately issued broadside map of Africa, celebrating the activities of the Royal Africa Company, with two panels of pictorial scenes, published in London by Henry Overton.

This highly decorative map of Africa was made during the height of the activities of the Royal Africa Company (RAA). The map was specifically intended to document the activities of the RAA on the African continent. Founded in 1660 as a private stock company, the RAA was granted a Royal Charter by Charles II, which gave the Company a monopoly on all English (and later British) trade with Africa. Most importantly, this included control of the brutal but lucrative Trans-Atlantic slave trade.

As labelled on the map (and depicted along its borders), the Company built a series of forts along the coast of West Africa. At these forts, company officials gathered captured slaves, before loading them onto boats for the 'Rough Crossing' to America or the West Indies. Additionally, the RAA gained large revenues from valuable tropical woods and dyes, ivory and gold. Indeed, gold from West Africa was used in London to mint "the Guinea", which is named after this region in Africa, and was the most important gold coin in Britain from 1663 to 1814. The RAA retained its monopoly on African trade until 1753, when the market was opened up to a variety of players.

While much of the interior of Africa is conjectural (and embellished with innumerable exotic animals), the coverage of the coasts of West Africa is exceedingly detailed, while the overall outline of the continent is quite modern, largely based on Portuguese sources. The map is framed by a 13 finely-engraved views of RAA forts and scenes of indigeous customs. Side panel vignettes include (1) the Pyramids and Sphinx in Egypt; (2) searching for mummies; (3) executing traitors in Barbary; (4) finding gold at the River Atzine in Negroland; (5) the custom of pouring earth on the new king in Negroland; (6) the manner of informing the subjects of Nether Ethiopia that the King is going to eat or drink (it being death to look upon him at that



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time); (7) images of Hottentots; (8) The Southwest Prospect of Williams Fort at Whydah; (9) A Prospect from Seat of James Fort at Accra (Ghana); (10) Southwest Prospect of James Island on the River Gambia; (11) Northwest Prospect of Bense Island on the River Sierra Leone; (12) South Prospect of the English Fort at Commenda; (13) Northwest Prospect of Cape Coast Castle. The vignettes towards the bottom of the main map include scenes of a man on horseback hunting a large bird (supposedly an Osterich), and a party of Africans, with one holding an elephant tusk.

The map was produced by Henry Overton (fl. 1707-1750), one of the leading British cartographers of the first half of the 18th-century. The dating of the map corresponds to the reign of Queen Caroline (the dedicatee of the map), George II's queen consort from 1727 until her death in 1737.

The map is of the utmost rarity. The only other known example of this state of the map is in the Stanford University collection, formerly the property of Oscar Norwich. OCLC locates 2 variant examples, one at the John Carter Brown Library (first state, with dedication to Queen Anne) and one at Cambridge University, without the decorative side panels.

Detailed Condition:

2-sheet map, joined. Minor marginal tears, a few entering the printed image.