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Arabia und das Nil-Land den manen Karsten Niebuhr's und den hochverienten forschern L.G. Ehrenberg u. E Ruppell . . . 1835

Stock#: 45750
Map Maker: Perthes
Date: 1835
Place: Gotha
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG
Size: 23.5 x 33.5 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Rare Printed Map Showing One of the Earliest Appearances of the Names Kuwait, Dubai and Abu Dhabi

Striking, rare map of the Arabian Peninsula and the east coast of Africa with the River Nile. This is one of the earliest printed maps to use a modern name for Kuwait (El Koueit Grahe), Dubai (Debai) and Abu Dhabi (Abuthhubi).

The map extends west to east from the "Lybian Desert" to "Ras-el-Had". From north to south it stretches from the Nile Delta to "Lake Tanzania". Several inset plans are included, such as Jeddah, Mecca and Medina. There is also a *trompe-l'oeil* of the caravan route from Jeddah to Mecca and on to Taife. The map names Bahrain and Riyadh. Qatar is shown as Bahran.

There are several red pencil highlights at various places on the map, including Bahrain, Basra, Kuwait, and on the Sinai Peninsula. Those marks in the Persian Gulf indicate key points: Basra (most emphatic with an X), then Kuwait, Bushehr, and Bahrain (each with a +).

The Sinai marks are more idiosyncratic and most likely follow the travels of German explorer and naturalist Eduard Rüppell, who visited the Sinai Peninsula twice. However, they could also refer to areas of trade or political interest, or, if they were made later in the nineteenth century, to the explorations of the American officers invited to Egypt by Khedive Ismail.

Of these Sinai marks, al-Arish is the most emphatically made (with an X). Also marked is Nakhl, the most important station on the Suez-Aqaba road (but without an X), then Thamud, a district not on the same road as Nakhl (X). Finally, marked is a nameless area east of Lake Timsah (with an intriguing X).



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Sources for the map: European exploration of the Arabian Peninsula

The map is based on the work of Carsten Niebuhr, a German mathematician and cartographer who participated in the Royal Danish Arabia Expedition (1761-7). As part of that expedition, he visited Cairo, Sinai, sailed the Red Sea, then went to Jeddah and Sana, Yemen. Niebuhr had trouble adapting to the climate, but his woes were nothing compared to his fellows, who died en route. By the time the voyage made it to Bombay, Niebuhr was the only surviving member.

He returned via Muscat, Bushire, Shiraz, and Persepolis, where he made copies of cuneiform inscriptions that helped to decipher the ancient script. He finished the trip with visits to Cyprus, Palestine, and Constantinople before returning to Copenhagen. Thanks to his careful observations, Niebuhr produced a series of small-scale maps of the areas he visited, as well nearly 30 town plans which constituted the most extensive cartographic coverage of the area by a European to date.

Additional information for the map came from the explorations of L.G. Ehrenberg and Eduard Rüppell, two zoologists who extensively explored the Red Sea and Ethiopian region. L.G. Ehrenberg refers to Christian Gottfried Ehrenberg, a German explorer and one of the most famous scientists of his time. After his early work on fungi, Ehrenberg paired with Wilhelm Hemprich to journey across the Middle East collecting animal and plant specimens. From 1820-25 they were in Egypt, the Libyan Desert, Sudan, the Nile River Valley, the north coasts of the Red Sea, Syria, and parts of what was then Arabia and Abyssinia. During his later career, he pioneered the study of microscopic organisms.

Eduard Rüppell was a third German man of science who journeyed to the Middle East. After a visit to Sinai in 1817, Rüppell abandoned the family business of banking to pursue natural history. In 1821, he returned to Sinai to collect specimens; he and his surgeon assistant, Michael Hey, were the first Europeans to reach the Gulf of Aqaba. They later traveled up the Nile to Nubia and then Cairo and then into parts of Ethiopia. Rüppell returned to Africa again in 1830, when he became the first naturalist to cross the entirety of Ethiopia. Like Ehrenberg, many species are today named after Rüppell which were gathered on these travels. Their travels also clearly influenced cartography, as this item shows.

Political control of the Arabian Peninsula and eastern Africa in the early-nineteenth century

The first Saudi state was established in 1744 and lasted until 1818, when it was taken over by the Ottoman Viceroy of Egypt, Muhammed Ali Pasha. The Al Saud family continued to control the central Najd region of the peninsula from 1824. This area is outlined in green on the map and is located in the interior of the peninsula. From 1818 to 1845, when this map was made, the Arabian Peninsula was administered by Egypt as part of the Ottoman Empire.



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In 1820, Muhammad Ali Pasha ordered the conquest of eastern Libya. Ali wished to extend his power southward, into Sudan, and to control the caravan route to the Red Sea and the gold mines in Sennar. Muhammed Ali's son, Ismail, led a force of roughly 4500 men from Cairo in July of 1820. Nubia was not able to mount an effective defense, Shagia Arabs beyond the province of Dongola were defeated, and Sennar was destroyed.

Although nominally part of the Ottoman Empire since 1554, between 1821 and 1841, Muhammad Ali came to control Yemen and the horn of Africa. After the Egyptians withdrew from the Yemeni coast in 1841, Haj Ali Shermerki, a Somali merchant, purchased executive rights over Zeila from the Egyptians. However, as this map was made in 1835, it still shows the Horn of Africa and Yemen under the control of Egypt.

The map provides an important, early, and authoritative delineation of the coasts of the Arabian Gulf which offers some of the earliest printed portrayals of Kuwait, Dubai, and Abu Dhabi. It includes more than twenty toponyms along the coast of Qatar (in this map labeled "Bahran"). The map shows the Hawar Islands off the west coast of Qatar, Doha Harbor, as well as a large reef off the eastern coast. Finally, the inclusion of the red markings show that this map was important reference material to a previous owner and it would make an important addition to any collection of the Middle East or the Arabian Peninsula.

Detailed Condition:

Dissected and laid on linen. Minor staining and soiling.