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[Iraq- Iran Border Survey] Map of the Ottoman-Iranian border [Compiled] by the Special Border Commission. 1325 R.

Stock#: 54908
Map Maker: Harbiye Nezâreti
Date: 1909 circa
Place: Istanbul
Color: Outline Color
Condition: VG
Size: 63.8 x 21.5 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Important Early Ottoman Survey of the Border Between the Ottoman Empire and Iran (predominantly shows modern border area between Iraq and Iran)

A historically-significant map covering the modern Iraq-Iran border and extending north to include some of the modern border between Turkey and Iran. The map shows the boundary as surveyed by a special commission of the newly-founded Harbiye Nezâret, the Ottoman Ministry of War, at the beginning of the Second Constitutional Era of the Ottoman Empire (1908-1922).

The map was prepared to help the Ottoman Ministry of War to visualize the land, the various treaties, and possible solutions to the boundary conflict, which had occupied the Ottoman and Persian Empires for several hundred years and had been the subject of two prior failed international boundary commissions. The map is a primary document illustrating the growing globalization and world-wide impact of politics in the early twentieth century and is one of the earliest surviving artifacts to provide a comprehensive overview of the future Iran-Iraq Border as surveyed by one of the primary stakeholders.

Map Overview

The map is oriented with east at the top. Baghdad is shown at the bottom center of the map, with Persia occupying its upper part and the Ottoman Empire the lower part. The map delineates the border from the Aras River in the north (where both the Ottoman Empire and Persia bordered Russia) to the Persian Gulf in the south. At center are the peaks and ridges of the Zagros Mountains.

The map is very detailed, marking all of the primary cities and towns, border forts, rivers, lakes and estuaries, including Lake Van, the Persian provinces of Khuzestan and Kermanshah, the cities of Tabriz,



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Marand, Meragha, and Sufyan; Lake Urumiyah, the Jarahi River, and Buneh Island (Persian Gulf). The lower right corner marks Khorasan, Hawr ad-Dalmaj district, the cities of Baakuba, Madein, and Baghdad. The Dijlah (Tigris) River and the Shatt al-Arab River run to the Persian Gulf.

The text states that the map portrays the border as determined (tanẓīm) by the Special Iranian Border Commission established in 1325; the date above the seal to the right is July 25, 1325, which corresponds to Oct. 8, 1909 of the Gregorian calendar and indicates that this map was created early on in the border-resolution process, most likely as a reference guide for diplomats.

Handwritten annotations in the legend explain the various borders depicted:

- Green - the old border as determined by the deceased Dervish Pasha
- Red - the border of the treaty (?)
- Yellow - what needs to be added to the Dervish border (i.e. that of Dervish Pasha, as above?) according to the investigations of the Ṭāhir Pasha Commission
- Purple - Claimed by Iran, but not specified in the protocol (qarārnāme)?

Territories recently occupied either by Ottoman or Iranian troops are indicated by pairs of letters. The seals in the lower right are made by military officers of the Border Commission; the seals show their names, while the caption indicates their ranks.

Historical Context

Although the map was created by the new Harbiye Nezâret, which had been established on July 23, 1908, the conflict it shows has a history that is centuries old. The boundary, and the dispute, stretch back to the first part of the sixteenth century, when the Safavids expanded their holdings, putting pressure on the Ottomans and their supporters.

The land in question stretched from the Caucasus to the Persian Gulf. Until the mid-nineteenth century, the land was variably settled, with people migrating across it and few recognizing the authority of either the Iranians or the Ottomans. The people of the area were and are diverse in origin, religion, and allegiance, which complicated matters further; they included Arabs, Lurs, Kurds, Turks, Jews, Persians, Armenians, and Nestorians.

From the mid-nineteenth century, the land was the subject of three international boundary commissions: 1843-47, 1848-65, and 1907-13. This map dates from the last of the three commissions, which arose, at least in part, in response to the Ottoman incursion into Iranian Azerbaijan. Additionally, the Ottoman



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Empire had reinstated a constitutional monarchy in 1908, which meant the issue had to be re-mediated. Internationally, the conclusion of the Russo-Japanese War in 1907 led to European powers claiming spheres of influence within Iran and the wider Middle East. The Commission ultimately resulted in the awarding of the Shatt al-Arab River to the Ottomans, leaving the Iranians only two anchorages for trade.

The Iranians were not pleased with the outcome of the agreement, but their interests also had to contend with those of Great Britain, Russia, and Germany who had oil and railway concerns in the region. Both Russian and British diplomats meddled throughout the negotiation process, trying to shape the final agreement. If the two sides had not reached an agreement, the case would have been sent to the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague, as the Ottomans and Iranians wanted the decision to concern only their two parties, not for it to be decided by international intrusion. However, by 1912, the Ottoman Empire was in a weakened state, which allowed the British to push their way to the center of the border dispute. In early 1913, Britain and the Ottoman Empire hammered out a protocol for settling the border.

This agreement, known as the Constantinople Protocol, was signed by the Ottomans and Britain and established an Ottoman-Persian Border Delimitation Protocol which both the Ottomans and Iranians agreed to in November 1913. The Protocol's technical commission worked from the 1914 to the end of World War I. They established 227 markers along the lines agreed in 1913.

This map was an early part of an ongoing process. It allowed the Ministry of War to visualize the land, the various treaties, and possible solutions to the conflict. This dispute between two Islamic powers was also watched avidly by Western powers; it is a document which portrays the globalization and world-wide impact of politics in the early twentieth century. Documents, especially with manuscript additions, so steeped in one part of history are rare and immensely instructive, making this an important addition to any collection on Middle Eastern or Ottoman cartography.

Detailed Condition:

Dissected in 24 section and laid on linen. Minor toning and some minor tears and chips at the outside part of the map and fold intersections.