



**Barry Lawrence Ruderman
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**A New History of Ethiopia. Being a Full and Accurate Description of the Kingdom of
Abessinia, Vulgarly, Though Erroneously Called the Empire of Prester John.**

Stock#: 93977
Map Maker: Ludolf
Date: 1682
Place: London
Color: Uncolored
Condition: Good
Size: 8.5 x 13.25 inches
Price: \$ 1,800.00



Description:

One of the Earliest English Language Travel Accounts of Ethiopia

By the Founder of European Ethiopian Studies

First edition in English, from the Latin edition *Historia Aethiopica* (Frankfurt, 1681), of the German orientalist Hiob Ludolf's (1624-1704) Ethiopian travels. Ludolf learned the Ethiopian language of Amhara from his friend, the monk Abba Gorgoryos.

Ludolf, known as the father of modern Ethiopian studies, played a significant role in the study of Abyssinian history. His contributions established Ethiopian studies in Europe. Ludolf was born in Erfurt and pursued studies in medicine, law, Oriental languages, and literature. He completed his law degree in 1645 and furthered his philological studies at the University of Leiden.

During his European travels Ludolf encountered four monks in Rome. One of them, Abba Gorgoryos, became his teacher and main source of information about Ethiopia. After returning to Erfurt in 1651, Ludolf entered the service of Ernst I, Duke of Saxe-Gotha-Altenburg. Combining his scholarly pursuits with diplomatic and political roles, Ludolf expanded his knowledge of Ethiopian and European languages and cultures.

Ethiopia had long fascinated Europeans as an exotic land with unique wildlife. It also held historical significance as an ancient Christian empire, isolated from Western Europe due to the spread of Islam across northern Africa and the Middle East.



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During the Middle Ages, the concept of Prester John, a powerful Christian prince who could potentially aid Europe against the Muslim world, captivated Europeans. When contact was reestablished with Ethiopia in the 15th century, it seemed to align with their expectations. The Portuguese, seeking to protect their trading interests from Islamic threats, sent military aid in the 16th century, followed by Jesuit missionaries. Their influence at court led to the conversion of the Emperor and posed a threat to the native Monophysite church, resulting in their expulsion in 1632.

The table of contents of the work reflects the extensive nature of the text:

- I. An account of the nature, quality and condition of the country, and inhabitants, their mountains, metals and minerals, their rivers (particularly of the source of the Nile and Niger;) their birds, beasts, amphibious Animals, (as the River Horse and Crocodile), Serpents, &c.
- II. Their political government, the genealogy and succession of their Kings, a description of their court, and camp ...
- III. Their ecclesiastical affairs, their conversion to the Christian religion ...
- IV. Their private oeconomy, their books and learning, their common names, their dyet, marriages, and polygamies.

Illustrated with 9 engraved plates (7 folding) and with a double-page unpaginated (letterpress) genealogical table.

- Engraved Ethiopic alphabet
- The Herb and Fruite Called in Hebrew Dudaim.
- An Eastern Sheep drawing his fatt tayle in a cart weighing 40 pound weight or more / Another sort of Sheep
- A Description of the Apes. [trimmed very close, a bit beyond plate mark, on right and left margins]
- Flocks of Elephants that lay waste whole Forrests / A cornfeild defended by a She Elephant [trimmed very close, a bit beyond plate mark, on right and left margins]
- The Ethiopian Fonkes, in the Amharic dialect calld' Guereza / A sort of little Animal of the kind of those which the Hollanders call Danguinen.
- Hippopotamos. The Sea Cow / The Sea Horse putting up his head a bove the water...
- A Marble Coffin, diggd up in a Church Yard nere the high-way called Priscilla's Salter's Way Representing the Communion of ye Ancients in a Cave.
- Three Capuchins beheaded in the yeare 1648 by the Command of Basilides King of the Habessines.



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Detailed Condition:

Folio. Late 19th-century calf, red leather spine label, raised bands. Spine gilt extra. Front board neatly detached. Marbled endpapers. Spine ends worn. Binding edges rubbed. [8], 88, 151-370, 375-398 pages. Erratic pagination, as usual, but complete. Plus 9 engraved plates (7 folding) and unpaginated double-page letterpress genealogical table (between pages 192 and 193). Except for occasional scattered foxing to the text leaves, internally clean and fresh. The plates very clean. Overall a nice example, with wide margins.