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[The Search for the Source of the Nile] Nouvelle Carte du Bassin du Nil indiquant la commune origine de ce Fleuve avec les Rivieres du Zanguebar Dressee et Dediee A La Colonie Europeene D'Orient . . . 1858

Stock#: 96196
Map Maker: Miani
Date: 1858
Place: Paris
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG
Size: 23.25 x 39.5 inches
Price: \$ 2,400.00



Description:

Searching for the Source of the Nile -- The Map Which Launched Giovanni Miani's Exploration Career

Rare and finely detailed map of the Nile Basin showing the origin of the Nile River and the "Rivers of Zanzibar," prepared by Giovanni Miani, which would launch his career as an explorer of the interior parts



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of Africa. With this map, he would propose his ambitious projects for further exploration.

Miani would go on to become one of the most important mid-19th Century explorers, who greatly furthered the exploration and mapping of the search for the source of the Nile. The map covers the region from the Mediterranean coastline of Egypt and the Red Sea to Lac Zaire (Lake Victoria), with a small inset map of Africa.

The present map is Miani's watershed moment, converting him from a little known amateur explorer to prominence. In 1857, after several years of exploration, he visited Upper Nubia, and drew the present map of the region based on his own observations and the accounts of sailors, merchants, hunters and missionaries. He had the map printed in Paris in 1858 and presented a copy to Napoleon III, along with his project for exploring the Nile basin to find the river's source.

The map's note at the bottom right provides a marvelous overview:

Information for a Future Expedition to the Sources of the Nile

We have prepared this Map with the aim of facilitating research on the grand question of the sources of the Nile. It is the culmination of ten years of study and travel in Egypt, the insights we have garnered from Mr. Figari Bey and other learned explorers, as well as the accounts of the most recent travelers. It offers a plethora of useful knowledge regarding agricultural zones, climatic boundaries, and historical facts, thereby we believe it will present some interest to enlightened travelers.

For a long time, we have harbored the project of seeking the origin of the Nile by the shortest route; however, various circumstances have yet to allow us to realize it. The missionaries Krapf Rebmann and Erhardt, who explored parts of the Languibar coast, did not consider ascending the Melinde River, which is a hundred leagues from the Equator.

We believe that to reach the area presumed to contain the sources of the Nile, one would need to ascend this river, cross the Gebel Kénia and its volcano, search for the lake of Gebel-Regief, reach the Equator, and before arriving at Gebel-Kambirat, near the kingdom of Robenga, one should find the origin of the Nile. By following its course, the explorer would arrive at Bellena where the Austrian missionaries from Khartoum have established a presence.

After recognizing the equatorial line, the expedition should verify the existence of metal mines and



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precious stones. Boats manned by trustworthy individuals would depart from Egypt in August, head to Khartoum to take on interpreters, and ascend the White Nile in October to reach Bellena. From there, with the influence of the missionaries, armed men with faithful Berri would be sent to meet the expedition coming from the Indian Ocean via one of the Languabar rivers at the same time. This junction at Robenga would enable a journey to Bellona, and from there, the boats would descend the river exploring the Sobat, No and Fitri lakes, trading ivory from the local inhabitants for beads and other goods stocked on the boats. According to the information we have received, boats cannot surpass the 5th degree of latitude even during the high water season, because after the rains, the Nile dries up and is only fed by its numerous tributaries. The decomposed waters that run through the marshes, pushed by the new periodic rains, are then carried in June to the sea, are greenish and of poor quality; it is before this time that these marshes cause deadly fevers in Sennar.

We have observed in February a multitude of clouds moving from the Mediterranean towards the Equator to turn into torrential rains, melting the snow and ice of the high mountains to increase the volume of water in this river, causing the phenomenon of its periodic flood.

As for the existence of large lakes under the Equator, it has been confirmed by the latest travelers, and we provide on this map, with a dotted line, the route that led the Berri to the Ocean, where they saw our steamships and described them in a very picturesque language.

These Berri saw in the lake of Gebel Regief, after the equatorial rainy season, the waters taking two directions, one towards the north to form the White Nile, and the other towards the south, giving birth to the rivers of Languabar. It is thus in the region of earthquakes that one must seek the origin of the Nile. The account of the Berri perfectly matches the map of Africa by Juan de la Cova, of which we provide a sketch. Moreover, only through the communication of Lake Regief with both slopes 1^o of the Nile, 2^o of the southern rivers that flow into the Ocean, can one explain the presence in the Nile of certain fish that have the property of inflating at will, and whose species is unique to the Red Sea. We thus believe that an expedition directed according to the plan we propose would offer execution facilities: one would not have deserts to cross, but rivers to ascend.

In addition to the great scientific interest attached to its realization, commercial interest would also be joined by the products that could be obtained along the way from trade and the great hunt for elephants, rhinoceroses, and hippopotamuses. The expedition should consist of ten scientists of different specialties, with 50 armed men accustomed to hardships. It should have a very complete set of equipment, then despite the unfortunately unsuccessful efforts of the Egyptian Government



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and its too often tested liberality. H.E. the Viceroy, whose enlightened spirit understands the full importance of such a discovery, seeing determined men with means, would deign to grant them his generous protection.

Rarity

The map is very rare.

OCLC locates 4 copies (Bibliothèque National de France, Darmstadt University, University of Leiden and Library of Congress (Hauslab-Liechtenstein collection)).

OCLC also locate a single 1862 example (British Library)

Detailed Condition:

Folding map, segmented and laid on linen.