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Jobi Ludolfi Habessinia Seu Abassia Presbyteri Johannis Regio . . . MDCLXXXIII

Stock#: 75004
Map Maker: Ludolf
Date: 1683 circa
Place: Amsterdam
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG
Size: 21.5 x 17.5 inches
Price: \$ 1,800.00



Description:

A Monumental Map of Ethiopia

Fine example of Job Ludolf's map of Ethiopia, the most important map of the region published in the second half of the 17th Century

Ludolf's mapping of Ethiopia is a cartographic landmark for the mapping of the region. Engraved by Ludolf's son Christian from a manuscript map by his father ('Christianus Ludolphus J. Filius delineavit ex autographo Parentis'). As noted by Clapham, the map:

placed spatial awareness of the country on a completely new footing. Most obviously, the Ptolomaic lakes have completely disappeared, and in their place the Abbay (described as 'Nilus seu Abawi') is shown as flowing from the south-east corner of Lake Tzana or Dembea in its familiar curve around Gojjam, before heading north. Ludolf locates the source of the Nile in Gojjam, southwest of Lake Tana, not far from where it was 'discovered' by Bruce some ninety years later.

More important still, [Ludolf] accurately places Ethiopia's latitude, as lying between 8° and 16° north of the equator, in the process confining the country to a relatively small corner of north-east Africa, instead of spreading it over much of the continent



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as previous cartographers had done. The longitude lies between 62° and 74° east; although at first sight this is puzzling, it is accurate by the convention of the time, which divided the globe into two hemispheres, and placed the prime meridian through the centre of the Atlantic Ocean.

Though much remained to be sorted out in the internal mapping of the country, fixing the basic co-ordinates enabled this to be far more accurately depicted than before. The Mareb is shown as rising to the east of Asmara, before curling round to the south and north-east (in a manner that echoes the Abbay), rather than broadly eastwards. Axum is shown well to the north of its actual location, almost due west of Massawa, with Adawa (noted for the first time) directly south of it. Although Massawa (Matzua) and Arkiko are stated to be occupied by the Turks, Ethiopian territory is shown as extending to the Red Sea coast, down to what would now be north-west Somaliland. The Danakil depression is identified as 'Terra Salis' (land of salt), illustrated by a herd of camels bearing saltpacks. Gondar (Guender) is shown as the tented encampment of the emperor, east of the northern end of Lake Tana, while strangely Kuara, which previous maps placed relatively correctly to the west of the lake, is shown by Ludolf to the north.. Extensive improvements are made to the mapping of southern Ethiopia, with the Galla shown for the first time as occupying much of the region (the name Oromo was not widely used until the 1970s), together with Guraghe, 'Cambať, Hadya, and other southern regions including Alaba, Buzama, Sugamo and Bahargamo. 'Zendero' is clearly associated with Gingiro, and the river Zebéewhich flows through it, and which [Pieter] van der Aa had identified with the Zambezi, is shown by Ludolf as flowing southwards, and clearly corresponds to the Omo. The Awash (Hawash) likewise appears, flowing eastwards towards Adel, while the (actually non-existent) river Hanazo runs parallel to the Hawash to the north.

The monasteries noted include Bizen, St. Stephen at Haik, and Debra Líbanos, while the princely prison is now placed at Amba Gishen, near Haik. This is also the first map on which I have been able to find a clear reference to Lalibela, though Sanson noted a place called Lulibella. The cartouche acknowledges the work of Balthasar Tellez, and notes that a very large number of place names have been inserted on the authority of Gregory the Abyssinian ('Gregorii Habess:'). The imperial insignia in the top left corner shows the lion bearing a double-headed cross, with the Ge'ez motto, Moa Anbessa Zaimnagada Yihuda.

The first subsequent map that I have been able to locate appeared in 1692, when the Venetian geographer Vincenzo Maria Coronelli published his Corso Geografico Universale, in which appears his map of Ethiopia, 'Abissínia dove sono le Fonti del Nilo'. Coronelli, unusually, names his sources: Mendez, Almeida, Pais, Lobo and Ludolf, though it is immediately clear



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that Ludolf was by far the greatest influence. To a large extent, indeed, Coronelli copies Ludolf, though he also as an inset shows the 'Origine e Corso del Nilo Descritto secondo l'Osservatione de passati Geografi' (Source and course of the Nile, according to previous geographers), in the form that it had appeared from Ortelius onwards. Stylistically, Coronelli - one of the leading cartographers of his era - looks forward to the eighteenth century, with clear and uncluttered lettering that makes his map much easier to follow, whereas Ludolf still looks back to the sixteenth, with ships on the sea, and elephant, rhinoceros, leopard and other animals filling in vacant spaces. Cartographically, however, it was Ludolf who led the way.

Detailed Condition: