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[Trabzon, Turkey] Trebizond

Stock#: 37950
Map Maker: Parker / Brothers
Date: 1853 circa
Place: London
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG+
Size: 37.5 x 9 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Fine large-scale panorama of the Coastline around Trabzon, Turkey, from Captain Hyde Parker's exceedingly rare *A Series of Sketches in the Black Sea* (London, circa 1853).

This magnificent view offers a panorama of the Black Sea coastline with snow-capped mountains in the distance, with the port city of Trabzon (Trebizond) in the centre, at the foot of verdant slopes. The harbor of Trabzon is dominated by a fort atop a promontory, while several minarets add definition to the city which unfolds in the background. Lettered below the image is the title, while a key, viewed left to right reads: 'Cape Fidgi / Khonsi point / Kalmek Point / Platana / Cape Jones'. An exceedingly large tinted lithograph, it was printed with great care and at great expense, and is by far the finest artistic view of Trabzon made during the 19th Century. It was the largest of the 11 views included in the very rare set *A Series of Sketches in the Black Sea*.

Trabzon, while then having a population of barely 20,000, was nevertheless a place of considerable importance. Located on the southeastern end of the Black Sea, it was since ancient times the principal trading gateway between Europe and Persia. It was the capital of the Greek Empire of Trebizond, from 1204 to 1461, and since the Ottoman conquest had been the center of the Eyalat of Trabzon. Both the celebrated prelate and scholar Basilios Bessarion (1403-72) and the greatest of all Ottoman rulers, Suleiman the Magnificent (1494-1566), were born in the city.

During the Crimean War (1853-55), which pitted an alliance of Britain, France and the Ottoman Empire against Russia, Trabzon served as an important naval base. Up to this point, the Black Sea had been largely off-limits to British mariners, and the immense beauty and diverse and sophisticated cultures of the region fascinated British artists and writers. As the war continually brought the Black Sea to the top of the news, Britons were eager to consume any material that would give them a better understanding of this hitherto mysterious part of the World.



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This view, like the others in the series, was based on a sketch by Captain Hyde Parker (1825-1854) of the Royal Navy, who commanded the *HMS Firebrand* in the Black Sea. He was killed on July 8, 1854, shortly after this work was published, when storming a Russian fort at the Sulina Mouth of the Danube River. He was the 4th in an unbroken line of 'Hyde Parkers' to serve in senior roles in the Royal Navy. His great-grandfather Admiral Sir Hyde Parker, 5th Baronet (1714-1783), was Commander of the West Indies Station, his grandfather Admiral Sir Hyde Parker (1739-1807) was Horatio Nelson's commander at Copenhagen in 1801, and his father Admiral Sir Hyde Parker (1784-1854) served as First Lord of the Admiralty (1853-4).

A Series of Sketches of the Black Sea was a lavish and luxurious production that was likely made as a fine art piece and/or as a grand memorial to Captain Parker, as opposed to being a commercial production. The firm which printed the *Sketches*, Dickinson Brothers of 114 New Bond Street, London, was known for top-end custom fine art projects, and not mass production. Its issue was likely sponsored by wealthy patrons, and only a small number of sets were ever made, as they were intended for circulation amongst a select audience.

The *Series of Sketches* is thus extremely rare. We find no examples of the complete work offered for sale in more than 50 years. While the great British state collections (National Maritime Museum, the Victoria & Albert Museum and the British Museum) possess the Trebizond view, OCLC locates no examples of the complete portfolio.

Detailed Condition:

Color lithograph on three conjoined sheets of card.