



# Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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## [Mecca]

**Stock#:** 64213  
**Map Maker:** Fischer von Erlach  
**Date:** 1725  
**Place:** Leipzig  
**Color:** Uncolored  
**Condition:** VG  
**Size:** 16.5 x 11.5 inches  
**Price:** SOLD



### Description:

#### *Rare, Finely-Detailed Eighteenth-Century View of Mecca's Sacred Sites*

This rare, early view depicts the Holy City of Mecca in stunning detail, with the Great Mosque and the Kaaba at center.

The Arabic title reads, "*Wajhat Bayt Ibrahim fi Medinat Mecca* [View of the House of Abraham in the City of Mecca]." The Kaaba is the holiest site in Islam and is believed to be a landmark built by Abraham as the House of God. The Kaaba is enclosed by the sanctuary of the Masjid al-Haram (the Sacred Mosque, or Great Mosque). One of the Five Pillars of Islam states this sacred site should be visited by all able Muslims, referred to as performing *Hajj*.

Viewers familiar with the Kaaba (labeled A) will clearly see all its significant details: the golden waterspout, the black stone in the wall, and the Kaaba door (labeled B-D). To the right of the Kaaba is the low semicircular wall of Ishmael, where Abraham was said to build a shelter for Hajar and their son. These structures are encircled by lamps suspended from gold chains. Beyond the Kaaba area, the pulpit and pavilions representing each of the legal schools of Islam can be seen.

To the right and beyond the sanctuary of the Great Mosque are outlying religious buildings, and to the left is the historic city of Mecca. In the distance, Mount Arafat rises above the city and its sacred sites.

The French and German explanatory text describes the religious significance of the Islamic holy sites of Mecca, noting the Kaaba ("House of Abraham") and the Zamzam Well ("fountain of Ishmael"). The Zamzam Well, a miraculous spring shown to Abraham's son Ishmael and his mother Hajar as they were



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stranded in the desert, was a sign to Abraham to build the Kaaba at its site. The descriptive reference to annual caravans of Turks describes *Hajj* pilgrims.

*French description: "Prospect d'une partie de la grande Ville de la Mecque avec cette Place Sainte si celebre, où Suivant l'opinion des Mahometans, subsiste la Maison d'Abraham et la fontaine d'Ismael; enfin où Mahomet écrivit son Alcoran: Ce lieu et visité chaque année de Caravanes de Turcs."*

*German description: "Prospekt von einem theil der großen Stadt Mecha sampt dem so genanten sie Platz wo nach der Mahumetaner meinung das Haus Abrahae und der Brun Ismaelis stehet und an welchem der Mahomet seinen Alkoran geschriben dieser Orth wird jährlich von der Turckischen Caravane besucht"*

*[Prospect view of a part of the large city of Mecca with its celebrated holy places, where according to the Mohammedans, was the location of the House of Abraham and the fountain of Ishmael; and where Mohammed wrote the Koran: This place is visited each year by caravans of Turks.]*

This view was published in 1725 in Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach's influential compilation of historical architecture entitled *Entwurf einer historischen Architektur* [Plan of Civil and Historical Architecture]. The *Entwurf einer historischen Architektur* was groundbreaking as one of the first and most popular comparative studies of historic global architecture.

Divided into five books, this view of Mecca appeared as plate VII (numbered here in the top right) in the third book. This vast work had two purposes: firstly, to depict the architecture of non-European buildings on a large scale; and secondly, to promote Fischer von Erlach's own architectural designs. Fischer von Erlach was chief architect to the imperial Austrian court, and his architectural work includes Schönbrunn Palace, Karlskirche, and the Austrian National Library in Vienna, and Schloss Klessheim, Holy Trinity Church, and the Kollegienkirche in Salzburg.

This rare and lushly-detailed view of the Holy City of Mecca is a fascinating historical depiction of Islam's most sacred sites.

#### **Detailed Condition:**