



Map of an important spying expedition through Arabia

PALGRAVE, William Gifford.

Map of Arabia Illustrative of W.G. Palgrave's Journey in 1862-63.

London: MacMillan & Co., 1865. Original outline colour. 375 x 485mm.

£400

A map of Arabia from 'Narrative of a Year's Journey through Central and Eastern Arabia', the account of Palgrave's spying expedition through the peninsula. As well as showing the author's route it also delineates the political boundaries, using colour to mark the countries subject to the Ottoman Empire and the Sultans of Shomar, Wahhabi and Oman. William Gifford Palgrave (1826-1888) was the son of Francis Palgrave, founder of the Public Records Office. While serving in the Indian Army Palgrave converted to Catholicism and entered the Jesuit college, Madras, undertaking missionary work in southern India. In 1855 he travelled to Syria as a missionary, experiencing religious riots in Damascus, on which he wrote reports for the European powers. It was as an agent for Napoleon III that Palgrave went to Arabia. Disguised as a Syrian Christian physician, he was the first westerner to cross Arabia from the north-west to the south-east and the first to visit Riyadh. Palgrave was introduced to Faisal bin Turki bin Abdullah Al Saud; he wrote that Faisal's son, Abdul Rahman bin Faisal, asked Palgrave to supply him with strychnine, probably to poison his father. After his return Palgrave renounced both Catholicism joined the British foreign service, serving in the West Indies, Manila, Bulgaria, Bangkok and Montevideo.



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