

A British Gentleman's Oriental Tour

[**Oriental album: Bahrein, Oman, Basra and other places.**] A collection of 847 original photographs documenting a British gentleman's oriental tour, assembled chronologically in five massive albums and captioned by hand throughout.

Various places, 1900–1901. Five oblong albums (445 × 315 mm), consecutively numbered with 847 vintage albumen prints (various formats, 115 × 85 to 280 × 205 mm) laid down and captioned on thick cream card. Contemporary red half sheepskin, title and year stamped in gilt lettering to front covers of each volume. Spine and edges ruled in gilt, silk-watered endpapers, album sheets edged in gilt.

€ 95,000



An exceptional trove of early exploration and travel photographs, documenting a two-year tour around the coast of Africa and Yemen, through the Gulf from Muscat to Bahrein, then on by the Arabian Sea to Karachi and finally back to Syria and Jerusalem. The collection is preserved in its original massive oblong albums with each of the partly large-format photographs meticulously captioned in the traveller's own hand. Numerous photographs of himself are included within the albums and witness the transformation of a well-groomed English gentleman at the beginning of the tour in East Africa, in early 1900 ("being carried to small boat at Majunga"), into a bearded explorer camping with the Bedouins in 1901 (showing him in front of "My camp at El Bagdadi on the Euphrates").



The Critical Moment - Being carried to small boat at Majunga



El Bagdadi

The unidentified traveller was hosted by local dignitaries and had an obvious special interest in architecture and archeological excavations. His photographs provide extraordinary insights into the social and cultural life of the British protectorates he visited.



Indeed, his journey to the Persian Gulf, documented here, pre-dates Hermann Burchardt's 1903/04 expedition, famed for providing the first visual records of many places in the region, and the numerous previously unrecorded photographs of Muscat, Bahrein and other places in the Gulf contained in the present albums are therefore a particularly important find.



Apart from the views of Muscat castle and port there are highly unusual snapshots of street life both outside and within Muscat's city walls, a stunning double portrait of "Men with Hawks belonging to the son of the Sheikh of Bahrein", a view of Bahrein harbour, captioned the "Head Quarters of Pearl Fishing", the Bahrein Post Office, the market in Bandar Abbas, the Quarantine Station at Basra, as well as photos of horse dealers, women selling salt or just date palms. The 1901 photograph of the Arch of Ctesiphon is captioned "Left wing fell in April 1887 the rest will probably soon follow", also recording height and length of the remaining structure, as well as the width of the entrance. A photo of the "British Residents Wife's Bay Arabian" documents the rare occasion of a "Ladies' nomination Race", also recording the names of the winners of this race held in Bagdad. "Dr. Robert Koldewey from the German expedition" is met and photographed in Babylon at the Temple of the Venus. Visits to several ships at sea are documented in photos of the vessels themselves, as well as by group portraits of their captains and crews on board. A remarkable photograph shows the warship Persepolis returning from its campaign under Daria Begi against the shores of the Trucial States.



*Men with Hawks belonging to the
son of the Sheikh of Bahrein.*



Women selling Salt (from Steamer.)



Tom

Arch of Ctesiphon AD 534

Height of Arch	105 feet
Length of Hall	163 "
Thickness of Wall	19 "
Length of Facade	310 "
Width of Entrance	86 "

Left Wing fell in April 1889 the rest will probably soon follow.



Bindings a little rubbed, boards partly stained, some of the album leaves affected by minor water-staining and some foxing. Photographs mostly unfaded with good, strong contrast and in excellent condition throughout. An extraordinary record and a unique collection.

