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978-1-108-02289-7 - Notes on the Bedouins and Wahabys, Volume 1

John Lewis Burckhardt

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Notes on the Bedouins and Wahabys

John Lewis Burckhardt (1784–1817) was a Swiss explorer who is best remembered for his re-discovery of the ancient city of Petra, in Jordan. In 1809 he was commissioned by the African Association to discover the source of the River Niger. In preparation for this journey, for which he needed to pass as a Muslim, Burckhardt spent two years exploring and studying Arabic in Aleppo, before travelling widely in Arabia and Egypt. These volumes, first published in 1830, contain Burckhardt's description of Bedouin society and his history of the Wahhabi sect of Islam. He describes the different Bedouin tribes of Arabia and the Middle East and their political allegiances, and recounts in fascinating detail aspects of their society. He also narrates the history of the Wahhabi sect from its founding, and discusses its effect on the contemporary politics of the region. Volume 1 contains his description of the Bedouin.

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Notes on the Bedouins and Wahabys

Collected During His Travels in the East

VOLUME 1

JOHN LEWIS BURCKHARDT
EDITED BY WILLIAM OUSELEY



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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore,
São Paulo, Delhi, Dubai, Tokyo, Mexico City

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108022897

© in this compilation Cambridge University Press 2010

This edition first published 1830

This digitally printed version 2010

ISBN 978-1-108-02289-7 Paperback

This book reproduces the text of the original edition. The content and language reflect the beliefs, practices and terminology of their time, and have not been updated.

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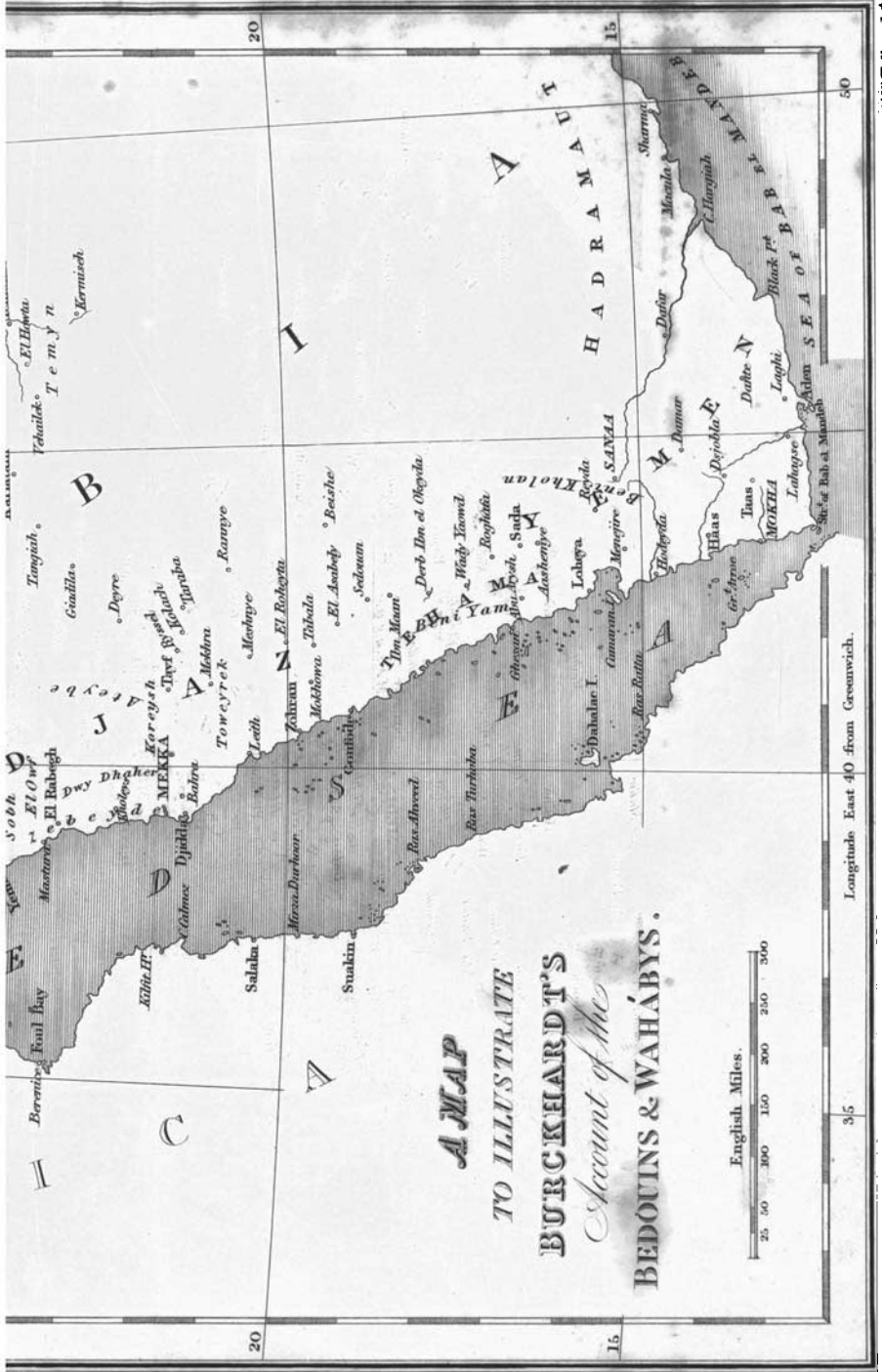
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Wahabys, scale

London, Published by Colburn & Bentley, New Burlington Street, April 1820.

Cambridge University Press

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NOTES

ON THE

BEDOUINS AND WAHABYS,

COLLECTED

DURING HIS TRAVELS IN THE EAST

BY THE LATE

JOHN LEWIS BURCKHARDT.

PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY OF
THE ASSOCIATION FOR PROMOTING THE DISCOVERY OF
THE INTERIOR OF AFRICA.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

HENRY COLBURN AND RICHARD BENTLEY,

NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1830.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-02289-7 - Notes on the Bedouins and Wahabys, Volume 1

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PRINTED BY A. J. VALPY, RED LION COURT, FLEET STREET.

Cambridge University Press

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P R E F A C E.

To the volumes already published at different times, comprising the accounts of Burckhardt's Researches in Nubia, Syria, and Arabia, these now succeed, which will be found to contain, as was originally promised by Colonel Leake (the editor of the Nubian and Syrian Travels), "very copious remarks on the Arabs of the Desert, and particularly the Wahábys."*

These volumes are here divided, after the author's own arrangement, into two parts, serving on many occasions for mutual illustration; yet each, in itself, form-

* Burckhardt's "Travels in Syria and the Holy Land." Pref. p. ii. 4to. Edition, 1822.

ing a distinct and independent work ; one part being merely descriptive, the other historical.

In the former we find not only an enumeration of the Bedouin tribes, and a statement of their various local establishments, numbers, and military force ; but an account of their extraordinary customs, manners, and institutions ; of their arts and sciences, dress, arms, and many other particulars relative to that interesting race of Arabs.

In the second portion of this work, Burckhardt has compiled from such original information, both written and oral, as seemed on minute inquiry, most authentic, a history of those Mohammedan sectaries and fierce enthusiasts, the Wahábys ; tracing them from their earliest appearance as reformers, in the last century, through all their wars with other Arabs and with the Turks, down to 1816, that year in which he returned from Arabia, the scene of action, to Egypt ; where, not long after, a premature death

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terminated his literary career, and prevented the accomplishment of many important designs: his favourite object being to explore the interior and least-known regions of Africa.

In preparing these volumes for publication, the editor must here declare, (as in his preface to Burckhardt's Arabia) that he has invariably adopted the plan of his ingenious friend, that accomplished scholar and antiquary, who superintended during their progress through the press, our lamented traveller's accounts of his Nubian and Syrian journies, in expressing with scrupulous fidelity the author's sentiments on all occasions, and in retaining, without any regard to mere elegance of style or selection of terms, his original language, wherever an alteration was not absolutely necessary to reconcile with our system of phraseology and grammatical construction, certain foreign idioms which had crept into his English writings.

The two works now offered, will suffi-

ciently recommend themselves to readers of different tastes, by numerous anecdotes, curious and characteristic; but all must feel an interest in the account of those Arabs, respecting whom an eminent historian's words may here be quoted: "As the naked wilderness could not maintain a people of hunters, they rose at once to the more secure and plentiful condition of the pastoral life—the same life uniformly pursued by the roving tribes of the Desert; and in the portrait of the modern Bedoweens we may trace the features of their ancestors, who in the age of Moses or Mahomet dwelt under similar tents, and conducted their horses and camels and sheep to the same springs and the same pastures." (Gibbon's Roman Empire, chap. L.)

WILLIAM OUSELEY.

London, March 19th, 1830.

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CORRIGENDA.

VOL. I.

- Page 80 for *Kouálek* read *Kouáleh*, قواله
 88 after “warlike evolutions,” insert يلعبون
 الطراد الخيل

VOL. II.

- Page 14 for *Mowalle* read *Mowaze*, موازه
 15 *Azayre* *Azayze*, عزايزه
 27 *Deyghám* *Deygham*, ديغم
Deyghámi *Deyghami*.
 88 *el fekeh* *el fekek*, الغقف