

Wooden chest, clad in vellum manuscript maps, with wrought iron handles, rivets, lock and clasp.

A DEAD MAN’S CHEST...

[Mariner’s Chest]

Author
[Anonymous]

Publication date
c1690].

Publisher

Publication place
[Spain,

Physical description
Wooden chest, clad in vellum manuscript maps, with wrought iron handles, rivets, lock and clasp.

Dimensions
320 by 740mm. (12.5 by 29.25 inches).

Notes
A very unusual piece of cartographic history. It was common for seafarers to have sturdy wooden chests for storage whilst on a voyage, but the owner of this chest chose to have it covered it with manuscript maps drawn on vellum, possibly by their own hand, with the decorative ironwork fitted on top. The lid is covered with a map of North and Central America, with the Darien Isthmus labelled to the south, and decorated with an elaborate compass rose and title cartouche supported by figures of Native Americans. The map on the front is decorated with a title cartouche showing a sea god.

The sides are covered with maps of the East and West Indies, decorated with ships. It is remarkable that the maps have survived given the treatment they would have encountered at sea.

Bibliography

Provenance

Price: £20000

Inventory reference: 2196

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