



Quarto (210 by 140mm), engraved title, 4p. table and 137 unsigned leaves bearing engraved plates number 1 to 273, printed on recto and verso, original English panelled calf, spine rebacked to style.

BOWEN'S REDUCTION OF OGILBY'S BRITANNIA

Britannia Depicta or Ogilby Improv'd...

Author

OWEN, John and Emanuel BOWEN

Publication date

1720.

Publisher

Printed for and sold by Tho: Bowles, Em: Bowen,

Publication place

London,

Physical description

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Dimensions

Notes

First edition, first issue of this of this highly popular reduced version of John Ogilby's 1675 road atlas; Bowen's address given as "next ye King of Spain", plate 128 misnumbered 121, and plates 74 and 75 transposed. Bowles decided to go one better than Thomas Gardner and John Senex, who were planning reduced size re-issues of Ogilby, by augmenting the work with 54 county maps and "a

multitude of historical, topographical and statistical information" (Hodson) by the antiquarian John Owen, the whole engraved onto 273 strip-maps by Emanuel Bowen. Bowles puffed the work extravagantly claiming, that "One leaf of this, contains more Observations than any whole book of this Nature yet publish'd", and seems to have stirred up "a great demand as there were four editions issued from 1720 to 1724" (Chubb). How practical this was as a road-book is questionable, the layout is rather cluttered with three or four road strips per page, together with the county maps, armorials, and minisculely engraved cursive text, however, it is certainly lively, and undoubtedly would have possessed considerable novelty on publication. Ogilby's survey itself was the first of the roads of England and Wales, "and [he] is probably best known on this account. Sir H.G. Fordham. says [the survey] 'is of particular and historical importance, as it displaced the old British mile of 2,428 yards, and substituted it for the statute mile of 1,760 yards, thus effecting a revolution in customary measurements'" (Chubb, p. 444).

Bibliography

Chubb CXLVII; Hodson 149.

Provenance

Price:

Inventory reference: 2495