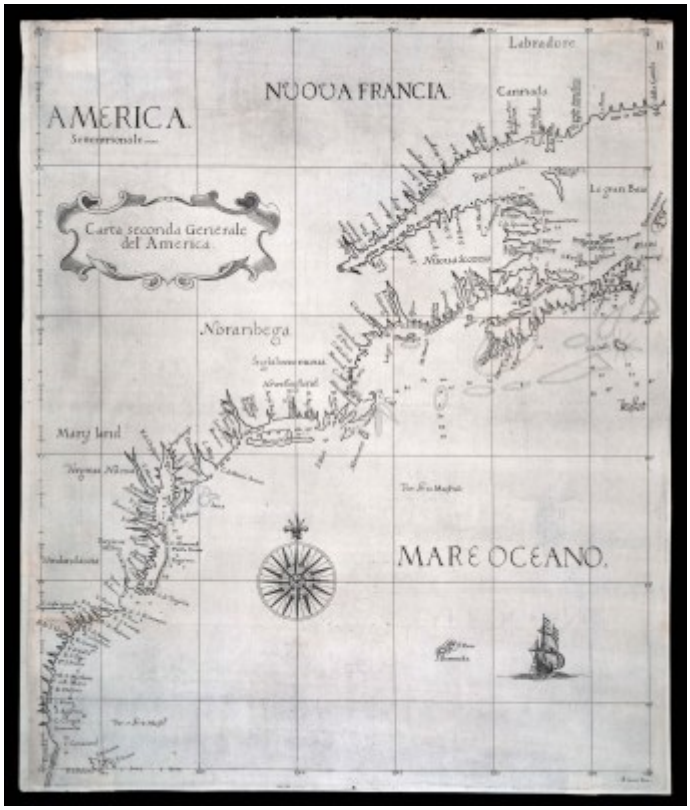


Engraved map.

FIRST PRINTED SEA CHART OF THE NORTHEASTERN SEABOARD BY AN ENGLISHMAN, AND THE FIRST WITH SOUNDINGS

Carta Seconda Generale del'America.

Author
DUDLEY, Robert

Publication date
1646].

Publisher
Francesco Onofri,

Publication place
[Florence,

Physical description
Engraved map.

Dimensions
455 by 370mm (18 by 14.5 inches).

Notes
First state, of the first edition of the second of two general charts relating to North America by Dudley, found in the second volume of the 'Arcano de Mare', one the "greatest atlases of the world" (Wardington). First published in 1646 when its author, Robert Dudley, was 73, it was not only the first sea atlas of the world, but also the first to use Mercator's projection; the earliest to show

magnetic deviation; the first to show currents and prevailing winds; the first to expound the advantages of ‘Great Circle Sailing’ – the shortest distance between two points on a globe; and “perhaps less importantly, the first sea-atlas to be compiled by an Englishman, albeit abroad in Italy” (Wardington).

The map covers most of the east coast of North America from Florida up to Labrador in Canada. It is mainly taken from Dudley’s manuscript, and is the first printed sea chart of this coast by an Englishman, and the first with soundings. The area near New York, including the island of Manhattan in the mouth of the Hudson and Sandy Hook, is after John Daniell’s 1639 manuscript chart. Virginia is shown after the maps of John Smith and John White. In the New York area, there are no indications of Dutch occupation. The river Hudson is named after its discoverer instead of the Dutch “Noort Rivier”.

Robert Dudley (1573–1649) was the son of the Earl of Leicester (the one time favourite of Elizabeth I) and Lady Douglas Sheffield, the widow of Lord Sheffield. Although born out of wedlock, Robert received the education and privileges of a Tudor nobleman. He seems to have been interested in naval matters from an early age and, in 1594, at the age of 21, he led an expedition to the Orinoco River and Guiana. His success upon the high seas was not matched, unfortunately, by his luck at court, and at the beginning of the seventeenth century he was forced to flee, along with his cousin Elizabeth Southwell, to Europe. Eventually he ended up in Florence at the court of Grand Duke Ferdinand I of Tuscany, where he not only married his cousin and converted to Catholicism, but also help Ferdinand wage war against the Mediterranean pirates. In his spare time he set about his great life’s work: the ‘Arcano del Mare’.

For the beautifully engraved charts, Dudley employed the services of Antonio Francesco Lucini (1610-c1661). Lucini states in the atlases that the work took him 12 years to complete and required 5,000lbs of copper. The charts are by English and other pilots, and it is generally accepted that the work was both scientific and accurate for the time. It is assumed that Dudley used the original charts of Henry Hudson, and for the Pacific Coast of America used the observations of his brother in-law, Thomas Cavendish.

Bibliography

Burden 267; Lord Wardington, ‘Sir Robert Dudley and the Arcano del Mare’, The Book Collector 52 (2003), pp.199-211.

Provenance

Price: £25000

Inventory reference: 14335

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