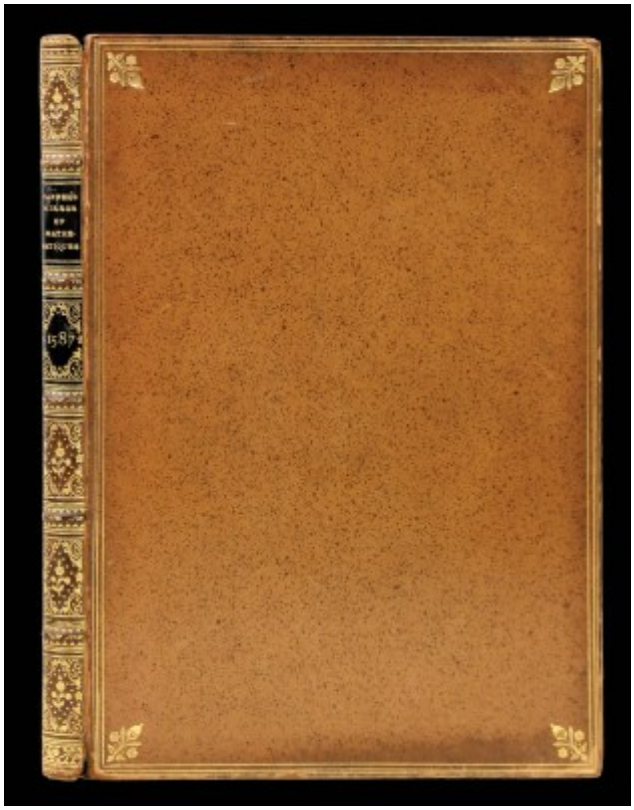


Small quarto (192 by 137mm), 56 leaves, title within typographic border, 16 woodcut figures in the text, woodcut headpieces and initials, ink inscription at head of sig. B1 (the first page of text) recording the gift of the book from John Galloway to Peter Smart on 9 Sept 1666; manuscript arithmetical workings in the margins of sigs. I3v – I4r, apparently in the same hand; marginal note in an earlier hand on sig. L1v, board edges a little rubbed, minor paper repairs to a few outer corners (sigs. A1–3, B1, B4) not affecting text, title page a little dusty, a little marginal soiling elsewhere, but an excellent copy, generally clean, well-margined, and unwashed, early nineteenth-century sprinkled calf by W. Pratt, spine richly gilt in compartments, twin black morocco lettering pieces, sides ruled in gilt with a French fillet, gilt fleurons at inside corners, gilt inner dentelles, marbled endpapers, old red edges. First and only edition, variant imprint (another imprint of the same year has “solde by Richarde Watkins”).

“GOLDEN GEM FOR GEOMETRICIANS: A SURE SAFETY FOR SAYLERS, AND AN AUNCIENT ANTIQUARY FOR ASTRONOMERS AND ASTROLOGIANS”

A Mirror for Mathematiques: A Golden Gem for Geometricians: A sure safety for Saylers, and an auncient Antiquary for Astronomers and Astrologians. Contayning also an order howe to make an Astronomicall instrument, called the Astrolab, with the use thereof. Also a playne and most easie introduction for erection of a figure for the 12. houses of the heavens. A work most profitable for all such as are students in Astronomie, & Geometrie, and generally most necessarie for all learners in the Mathematicall artes. The contents of which booke you shall find in the next page.

Author
TANNER, Robert

Publication date
1587

Publisher
by J[ohn]. C[harlewood]. and are to be sold, by Richard Watkins,

Publication place
London

Physical description
Small quarto (192 by 137mm), 56 leaves, title within typographic border, 16 woodcut figures in the text, woodcut headpieces and initials, ink inscription at head of sig. B1 (the first page of text) recording the gift of the book from John Galloway to Peter Smart on 9 Sept 1666; manuscript arithmetical workings in the margins of sigs. I3v – I4r, apparently in the same hand; marginal note in an earlier hand on sig. L1v, board edges a little rubbed, minor paper repairs to a few outer corners (sigs. A1–3, B1, B4) not affecting text, title page a little dusty, a little marginal soiling elsewhere, but an excellent copy, generally clean, well-margined, and unwashed, early nineteenth-century sprinkled calf by W. Pratt, spine richly gilt in compartments, twin black morocco lettering pieces, sides ruled in gilt with a French fillet, gilt fleurons at inside corners, gilt inner dentelles, marbled endpapers, old red edges. First and only edition, variant imprint (another imprint of the same year has “solde by Richarde Watkins”).

Dimensions

Notes
First and only edition, variant imprint (another imprint of the same year has “solde by Richarde Watkins”).

The book includes “A particular description of some parte of America, as by travaile is found out”, with a description of the characteristics of the natives, emphasizing that they are in possession of gold yet do not value it highly. Published on the eve of the Spanish armada in 1588, the book is dedicated to Charles, Lord Howard of Effingham, Lord Admiral of England, Commander of the English naval forces against the armada; he was also among the biggest subscribers to Sir Walter Ralegh’s scheme to colonise North America.

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Justin Winsor, in his ‘narrative and Critical history of America’, lists this work as being among the 34 publications in english relating to America prior to the enlarged edition of Hakluyt (1598), and one of only 14 of english origin. Yet the title appears neither in Sabin nor in any of the great Americana collections (Church, Boies Penrose, Streeter, etc.) nor in others where it might have been expected, such as Macclesfield.

This rare early english work largely on the planispheric astrolabe was published only two years after John Blagrave’s pioneering ‘The Mathematical Jewel’. “Like Blagrave’s, [tanner’s] astrolabe could be made in paper, wood, or brass, thus combining portability with cheapness or robustness. At the end of his book he included for seamen some rules for forecasting the weather by the state of the sun and moon. It is hard to say whether or not the works on astrolabes and the instruments were much used at this time by seamen: their appearance at this conjunction was certainly symptomatic of the growing sense in England of the practical value of a knowledge of astronomy: as Captain Smith recommended the use of astrolabes and astrolabe quadrants it would seem that in the seventeenth

century they were certainly taken to sea by responsible navigators" (Waters).
The author is described in the title as "gent. Practitioner in Astrologie & Phisick", and the book includes astrological instructions, for which an astrolabe was also useful. tanner had previously written 'A Prognostication for 1584', printed by the partnership of Richard Watkins and James Roberts, who held a 21-year patent given to them by elizabeth I for almanacs and prognostications. on the present occasion, however, Richard Watkins alone acted as bookseller. The printer was John Charlewood, who entered the book in the Stationer's Register on
6 April 1587. Charlewood may have had Roman Catholic connections: in 1581 and again in 1583 he styled himself servant or printer "to the right honourable earl of Arundel", i.e. Philip howard, the dedicatee Lord Charles Howard's cousin, who was either traitor or saint depending on one's religious allegiance. Charlewood was indicted in the early part of his career for unauthorised publications but, later in 1583, he secured an exclusive licence from the Stationers' Company for the printing of playbills (the earliest such entry in the registers), suggesting a newfound respectability. This is the only recorded work printed by him for Watkins.

Rare. eStC locates a total of seven copies with either imprint in Britain and four in north America, to which Adams and Waters add the Prinz hendrik Maritime Museum copy in Rotterdam. no copy appears in auction records, according to ABPC, going back to 1960. The only copy we can trace in commerce in the last 50 years is the horblit copy (same imprint as this, title washed and fore-edge remargined, nineteenth-century half morocco), which was sold to h. P. kraus in 1974 and offered for sale in their catalogue 168, item 186.

Bibliography
Adams & Waters, English Maritime Books, 3519; STC 23674.5; Taylor, Mathematical Practitioners, 67 (without details); Waters, Art of Navigation, pp. 166–7.

Provenance

Price:

Inventory reference: 2203

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