

Folio (550 by 370mm) title, dedication, list of subscribers, ten double-page engraved plates of the battle, printed in black and green, and 12 engraved maps on seven map sheets, very slight marginal staining, later end papers, full calf, skilfully rebacked, gilt.

JOHN PINE’S STRIKING DEPICTIONS OF THE SPANISH ARMADA TAPESTRIES

The Tapestry Hangings of the House of Lords: Representing the several Engagements between the English and Spanish Fleets in the ever Memorable Year MDLXXXVIII... with the portraits of the Lord High-Admiral, and the other noble commanders, taken from the life. To which are added, from a book entitled, Expeditionis Hispanorum in Angliam Vera Descriptio, A.D. 1588, done, as is supposed, for the said tapestry to be work’d after, ten charts of the sea-coasts of England, and a general one of England, Scotland, Ireland, France, Holland, &c. shewing the places of action between the two fleets; ornaments with medals struck upon the occasion, and other suitable devices. Also an historical account of each day’s action, collected from the most authentic manuscripts and writers.

Author
PINE, John

Publication date
1739 [1740].

Publisher
Sold by John Pine, in Old Bond Street near Piccadilly,

Publication place
London,

Physical description
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Dimensions

Notes
The work reproduces the tapestries that depicted the defeat of the Spanish Armada that once hung in the House of Lords. The tapestries had been commissioned by Howard of Effingham, Lord High Admiral under Elizabeth I, and the man who commanded the English fleet against the Armada. The designs for the tapestries were drawn by Hendrik Cornelisz Vroom (1562-1640) and woven in the Delft workshop of Francis Spierincx. For several years, Effingham displayed them in his London house, until debts forced him to sell them to James I. In 1650, the tapestries took up permanent residence in the House of Lords.

The defeat of the Spanish Armada was seen then – as now – as one of the defining moments of Elizabeth I's reign. The victory affirmed her supremacy at sea and the righteousness of her new Protestant religion. The Herculean nature of the victory is emphasised in Pine's engravings, with Spanish galleons appearing to dwarf the small English vessels. The accompanying text goes on to state that the Spanish ships were, "of an uncommon size, strength, and thickness, more like floating castles than any thing else…".

John Pine in his preface states the reason for his work: "because time, or accident, or moths may deface these valuable shadows, which, by being multiplied and dispersed in various hands, may meet with that security from the closets of the curious, which the originals must scarce always hope for, even from the sanctity of the place they are kept in." In 1834 the Houses of Parliament were largely destroyed by fire, taking Vroom's original tapestries with them, and Pine's engravings are now, as he foresaw, the surviving pictorial record of the images they portrayed.

Bibliography
Berlin Katalog 1677 (which does not mention the two maps of the River Thames and South West England and which are often not included, but are in the present example).

Provenance

Price:

Inventory reference: 2144

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