Double-page engraved map, with fine original hand-colour.

JOHN SELLER’S FIRST CELESTIAL MAP

A Mapp of the two Hemispheres of the Heavens.

Author
SELLER, John

Publication date
[c1675].

Publisher
John Seller his Ma[jes]ties Hyd[rographe]r, And are to be sold at his shop at the Hermitage in Wapping,

Publication place
London,

Physical description
Double-page engraved map, with fine original hand-colour.

Dimensions
(plate) 300 by 445mm. (11.75 by 17.5 inches). (sheet) 445 by 555 (17.5 by 21.75 inches).

Notes
The chart depicts the northern and southern hemispheres, both of which are centred on an equatorial pole using a polar stereographic projection with geocentric orientation. Text to the upper left and right of the chart provides the reader with information on how to find the position of stars with help of the chart. Surrounding the hemispheres are diagrams of the solar system, individual

planets, and the phases of the moon. To the upper and lower border are the 12 signs of the zodiac.

John Seller (1630–1697) was one of the most important individuals in the early history of the atlas and map trade in England, yet his grand ambition – to rival the great atlas publishing houses of Blaeu, Janssonius, and Goos – would lead to bankruptcy and eventual failure.

Before entering the atlas market, Seller traded in nautical instruments from his shop ‘at the Sign of the Mariner’s Compass’ in Wapping – at the time the heart of the maritime trade. In 1669 he published ‘Paxis Nautica: Practical Navigation’, which established his credentials within the maritime community. His place was further strengthened when, in 1671, he was appointed hydrographer to Charles II.

The present chart was sold both separately by Seller, and also included in one of his most important atlas, the ‘Atlas Maritimus’. Published in 1675, the atlas was the first English attempt to challenge the Dutch monopoly in printed sea atlases by the likes of Goos, Doncker, and Colom. Each was made up according to the wishes of the purchaser, and so individual copies can vary considerably. However, due to Seller’s considerable financial troubles, and competition from Dutch imports, the work was not a commerical success and very few examples were published.

We are unaware of an example of the present chart appearing at auction since the War.

Bibliography

Provenance

Price:

Inventory reference: 14995

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