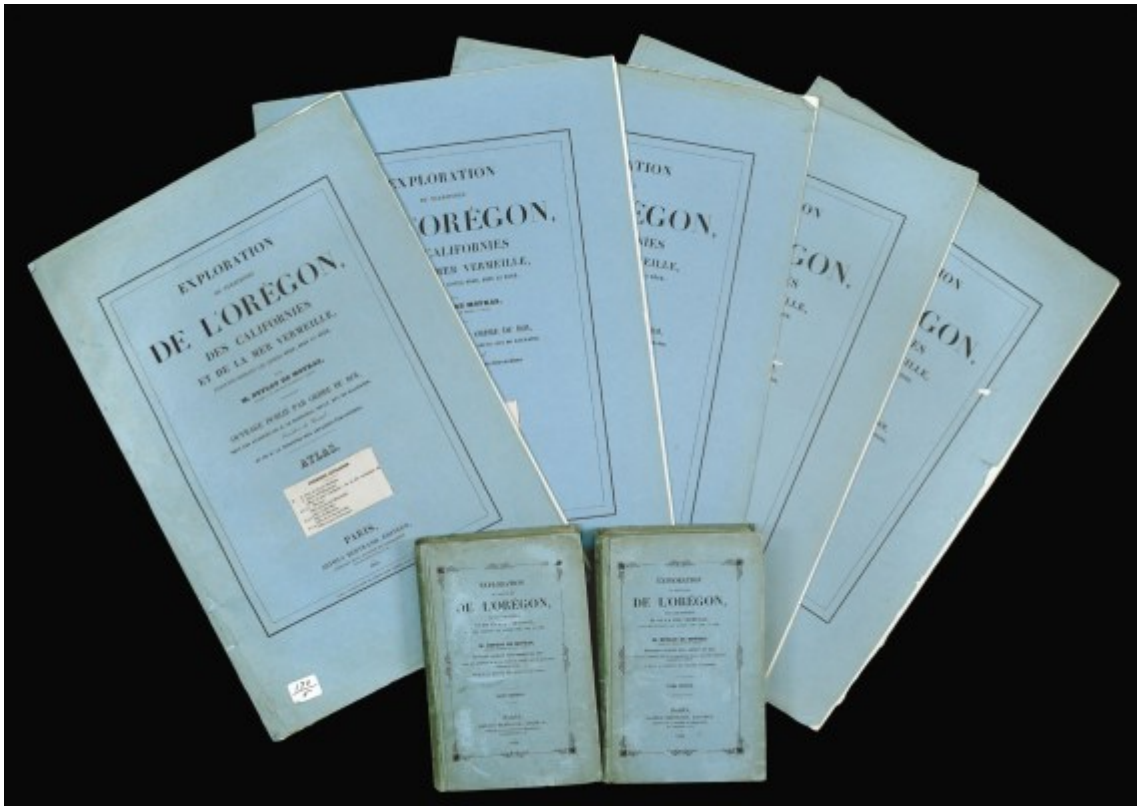

3 volumes: 2 text, and one atlas. Text: 8vo., (150 by 240mm) xii, [4], 524; [4], 514 pp., eight engraved plates, original blue paper over boards. Atlas: folio (555 by 375mm), in five fascicles, as issued, half-title, table of contents, and 26 engraved plates on 19 leaves, 23 of which are maps or plans, a large folding map hand-coloured in outline, each section, in original blue paper wrappers with publisher's printed paper label.

PRESENTATION COPY OF THE MOST DETAILED BOOK ON CALIFORNIA BEFORE AMERICAN OCCUPATION, IN ORIGINAL PARTS

Exploration du Terretoire de l'Oregon des Californies et de la Mer Vermeille, exécutée pendant les années 1840, 1841, et 1842.

Author
DUFLOT DE MOFRAS, Eugene

Publication date
1844.

Publisher
Arthus Bertrand,

Publication place
Paris,

Physical description
3 volumes: 2 text, and one atlas. Text: 8vo., (150 by 240mm) xii, [4], 524; [4], 514 pp., eight engraved plates, original blue paper over boards. Atlas: folio (555 by 375mm), in five fascicles, as issued, half-title, table of contents, and 26 engraved plates on 19 leaves, 23 of which are maps or plans, a large folding map hand-coloured in outline, each section, in original blue paper wrappers

with publisher’s printed paper label.

Dimensions

Notes
A rare work providing the earliest European perspective of Oregon and the west coast of America, and the most detailed book on California before American occupation. This example is inscribed on the front free endpaper of each text volume “a Son Excellence, Monsieur Le Comte Maurice de Dietrichstein, hommage respectueux del’auteur D. de Mofras”

Maurice Dietrichstein (1775-1864) was released from a French prison by Napoleon in 1800, and eventually became tutor to his son Napoleon II, 1815-1832, when the young man died. He was also musical director of the Imperial Court from 1819, and from 1821, director of court theatres. In 1826, he was appointed director of the Court Library, a post which he held until 1845, during which time he famously acquired the original score of Mozart’s ‘Requiem’. From 1833 – 1848, he was also director of the Imperial Cabinet of Medals and Antiquities.

Eugène Duflot de Mofras (1810-1884) a French diplomat, was appointed attaché to Mexico and sent to investigate Alta California and the Pacific coast from 1841-42. His special mission was to explore and evaluate the commercial possibilities of California and the Oregon Territory, which was the subject of dispute between the United States and Great Britain at the time. Duflot de Mofras did not endear himself to the Spanish community in America – he reputedly stole altar wine from the house of one family he stayed with and insulted the General meant to be helping him with his passport (Beebe and Senkewicz). This did not prevent him from creating an ambitious and comprehensive work, accompanied by these meticulously charted maps.

The first section contains a map of the Pacific Ocean with the area of America under dispute outlined in red, and plans of ports in Mexico. The second section contains plans of ports in California. The third section contains plans of ports in Alaska and Canada. The fourth section contains prints of Native American culture, including the mummified head of a three-year-old child, and goods including basketwork and weapons. It also has a plan and view of the St Luis Rey Mission, named after the French thirteenth century Saint-King Louis IX, founded by Franciscan monks and surviving to this day. The fifth part contains the standout piece of cartography: the large folding map of the west coast, which “made these western regions known in European official circles” (Wheat). It covers the area from Mount St Elias to Acapulco and reaches as far inland as Austin.

Bibliography
Rose Marie Beebe and Robert M. Senkewicz (trans. and ed.), Testimonios: Early California Through the Eyes of Women, 1815–1848 (University of Oklahoma Press, 2015), pp.64-67; Cowan I, p 74. Cowan II, p 186; Forbes 1461; Hill, p 87; Holliday 319; Howes D542; Lada-Mocarski 120; Phillips Atlases 1457; Streeter sale 3323; Van Nostrand & Coulter California Pictorial, pp 38-39; Wheat Transmississippi West 474; Maps of the California Gold Region 19; Zamorano 80 30.

Provenance
Provenance:
1. Presentation inscription to Prince Moritz of Dietrichstein (1775 – 1864), an Austrian nobleman who held several high offices at the Imperial court; these included Director of the Imperial Court Theatre (Burgtheater) and Library (Kaiserlichen Bibliothek), and Keeper of the Privy Purse (Oberstkämmerer) 1845-1848.
2. The Society of California Pioneers, San Francisco

Price:

Inventory reference: 12160

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