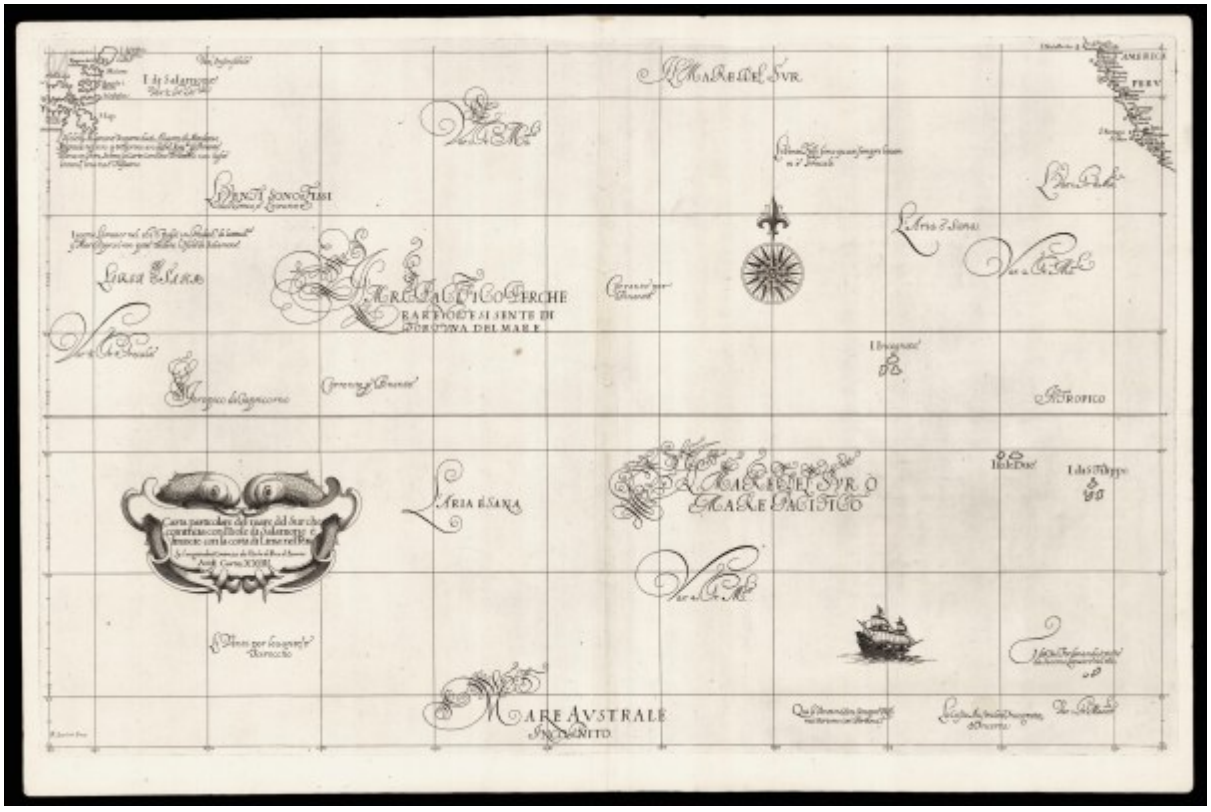


Engraved chart.

RARE CHART OF THE PACIFIC FROM THE SOLOMON ISLANDS TO THE SOUTH AMERICAN COASTLINE

Carta particolare del mare del Sur che comincia con l'Isole di Salamone e finiscie con la coast di Lima nel Peru

Author
DUDLEY, Robert

Publication date
1661

Publisher
Giuseppe Cocchini,

Publication place
Florence,

Physical description
Engraved chart.

Dimensions
515 by 785mm. (20.25 by 31 inches).

Notes
A rare sea chart of the northern coast of part of the South Pacific, from the Solomon Islands to the coast of Peru, with notes in the south referencing the unknown and uncertain southern coastline (a reference to Terra Australis Incognita). The chart locates the Solomon Islands in the northwest, with

other islands far to the east.

From the ‘Arcano del 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).

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. 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 his brother in-law Thomas Cavendish’s observations.

Bibliography

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

Provenance

Price:

Inventory reference: 15795

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