Folio (470 by 330mm), two parts bound in one volume, 26pp., including engraved title, part title, addresses to “Amateurs of Marine Drawing”, list of plates, and 17 engraved plates, eight with fine original hand-colour, modern half-russia over marbled boards, inlaid russia lettering piece, gilt, to upper cover.

SERRES’S SCARCE WORK DETAILING THE MARINE PAINTERS’ ART

Liber Nauticus, and Indroductor in the Art of Marine Drawing. By Dominic Serres, R.A. and John Thomas Serres, Marine Paiter to His Majesty, His Royal Highness the Duke of Clarence, And the Marine Draft-Man to the Honourable the Board of Admiralty. Part First.

Author
SERRES, Dominck, R.A.; [and] SERRES, John Thomas

Publication date
1805-06.

Publisher
Published and Sold By Edward Orme, His Majesty’s Printseller, No. 59 New Bond Street,

Publication place
London,

Physical description
Folio (470 by 330mm), two parts bound in one volume, 26pp., including engraved title, part title, addresses to “Amateurs of Marine Drawing”, list of plates, and 17 engraved plates, eight with fine original hand-colour, modern half-russia over marbled boards, inlaid russia lettering piece, gilt, to upper cover.

Dimensions

Notes
A very fine example with eight hand-coloured plates (Abbey's copy had only one coloured plate.) This, the first issue with the 'm' in 'Nauticum' overprinted with an 's' on the title, and p. 16 with printed overslip for "end of part first".

'Liber Nauticus', the largest format English book of seascape aquatints, was published in two parts: the first in 1805 and the second in 1806. Dominick Serres, R.A., and his son, John Thomas Serres, were both marine painters to the Crown but it is the father, Dominick, who is chiefly remembered for his important plates from the second part.

In the first part, J.T. Serres's aim was to illustrate the essentially practical aspects of the art of marine painters and draughtsmen. He draws and describes with great charm and exactitude the components of ships of Nelson's navy, with details of their construction and ornamentation as well as the "ship and the sea", the latter drawn and described in all its moods. The second part, with the finer plates, was intended as a collection of typical or genre sea-pieces, leading the reader to an appreciation of the elements of marine painting. The 41 plates are covered by an index at the rear.

Dominick Serres was born at Auch, Gascony, in 1722. He ran away from his native town and found his way to Spain where he joined, as a seaman, a ship bound for South America. In the course of time he learnt the art of seamanship and became master of a vessel trading to Havana. During the war of 1752 he was taken prisoner by an English frigate and brought to England. Released on parole, he began to earn a living as an artist and liked the country so much that he remained. On the establishment of the Royal Academy in 1768, Dominick was chosen as a foundation member and became its Librarian in 1792. He died a year later and is buried in St. Marylebone Church. All of his four children became artists in their own rights. His son John was appointed marine draughtsman to the Admiralty in 1793, and his duties included spying on the French and sketching coastal installations along their coasts.

Copies of these works are very scarce, and we are unable to trace any copy coming up for sale in the past 30 years.

Bibliography
Abbey, Life, 345.

Provenance

Price:

Inventory reference: 1045

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