

Engraved chart, manuscript annotations, minor staining.

PORTS OF ST DOMINGO

Plans of Ports in St. Domingo Chiefly from the Portulano de la America Setentrional.

Author
HYDROGRAPHIC OFFICE

Publication date
Septr. 12th 1855. Large corrections Novr. 1874. Dec. 1886, Dec. 1887, Nov. 1891. Small corrections [to 18]92.

Publisher
Hydrographic Office of the Admiralty,

Publication place
[London],

Physical description
Engraved chart, manuscript annotations, minor staining.

Dimensions
655 by 500mm. (25.75 by 19.75 inches).

Notes
Detailed British Admiralty chart of the ports of St Domingo.

The chart marks soundings, hazards of the sea, and magnetic variation, with principal ports and rivers marked. The sheet contains 12 charts: Monte Christi and Manzanillo Bay; Cabarete

anchorages; Chouchou and Salt River Bays; Moustique Bay; Port a L'Ecu; Approach to Sanchez; Caldera Bay; Tierra Baja Road; Fond la Grande; and Port Paix.

Although the majority of charts produced by the Admiralty were carried out by British naval vessels, these charts were based on the Spanish 'Portulano de la America Setentrional'.

The publication of the Portulano was a significant event in the history of Spanish map-making. The Dirección de Hidrografía was established in 1797, as a single governmental organisation, in charge of co-ordinating hydrographical and cartographic production. Spain, forever weary of enemy states getting a hold of their navigational charts, and cartographic discoveries, had continued to suppress the publication of printed charts, instead continuing to produce maps and charts of their colonies in manuscript, for much of the eighteenth century.

The work thus represented a major shift is Spanish practice, and a realisation that the major naval powers at the time, Great Britain and France, had firmly embraced the printed chart, for its superior accuracy, and ease of dissemination. The pilot soon became the standard work of the area for the rest of the nineteenth century.

The British Hydrographic Office was founded in 1795 by George III, who appointed Alexander Dalrymple as the first Hydrographer to the Admiralty. The first charts were produced in 1800. Unlike the U. S. Coast Survey the Hydrographic Office was given permission to sell charts to the public and they produced a great number of sea charts covering every corner of the globe. Most of the Admiralty charts produced by the Hydrographic Office delineated coastline as well as high and low water marks and record depth of water as established by soundings. In addition these charts included information on shoals, reefs, and other navigational hazards that plagued mariners across the world. Thanks to the innovations of Sir Francis Beaufort, who developed the Beaufort Scale of wind strength, the British Hydrographic Office became one of the leading producers of sea charts. In fact, such was their accuracy that the phrase 'Safe as an Admiralty Chart' was coined.

Bibliography

Provenance

Price: £250

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