



First edition, three volumes (comprising folio atlas and two volumes text, 4to). Text: two volumes 4to (300 by 230mm), [4], ix, [10], cciv, 269pp.; [2]; 613pp. plus nine engraved plates by John Pye, W. Woolnoth, S. Middiman, and others after William Westall, some off-setting and toning to plates, otherwise a clean and broad-margined example, contemporary tree calf rebacked, small area of abrasion to upper board of second volume, joints expertly repaired, spine in six compartments each with roll-tool border and central celtic device, gilt, green morocco labels for title and volume number lettered in gilt. Atlas: large folio (670 by 490mm), 16 engraved charts, four plates containing 28 coastal profiles and ten engraved botanical plates after F. Bauer, half-calf uniform to the reback of the text volumes, corner of one chart slightly restored.

THE FIRST CIRCUMNAVIGATION OF AUSTRALIA

A Voyage to Terra Australis: Undertaken for the Purpose of Completing the Discovery of that vast Country, and prosecuted in the years 1801, 1802 and 1803, in His Majesty's Ship The Investigator ... with an Account of the Shipwreck of the Porpoise, Arrival of the Cumberland at Mauritius and Imprisonment of the Commander ... in that Island, [Together with] [The improved atlas published by the Admiralty].

Author

FLINDERS, Captain Matthew, R.N.

Publication date

1814[-1829].

Publisher

Printed by W. Bulmer and Co. Cleveland-Row, and published by G. and W. Nicol, Booksellers to His Majesty, Pall-Mall,

Publication place

London,

Physical description

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Dimensions

Notes

The first edition of the text of the official account of the first circumnavigation of Australia: "the most outstanding book on the coastal exploration of Australia" (Wantrup).

Flinders sailed from England on 18 July 1801, and during the next two years he surveyed the entire coast of Australia from Cape Leeuwin to Bass Strait. He returned to Port Jackson in 1803 having completed the first circumnavigation of Australia, thus establishing that it was a continent. The text offers a day-by-day record of the expedition. To this work Flinders prefixed an elaborate introduction relating the prior discoveries of the Dutch on the North West and South Coasts of Australia, short accounts of Tasman, Cook, Marion, and his own boat expedition with Bass in which Tasmania was circumnavigated for the first time. Flinders sailed on Bligh's second expedition in 1792, and he includes a brief account from his own journal of the discoveries then made in Torres Straits, as well as an appendix by the expedition botanist, Robert Brown: "General Remarks, Geographical and Systematical, on the Botany of Terra Australis" (Appendix III, pp. 533-613 in vol. 2).

Flinders received little formal training in surveying, but his achievements on this voyage, working under very difficult circumstances, established him as one of the greatest of all coastal surveyors. His natural ability, allied with the great pains he took to insure the accuracy of the printed results, have ensured that the present work is of monumental cartographical significance and that it should be "the centerpiece of any collection of books dealing with Australian coastal discovery" (Wantrup).

On his return voyage to England, Flinders was forced by the state of his ship to seek assistance at the French island of Mauritius. There, despite his passport that instructed all French officers to render him assistance, the French Governor, General De Caen, arrested Flinders, accusing him of spying, and impounded his papers. Ignoring numerous official protests and disregarding even a direct order from Napoleon, De Caen held Flinders prisoner on Mauritius for the next six and a half years, finally releasing him on 14 June 1810. Although mortally ill, Flinders spent the last years of his too-short life preparing this detailed record of the Investigator voyage.

By 1822 several of the charts published in 1814 were obsolete, so they were revised and the whole atlas re-issued by the Hydrographical Office of the Admiralty. Some plates were issued with the statement "Corrected to 1822", and the remaining plates, including the coastal profiles and botanical illustrations were issued with the revised imprint and the Hydrographical Office seal, and, in the case of the charts, with compass roses and rhumb-lines. The complete atlas was not again issued by the Hydrographical Office but, as time passed, individual plates were revised and reprinted, reprinted without revision, or withdrawn as necessary.

In the present example 12 charts and the four profiles are later, published by the Hydrographical Office to the Admiralty rather than by G. & W. Nicol, and all 16 are watermarked "J. Whatman Turkey Mills 1836". A full list is available on request. The ten botanical plates retain the original publisher's G. and W. Nicol imprint.

According to the original manuscript accounts found in the Admiralty Library Archives, the total production cost of printing Flinders work was £628: 7 shillings and 6 pence, plus Paper £1452: 12 shilling and 4 pence, plus engravings £58: 10 shillings, making a staggering £2139: 9 shillings and 10 pence! These records also show that 1,000 copies of the 4to edition and 150 large paper copies were ordered. Due to poor sales, only 98 complete sets of the large paper edition were sold, the remaining 52 were sold at a trade sale without the folio atlas, and only 422 complete sets of the normal 4to edition were sold. The remaining sets were either sold without the plates or charts, and again the residue sold to trade. This explains why the text is found frequently without the atlas.

Bibliography

Clancy 9.5; Davidson, pp. 121–23; Ferguson 576 (miscounting the preliminaries in the first volume); Great Flower Books, p. 94; Hill 614; Ingleton 6487; Kroepelien 438 (text volumes only); Mosley, Charles, *Burke's Peerage and Baronetage*, 107th edition, volume 1, p. 516; Nissen (BBI) 637; Tooley 570–585; Stafleu & Cowan 1806; Wantrup 67a, pp. 138–44.

Provenance

Bookplate of William Brodie of Brodie (1799–1873), 22nd of Brodie held the office of Lord-Lieutenant of Nairnshire between 1824 and 1873. He held the position of 22nd Chief of Clan Brodie from 17 January 1824.

Price:

Inventory reference: 1048