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THE FIRST MAJOR SEA PILOT PUBLISHED IN ENGLAND

The English Pilot for the Southern Navigation...; [and] The English Pilot... Northern Navigation; [and] The English Pilot Part III... the whole of the Mediterranean Sea; [and] The English Pilot the Fourth Book...

Author

MOUNT, [Richard] & PAGE, [Thomas]

Publication date

1758 [and] 1763 [and] 1753 [and] 1759.

Publisher

Mount and Page,

Publication place

London,

Physical description

Folio (470 by 310mm), four works in three volumes, southern and mediterranean pilots bound together, letterpress title-pages, and 122 mainly double page engraved charts (some folding, single-page, or within text), a few trimmed to upper and lower neatline, all bound uniformly in eighteenth century speckled calf, spine in compartments separated by raised bands, corners rubbed and bumped, with loss to head and foot of spine.

Dimensions

Notes

Rare uniformly bound set of four, out of the six, Navigations that made up 'The English Pilot', the first major sea pilot published in England.

"Seller's English Pilot initiated the independent production of pilot books in England which ultimately overcame Dutch predominance" (Koeman). The works genesis can be seen as a response to England's burgeoning global ambitions; with the foundation of numerous chartered companies, such as - The East India, The Royal Africa, The Hudson's Bay, The Muscovy, and the Levant - and her growing colonial ambitions in the New World and India, many merchants were crying out for reliable pilot published in England, rather than having to rely on Dutch pilots published in Amsterdam.

With one of the most complex and longest running publication histories of any atlas, the 'Pilot' was first envisaged by John Seller in 1671 as a six volume work that would cover all the major Navigations of the world: The Southern Navigation (London to The Straits of Gibraltar); The Northern Navigation (London to the White Sea); The Mediterranean Sea; The Oriental Navigation (London to China and Southeast Asia); The West India Navigation (North America and the Caribbean); and The African Navigation (London to Africa).

Seller managed to publish volumes on the Southern, Northern, Mediterranean, Oriental, and West India Navigations - between 1671-1678 - before the project ran into financial difficulties. In 1678, he was forced to enter into partnership with several other mapsellers, most notably John Thornton and William Fisher. This consortium would later break up and force Seller to sell many of his plates to Thornton and Fisher, in lieu of debts. John Seller's son, Jeremiah Seller, would publish the first Africa Navigation in 1701, with the aid of the mapseller Charles Price. All the plates and text would later be acquired, gradually, by the publishers. William Mount and Thomas Page, between 1701 and 1716, who would continue to publish the pilots until the end of the eighteenth century, often with little or no alteration to the plates.

It is highly unusual to find, as here, a uniformly bound pilot, covering four, out of the six, Navigations; in the present case, the Southern, Northern, Mediterranean, and Western. The present work has the Southern and Mediterranean pilots bound as one, as in the example in the British Library (BL Maps C.29.f.13.(1); Maps C.29.f.13.(2)). An ownership inscription to the title page on the Southern Navigation, gives the name Thomas Billing, which has been crossed out, and the name of Justus R. Offerman added.

We are unaware of any uniformly bound sets of 'The English Pilot' appearing at auction, or on the market, in the last 40 years. Individual Navigations do appear: In 2006, an example of the Southern Navigation, dated 1738, made £8,640 at Sotheby's; in 2014, a 1756 edition of the Northern Navigation made £3,125 at Bonhams; the only example of the Mediterranean Navigation (dated 1736) we could trace, made £1,650 at Sotheby's in 1990, (Agosy book dealers in New York currently have the Southern and Mediterranean Navigations bound in one for \$35,000 - bound in blue buckram in 1955 by G. H. Crawford bookbinders); an example of the West India Navigation, dated 1759, appeared at auction in 2007 at Christies making \$50,400.

Bibliography

Shirley Atlases M.M&P-1d; M&P 2a-c; M&P-3a-b; M&P-5a-c.

Provenance

Price:

Inventory reference: 12558

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