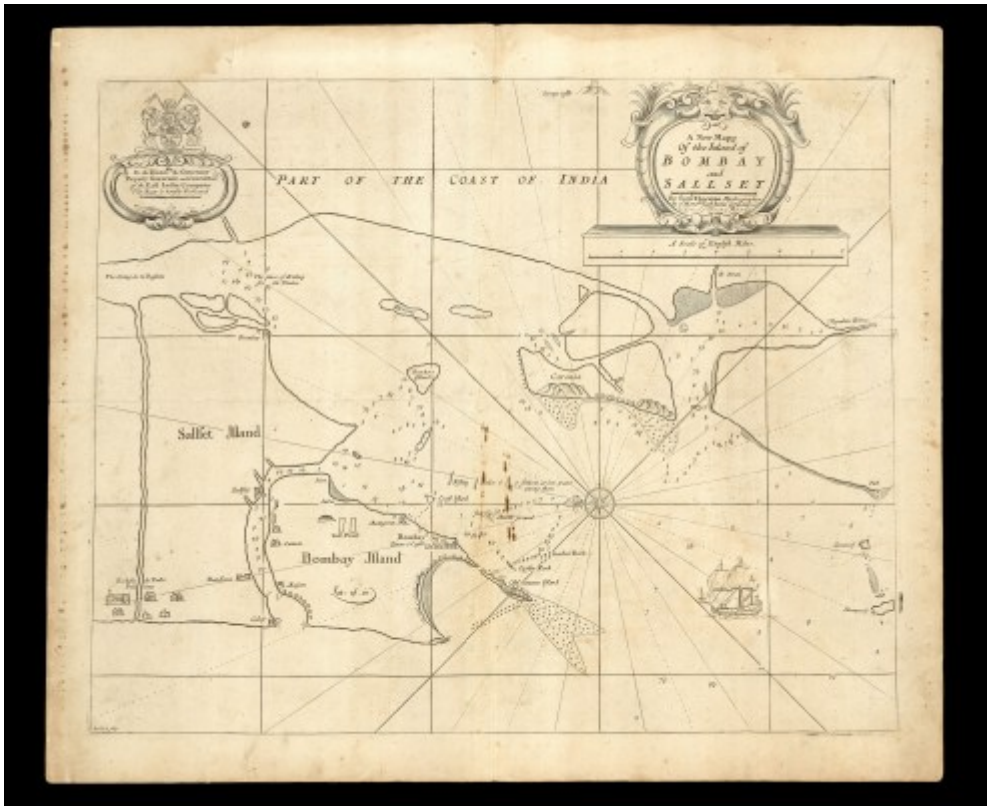


Double-page engraved chart, heightened with colour wash; with full-page fair copy manuscript chart, pen and ink and colour wash on verso.

THE FIRST PRINTED CHART TO SHOW A RECOGNISABLE BOMBAY – WITH A MANUSCRIPT CHART OF THE MALABAR COAST ON THE VERSO

A New Mapp Of the Island of Bombay and Sallset [and] an untitled manuscript chart of the Arabian Peninsula, Gujarat, and the Malabar coast of India.

Author
THORNTON, John; and Samuel THORTON

Publication date
[1711-1715].

Publisher
London, Hydrographer to ye Hono.ble East- India-Company; at ye Signe of ye Plat in ye Minories,

Publication place
London,

Physical description
Double-page engraved chart, heightened with colour wash; with full-page fair copy manuscript chart, pen and ink and colour wash on verso.

Dimensions
505 by 590mm (20 by 23.25 inches).

Notes
A New Mapp of the Island of Bombay and Sallset’

First published, as here, in John Thornton's edition of 'The English Pilot. The Third Book … the Oriental Navigation' (1703), the first printed sea atlas of southeast Asia and the East Indies. Dedicated to the "hono.ble the Governor, Deputy Governor and Committees of the East India Company", the chart is largely unchanged from when it was first appeared in Thornton's 'Atlas Maritimus,…' of 1685, less than fifteen years since "Bombay" had finally been wrested by the English from the Portuguese, in 1661, as part of the dowry and treaty of Charles II's marriage to the Portuguese infant, Catherine of Braganza.

As the original map accompanying the treaty was lost, the exact location, size and shape of the island remained a bit of a mystery for some time. Nevertheless (or maybe because), in December of 1667, the Privy Council created a charter giving the English East India Company "full Power to Governe, Order and direct in the said Island, as is Usuall in any other his Majesty's Plantations". By 1668, the Company had sole proprietorship, the command of a fort, a small English garrison, its stores, and about ten or twelve thousand inhabitants, mostly Portuguese, in exchange for £10 per annum. Eventually, Bombay was to become the English East India Company's third major settlement, after St. Helena and Madras; and the rest is history.

The great 'English Pilot' project had been started by John Seller in 1671, with the first edition of the 'Oriental Navigation (Third Book)' published in 1675. Seller's financial troubles, however, precluded any further editions, and it was not until four years after his death, in 1701, that the 'Third Book' was reissued by Thomas Mount and William Page. To confuse matters, John Thornton published a rival edition in 1703. Thornton was part of the consortium that had overseen the publication of the first edition of 1675, and his position as hydrographer to the East India Company meant he had a ready supply of charts of the area. A subsequent edition of 1711 would be published by his son Samuel and, after Samuel's death in 1715, the plates were acquired by William Mount and Thomas Page. The following year they issued a new edition complete with Thornton's charts.

An untitled chart of the Arabian Peninsula, Gujarat, and the Malabar coast of India.

This appears to be a fair copy of a near contemporary VOC chart of the area, possibly even a portion of Linschoten's chart, 'Deliniantur in hac Tabula, Orae Maritimae Abexiae, Freti Mecani: al Maris Rubri: Arabiae, Ormi, Persiae, Supra Sindam' (1596) which later informed the map by Bellin, 'Carte des Costes de Perse, Gusarat, et Malabar. Tiree de la Carte Francoise de l'Ocean Oriental' (1740), which most closely resembles this chart.

The mapmaker
John Thornton (1641-1708) was a leading English chart-maker, active between 1667 and 1708. He was apprenticed to John Burston in the Draper's Company in 1656; at the time, and despite the name, the Draper's Company was the epicentre for the leading makers of manuscript charts in England, with Burston a prominent figure in the "school" and Thornton emerges as a skilled practitioner both as a maker, and possibly as an engraver. He described himself as Hydrographer to the East India Company and Hydrographer to the Hudson Bay Company, although he is not recorded as such in the records of either company.

He was the first member of the "school" to make the transition from manuscript to printed charts, publishing three charts relating to the Americas or Atlantic in 1673, but his career path changed dramatically in 1677 when he entered into partnership with a group, including William Fisher, to assist John Seller in continuing his chart publishing business. When the partnership ended Thornton retained some of Seller's materials, and moved firmly into publishing.

The core of his business was chart publishing, the most important of his atlases being the 'English Pilot. The Fourth Book' (1689), the first English sea atlas devoted to the English colonies in North

America and the West Indies, published jointly with William Fisher, and much reprinted.

John was succeeded by his son Samuel (c1665–1712) on his death in 1708, but Samuel died shortly after, and the stock was acquired by Mount and Page.

Bibliography
Skelton & Verner, ‘John Thornton. The English Pilot. The Third Book’, 1970.

Provenance
Provenance: Freycinet family archives

Price: £6000

Inventory reference: 22736

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