

Three volumes bound in two, folio, second edition, second issue, including the original printing of the suppressed ‘Voyage to Cadiz’ (1598, state II), [24], 619pp.; [16], 312pp. 204pp.; [16], 868pp.; [12], 807pp., world map by Edward Wright in the second state of two, with the additional cartouche mentioning Francis Drake’s voyage, the map re-mounted on old paper guards, and with a small area of restoration at one fold, finely bound in eighteenth century English calf, spines in six compartments separated by raised bands, richly gilt, red and green morocco lettering pieces, gilt, lettering piece to the second volume missing and skilfully reinstated in facsimile, split at joints, repaired.

“THE GREAT PROSE EPIC OF THE ELIZABETHAN PERIOD” WITH BOTH THE WRIGHT-MOLYNEUX WORLD MAP AND THE RARE SUPPRESSED ‘VOYAGE TO CADIZ’ FROM THE LIBRARY OF THE EARLS OF MACCLESFIELD.

The Principall Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation, Made by Sea or Over-Land, to the Remote and Farthest Distant Quarters of the Earth…

Author
HAKLUYT, Richard, and WRIGHT, Edward.

Publication date
Anno 1599–1600.

Publisher
by George Bishop; Ralph Newberie and Robert Barker,

Publication place
Imprinted at London,

Physical description

Three volumes bound in two, folio, second edition, second issue, including the original printing of the suppressed 'Voyage to Cadiz' (1598, state II), [24], 619pp.; [16], 312pp. 204pp.; [16], 868pp.; [12], 807pp., world map by Edward Wright in the second state of two, with the additional cartouche mentioning Francis Drake's voyage, the map re-mounted on old paper guards, and with a small area of restoration at one fold, finely bound in eighteenth century English calf, spines in six compartments separated by raised bands, richly gilt, red and green morocco lettering pieces, gilt, lettering piece to the second volume missing and skilfully reinstated in facsimile, split at joints, repaired.

Dimensions

Map dimensions: 630 by 430mm. (24.75 by 17 inches).

Notes

The Wright-Molyneux Map is the first English map on Mercator's projection, it is the first map to name Lake Ontario, and one of the first maps to use the name "Virginia". Richard Hakluyt's 'Principall Navigations' is first collection of English voyages, published at the height of Elizabethan maritime prestige and "the great prose epic of the Elizabethan period".

The Wright-Molyneux Map

Gerard Mercator (1512-1594) revolutionized cartography with his development of an isogonic cylindrical projection that mapped a sphere on to a flat plane. Mercator expected that his projection would be a valuable tool for navigators but he neglected to provide practical guidelines on how use it. Edward Wright (1558?-1615), a professor of mathematics at Cambridge University, modified Mercator's system and published his results, 'The Correction of Certain Errors in Navigation', in 1599 and again in an improved edition entitled 'Certaine errors in navigation, detected and corrected' (London, 1610). Wright's book contained new mathematical tables and instructions on plotting straight-line courses on maps based on the Mercator projection. The system developed by Wright contributed to the supremacy of the British Navy and is still in use today.

Wright published 'A Chart of the World on Mercator's Projection' in 1599 based on his projection of a globe engraved by the English globe maker Emeric Molyneux in 1592. It was the first map to use Wright's improvements on Mercator's projection. It quickly became famous, even catching Shakespeare's attention: in "Twelfth Night", first performed in 1602, Maria says of Malvolio: "He does smile his face into more lines than is in the new map with the augmentation of the Indies" (Act III, Scene II).

Unlike many maps and charts of the era that represented the often fantastic speculations of their makers, Wright's 'Chart of the World' offers a minimum of detail and even leaves areas blank wherever geographic information was lacking. These undefined areas are especially evident along Wright's coastlines. For example, the coast of California above Cape Mendocino is blank.

Wright's world map depicts a wider Pacific Ocean than other maps of its time. On the American continent, Wright labels upper California 'Nova Albion'; other maps designated this area 'Anian' but Wright adopted the name given the region by Sir Francis Drake. 'Quivira' still appears on the West coast. Further to the east, the map also shows a 'Lake of Tadouac' reminiscent of the Sea of Verrazano. This lake is connected to the Atlantic Ocean by a river that appears to run south of the St. Lawrence River. It is also connected to a large body of water to the north. Lake Tadouac is apparently an early reference to either the Hudson Bay or to the Great Lakes, neither of which were "discovered" by Europeans until eleven or twelve years after Wright's map was published. Wright's map is also one of the earliest maps to use the name "Virginia".

The present example is in the second state, also from 1599, with the cartouche with engraved text describing Drake's discoveries in the Americas added to the lower left of the map.

Top left are the arms of Elizabeth I; top right a strapwork cartouche with a text about Francis Gaulle's discoveries in the Pacific; and bottom centre another cartouche with a general description of the chart.

The Principall Navigations

Comprising 243 narratives of voyages and travels in the New World in some 1,700,000 words, 'The Principall Navigations' is the greatest assemblage of travel accounts and navigations to all parts of the world collected up to its time, and a vital source for early New World exploration. "It is difficult to over rate the importance and value of this extraordinary collection of voyages" (Sabin).

This second edition of Hakluyt's voyages is, in fact, an entirely different book from the initial 1589 compilation and was greatly expanded from the single-volume original. Boies Penrose considered that "the first edition of the Principal Navigations transcended anything that had gone before, though it, in turn, was surpassed by the second edition". Indeed, Hakluyt devoted his life to the work and "throughout the 1590s, therefore, this indefatigable editor set himself to the formidable task of expanding the collection and bringing it up to date … this was indeed Hakluyt's monumental masterpiece, and the great prose epic of the Elizabethan period … Much that was new and important was included: the travels of Newbery and Fitch, Lancaster's first voyage, the new achievements in the Spanish Main, and particularly Raleigh's tropical adventures …The book must always remain a great work of history, and a great sourcebook of geography, while the accounts themselves constitute a body of narrative literature which is of the highest value in understanding the spirit and the tendencies of the Tudor age" (Penrose).

Here the first volume contains the original printing of the rare 'Voyage to Cadiz', which was suppressed by order of Queen Elizabeth after Robert Devereux, the Earl of Essex, incurred her wrath by returning to England from Ireland without leave in 1599 to marry Sir Philip Sidney's widow, the daughter of Sir Francis Walsingham. The original title page, dated 1598, mentioning the "famous victorie atchieued at the citie of Cadiz" is here replaced for the 1599 printing with these words removed. As the account of the sacking of Cadiz was contained within the last leaves of the first volume (pp. 607–619), these leaves were often removed. In the present example the leaves have been re-inserted in their rightful place.

The third volume is devoted almost entirely to the Americas, the South Seas, and various circumnavigations of the world. It includes the accounts of Niza, Coronado, Ruiz, and Espejo relating to New Mexico; Ulloa, Drake, and others concerning California; and Raleigh's account of Guiana. "Hakluyt was a vigorous propagandist and empire-builder; his purpose was to further British expansion overseas. He saw Britain's greatest opportunity in the colonization of America, which he advocated chiefly for economic reasons, but also to spread Protestantism, and to oust Spain" (Hill).

Edward Wright's world map was, according to Quinn's 1974 census for 'The Hakluyt Handbook', only to be found in 19, of the 240, predominantly institutional, examples of the book surveyed. Quinn notes that this survival rate is, even allowing for the high mortality levels traditionally attached to decorative world maps in books, "sufficiently low to raise the possibility that not all copies were equipped with the map, either because it was made available after many sets had been sold, which would mean that its date might be later than 1599, or because it was an optional extra supplied at additional cost". We have been unable to trace any example of the work with Wright's map selling in the trade in the past 100 years. Indeed, Quinn's survey included all major booksellers' catalogues and public auctions in the English speaking world.

The historical importance of the work cannot be overstated. It is truly “an invaluable treasure of nautical information which has affixed to Hakluyt’s name a brilliancy of reputation which time can never efface or obscure” (Church). ‘The Principall Navigations’ “redounds as much to the glory of the English nation as any book that ever was published” (Bancroft).

Bibliography
Borba De Moraes, pp. 391–92; Church 322; Grolier English 100, 14; Hill 743; JCB (3) I:360–61; LOC European Americana 598/42; Penrose, Boies, ‘Travel and Discovery in the Renaissance 1420–1620’, p. 318; Pforzheimer 443; Printing and the Mind of Man 105; Quinn, p. 490; Sabin 29596, 29597, 29598, 29599; STC 12626; cf. Shirley 221.

Known examples of the Wright-Molyneux map

British Library, London (3 copies); Bodleian Library, Oxford; Chatsworth House, Derbyshire; Eton College Library, Windsor; Huntington, San Marino (2 copies); Newberry Library, Chicago; Lilly Library Bloomington; Clements Library, Ann Arbor; Princeton (2 copies); New York Public Library, New York; Philadelphia Public Library, Philadelphia; Naval War College, Newport; JCB Library, Providence; University of Virginia, Charlottesville; Mitchell Library, Sydney.

Provenance
Nineteenth-century North Library bookplate of the Earls of Macclesfield, Shirburn Castle, Oxfordshire, on the front paste-down.

Price:

Inventory reference: 1314

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