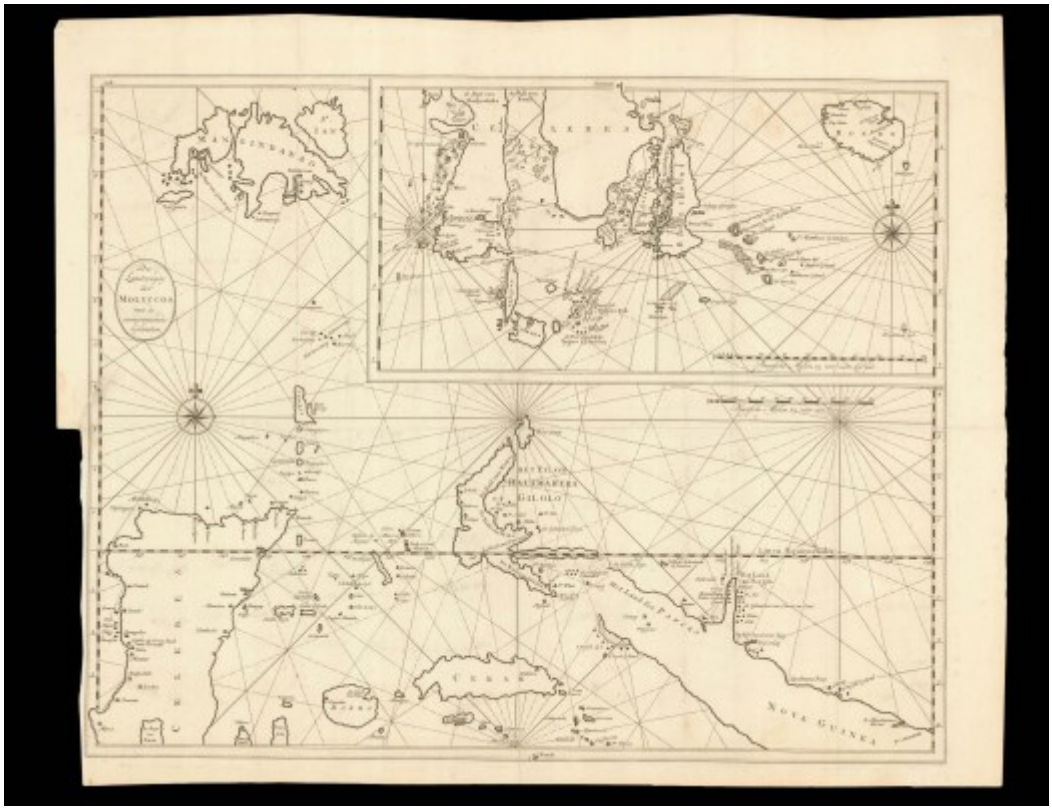


Engraved chart.

THE MOLUCCAS

De Landvoogdy der Moluccos, met de aangrenzende Eylanden

Author
VALENTYN, Francois

Publication date
1724-1726].

Publisher
J. van Braam,

Publication place
[Amsterdam,

Physical description
Engraved chart.

Dimensions
515 by 625mm. (20.25 by 24.5 inches).

Notes
A detailed chart of the Moluccas, or Spice Islands, including present-day Baru, Ambon, Seram, and part of Maluku as “Nova Guinea”, extending north to include the southern Philippines and the island of Mindanao, with an inset of Baru and the southern Celebes. Published in Valentyn’s ‘Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indien, vervattende een Naaukeurige en Uitvoerige Verhandelinge van Nederlands Mogentheyd in die Gewesten’, two volumes, an account of the history of the Dutch empire in Asia.

Francois Valentyn (1666-1727), a minister who devoted most of his life to the employ of the VOC, is responsible for publishing a comprehensive cartography of Southeast Asia. As a young man, in 1685, he was sent by the VOC to Ambon as a Minister to the East Indies, where he remained for a decade. In 1705, the now married Valentyn, and father of five children, returned to the Indies with his family. The following year he was Army Chaplain on an expedition in eastern Java, but suffered health problems and requested permission to return to Holland. This was denied, however, and he remained in the East until 1714. Finally, back home, Valentyn composed his monumental work, 'Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indien', which was published between 1724 and 1726.

The 'Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indien' was created both from the voluminous journals Valentyn had amassed during his two stays in Southeast Asia, as well as from his own research, correspondence, and from previously unpublished material secured from the VOC officials. The work contained an unprecedented selection of large-scale maps and views of the Indies, many of which were superior to previously available maps.

VOC — Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie — Dutch East India Company

The VOC and its subsidiaries were the first joint stock companies in history, and the forerunners of modern corporations; eventually giving rise to a multi-national global empire, where money, and the ability to manipulate and move it, becomes the principal resource and driving force.

For nearly one hundred years, after Vasco da Gama discovered a sea route to India in 1499, the Portuguese and the Spanish were dominant in the eastern and western hemispheres respectively. This dominance was aided by a policy of extreme cartographic secrecy by both crowns, and returning ships were required to surrender both their charts and information on any discoveries made. All charts were state property, and illegal use or copying was punishable by death. However, smuggling often took place, and piracy by both English and Dutch vessels meant that, eventually, the routes to both the "Old", or East, and "New", or West, Indies became available to northern Europe. Using this purloined information, the British East India Company – EIC- and Dutch Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie –VOC — were established — in 1600 and 1602 respectively — to cash in on the lucrative trade in nutmeg, pepper, cinnamon, cloves, and other spices.

These monopolistic giants continued the tradition of jealously guarding the secret charts that laid the path to the source of their immense wealth and power. Both organisations employed teams of chartmakers or hydrographers to record the most up-to-date navigational information for speedy distribution in order to obtain commercial advantage with the quickest routes to the most profitable markets. The principal vector for this information was the "pascaert".

The publication of these pascaerts proudly makes proprietary information inviting and accessible to a new investor class. In joining the chase around the globe for a nutmeg, one of the smallest countries in the world created a vast empire by applying the principle of capital investment to their ventures, eventually driving the Spanish, the Portuguese, and even the English from the East Indies.

Bibliography

Provenance

Price:

Inventory reference: 17554

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