

Engraved chart, on two sheets, joined.

THE NORTHERN MALACCA STRAIT

A Chart of the Northern Part of the Straits of Malacca, from The Road of Acheen to Malacca, by Mons.r D'Apres de Mannevillette, with Improvements from Captn. Hall, Captn. Popham, and Other navigators.

Author
LAURIE, Robert; and James WHITTLE

Publication date
17th Sep.tr 1798.

Publisher
Laurie & Whittle,

Publication place
London,

Physical description
Engraved chart, on two sheets, joined.

Dimensions
470 by 640mm. (18.5 by 25.25 inches).

Notes
Chart of the northern Malacca Strait between Sumatra and the Malay Peninsular. From an early edition of Laurie & Whittle's rare 'East India Pilot', based on d'Apres Mannevillette's 'Carte Plate de la partie Septentrionale du Detroit de Malac, depuis de la rade d'Achem jusqu'a Malac' (1775),

published in English by Sayer and Bennett in 1778, but here more detailed. With the addition of a coastal profile and an inset upper right, ‘Plan of Poolo Pinang, now Prince of Wales’s Island, with its Straits and Harbour; Given to Capt. Light by the King of Queda, and of which Possession has been taken by that Officer, for the use of the English East India Company, Aug.st 11th, 1786″. A note beneath the title states that “Detail of the Eastern Coast of Sumatra is taken from Dutch Charts, and as the European Ships do not frequent it, it is but imperfectly known : Care has been taken only to place the Soundings, along that Coast in the usual Track of the Ships, the same attention has been paid for all the Depths marked in the Straights. Chiefly in the Neighbourhood of the Aroas and between the North and South Sand, to cross from those Islands to Parcelar Hill”.

Laurie & Whittle’s ‘East India Pilot’ was published as a practical guide to navigators aboard ships of the Royal Navy and East Indiamen, and often taken to sea, and this chart appears to be no exception. All variants of Laurie and Whittle’s ‘Oriental’ pilots of eastern waters are scarce, and were published under several titles, each with a different complement of charts. Variants include: ‘The Country Trade East-India Pilot, for the Navigation of the East- Indies and Oriental Seas, within the limits of the East-India Company’, ‘The Complete East-India Pilot, or Oriental Navigator’, ‘The East-India Pilot, or Oriental Navigator’, and ‘The Oriental Pilot; Or, East-India Directory’ focusing on the most important charts used for the journey.

The foundation of the partnership of Robert Laurie (1755–1836) and James Whittle (1757–1818) was the existing stock of Robert Sayer’s printing plates, both for maps and atlases and also decorative prints. Laurie had originally apprenticed to Robert Sayer in 1770, and made free in 1777. He was a skilled artist, who exhibited at the Society of Artists from 1770, winning a silver palette for a drawing in 1770, and he was also an accomplished engraver of mezzotint portraits and produced views and other decorative items. In about 1792 he returned to the Sayer business and took it over from the ailing Sayer in 1794. Whittle was apprenticed into the Needlemakers’ Company, evidently made free by 1792, and joined with Laurie to take over the Sayer business in 1794.

Laurie retired in 1812. His son Richard Holmes Laurie replaced him in the partnership and, eventually, took over the firm after Whittle’s death in 1818. Presumably under the influence of Richard Holmes Laurie, the partnership became noted as chartmakers and publishers, with the business existing to the current day as Imray, Laurie, Norie and Wilson.

Bibliography

Provenance

Price: £1100

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