



Engraved broadside.

ADVERTISEMENT FOR ADAMS'S SEA QUADRANT - PERHAPS THE EARLIEST EXAMPLE OF A LOT TAG FROM SOTHEBY'S

New Sea Quadrant. Invented, Made & Sold by Geo. Adams. Mathematical Instrument Maker to his Majesty's Office of Ordnance... At the above said place are Also made and sold Hadley's, Smith's, and Davis's Quadrants.

Author

ADAMS, George

Publication date

September 30th, 1748.

Publisher

At Tycho Brahe's Head Fleet Street, Published,

Publication place

London,

Physical description

Engraved broadside.

Dimensions

355 by 215mm. (14 by 8.5 inches).

Notes

George Adams (c1704-1773) was one of the leading the scientific instrument makers of his day. Apprenticed in 1718 he is recorded as setting up his business in 1735 of Fleet Street at the sign of

Tycho Brahe's Head, where he is recorded as being active between 1738 and 1757.

This advertisement was issued separately, and bound in with Adam's exceedingly rare work 'The description and use of a new sea quadrant'. OCLC records three institutional examples of the work: St Andrews University Library; The British Library; and The University of Edinburgh. The work last appeared on the market in 1951.

On the verso of the print are three paste-down slips bearing the numbers "No 159", "5103", and "4830", together with a further slip with the letterpress text "Baker and Leigh" and the letters "c.o.b." in manuscript iron gall ink. It is likely that these represent lot numbers from an auction, presumably "Baker and Leigh - C[lose] o[f] B[usiness]".

Samuel Baker (d1778) was a bookseller. He founded his business in 1744, and took his friend, George Leigh, into partnership in 1767 (Baker & Leigh). Baker died in 1778 and his nephew, one John Sotheby, inherited his share of the firm. The partnership was dissolved in 1804, and the remaining inventory, presumably including the present print, sold at auction before reforming under John's son, Samuel Sotheby. The rest, as they say, is history! It is worth noting that when Sotheby's claim that they have been in business since 1778, they are technically incorrect - they have really only been carrying on since 1804. The present advertisement may, therefore, be one of the earliest, if not the earliest, recorded example of a lot tag from the auction house that would become Sotheby's.

Bibliography

Provenance

Price:

Inventory reference: 12647