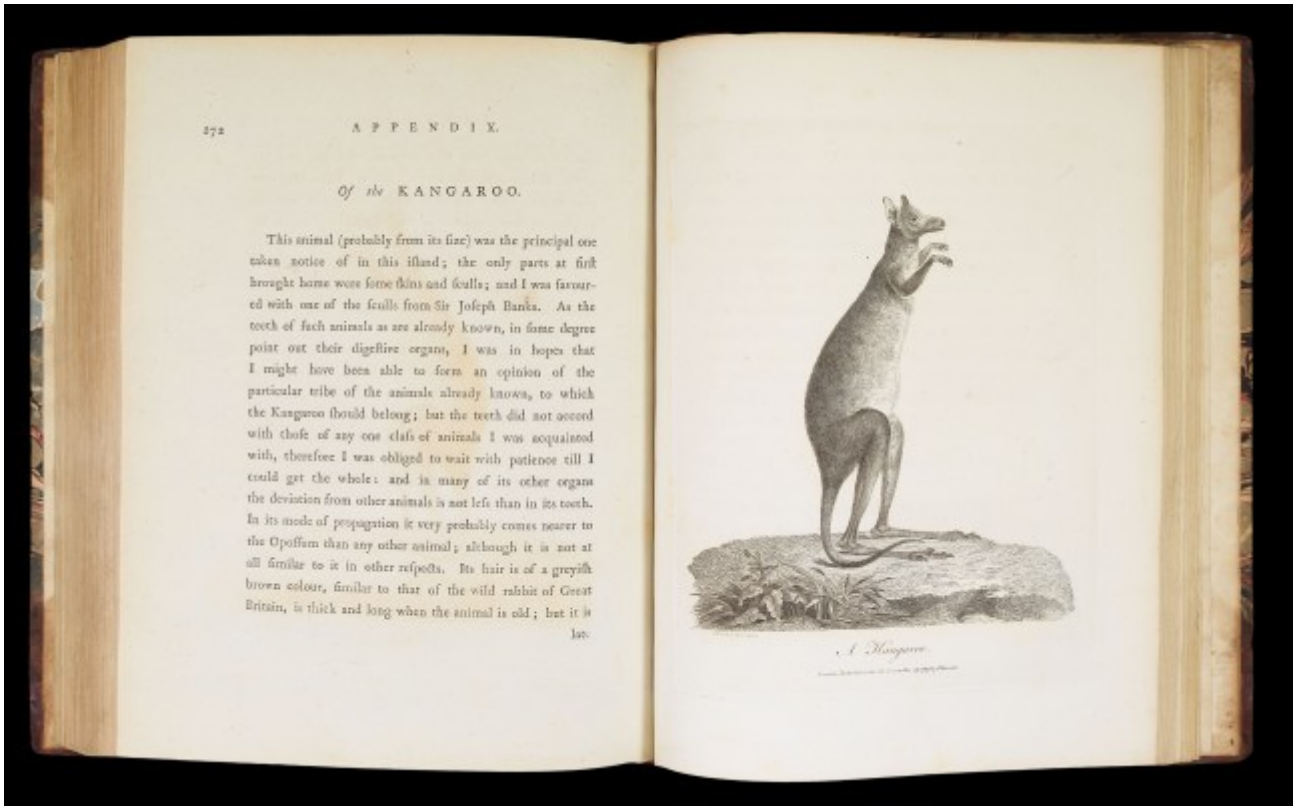


First edition. Quarto (300 by 230mm), engraved vignette title-page, 65 uncoloured engraved plates; modern maroon calf backed contemporary marbled paper boards, gilt.

FULL OF “NON DESCRIPT” NATURAL HISTORY

Journal of a Voyage to New South Wales, with Sixty-five Plates of Non descript Animals, Birds, Lizards, Serpents, curious Cones of Trees and other Natural Productions By John White Esqre. Surgeon General to the Settlement.

Author
WHITE, John

Publication date
1790.

Publisher
Printed for J. Debrett, Piccadilly,

Publication place
London,

Physical description
First edition. Quarto (300 by 230mm), engraved vignette title-page, 65 uncoloured engraved plates; modern maroon calf backed contemporary marbled paper boards, gilt.

Dimensions

Notes
John White (c1756-1832) was chief surgeon of the First Fleet, and began keeping a journal during the voyage. Once in Sydney, he kept notes of local flora and fauna, but paid particular attention to

the birds. This was no doubt a distraction from the dire conditions in the fledgling colony, which was facing famine. The arrival of the Second Fleet, in 1790, compounded problems, as many of the new convicts were already dying or seriously ill. In his care of the sick White was somewhat of a hero. Despite a great “lack of medicines and hospital accommodation White and his assistants nursed more than half of them back to health. A similar crisis arose with the arrival of the Third Fleet between July and September 1791. At one time about 600 newly-arrived convicts were under medical treatment and incapable of work and in 1792 the appalling total of 436 died. The strain on White was severe and in December 1792 he applied for leave in England. Nevertheless he pursued his natural history studies and sent many specimens and drawings to England. When Thomas Watling, convict and artist, reached the colony in October 1792 he was assigned to White and in the next two years made many drawings for him. It is possible that White himself had some skill as an artist…” (Rienits for ABD online).

Eventually, and as a great relief, White’s application for leave was granted. He arrived in London in July 1795, but was soon delivered an ultimatum to either return or resign. He resigned.

Bibliography
Literature: Ferguson, ‘Australian Bibliography’, 97.

Provenance

Price:

Inventory reference: 23903

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