



First issue. Double-page engraved chart, on 2 joined sheets, old folds, framed.

NAMING "AUSTRALIA"

General chart of Terra Australis, or Australia: showing the parts explored between 1798 and 1803 by M. Flinders Comm'r of H.M.S. Investigator.

Author

FLINDERS, Matthew

Publication date

Jan.y 1st 1814.

Publisher

Published as the Act directs, by G. & W. Nicol, Pall Mall,

Publication place

London,

Physical description

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Dimensions

660 by 950mm (26 by 37.5 inches).

Notes

Plate I from Flinders's atlas to: 'A voyage to Terra Australis by Matthew Flinders' (1814), the first true atlas of Australia (Clancy).

Flinders began work on "his map of Australia in 1804, during his detention in Mauritius. With the

first 'fair drawing', known as Y46-1, he made the decision to apply the name 'Australia' to the continent which up until then had generally been referred to as 'New Holland'... In 1811, while Flinders was still engaged in preparing his charts, maps and journal for publication, Louis Claude de Saulces Freycinet published what was to be the first full map of Australia, 'Carte generale de la Nouvelle Hollande'" (NLA).

He "surveyed the entire south coast from Cape Leeuwin to Bass Strait, the east coast, and the Gulf of Carpentaria. In the course of its survey, the 'Investigator' encountered the French exploratory vessel 'Geographe', commanded by Nicolas Baudin. On his return voyage to England, Flinders was commanded to put in to Mauritius for repairs and was made a prisoner for several years by the French governor. Upon returning to England, he devoted the remainder of his life to preparing this work of the press, and he died shortly before its publication. His account is one of the great works of Australian discovery" (Hill). It took Flinders three years to produce the sixteen folding charts which were destined to become the basis of the British Admiralty's folio of Australian hydrographic charts.

The mapmaker

Matthew Flinders (1774-1814) sailed from England on 18 July 1801, and during the next two years surveyed the entire coast of Australia from Cape Leeuwin to Bass Strait. He returned to Port Jackson in 1803 having completed the first circumnavigation of Australia, thus establishing that it was a continent. However, Flinders received little formal training in surveying, but his achievements on this voyage, working under very difficult circumstances, established him as one of the greatest of all coastal surveyors. His natural ability, allied with the great pains he took to insure the accuracy of the printed results, have ensured that the present work is of monumental cartographical significance and that it should be "the centerpiece of any collection of books dealing with Australian coastal discovery" (Wantrup).

On his return voyage to England, Flinders was forced by the state of his ship to seek assistance at the French island of Mauritius. There, despite his passport that instructed all French officers to render him assistance, the French Governor, General De Caen, arrested Flinders, accusing him of spying, and impounded his papers. Ignoring numerous official protests and disregarding even a direct order from Napoleon, De Caen held Flinders prisoner on Mauritius for the next six and a half years, finally releasing him on 14 June 1810. Although mortally ill, Flinders spent the last years of his too-short life preparing a detailed record of the 'Investigator' voyage.

Bibliography

Literature: Clancy, 'The Mapping of Terra Australis', 9.5; Hill, 'The Hill Collection of Pacific Voyages', 614; National Library of Australia, Gerritsen, 'Mapping our World', 225; Tooley, 'The Mapping of Australia', 570.

Provenance

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