



NICHOLAS BION

Nicolas Bion Ingenieur du Roy pour les Instrumens de Mathematique. Mor a Paris en 1753. Agé de 78 Ans. Admovet ille oculis distantia Sidera nostris, Ingenio potior fabraene exactior Artis? Ovid. Easior. Par des secours nouveaux, sa main et son Genie Nous ont developé tes leçons d'Uranie, Nous mesurent la Terre, et les Mers, et les Cieux; Les Astres par son Art s'approchent denos yeux. M Roy.

Author

LARMESSIN [Nicolas de]

Publication date

[c1760].

Publisher

De Larmessin graveur du Roy

Publication place

[Paris],

Physical description

Dimensions

215 by 158mm. (8.5 by 6.25 inches).

Notes

Nicholas Bion (1652-1733) was a French instrument maker, map publisher and author, who was active at the quai de l'Horloge a l'enseigne du Soleil, Paris. His most notable work was the 'Traité de la construction et des principaux usages des instrumens de mathématique' (1709), perhaps the most important book on the use of scientific instruments of the eighteenth century; it was published in

English in 1723 as 'The Construction and Principal Uses of Mathematical Instruments'. His expertise won him the position of engineer to the King, for whom he produced a range of instruments. Bion's success was made evident in his will, which left an estate worth an estimated 66,000 livres.

Some time after his death, Bion's portrait was engraved by Nicolas de Larmessin, a French printmaker who specialised in portraits. The engraving shows Bion seated besides one of his globes, set within an oval frame atop a plinth. On the plinth two lines of Latin are attributed to Ovid, although probably paraphrased: "Admoveret ille oculis distantia Sidera nostis, Ingenio potior, fabraene exatior Artis?" ('He himself brings the distant Stars to our eyes, a genius most powerful, an artist most exact'). There follow four lines of French lauding Bion's contributions to astronomy.

Bibliography

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Provenance

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