

Folio, (450 by 280mm) half-title, 8pp., 90pp. (last 13 pages mispaginated) ‘English Pilot the Second Book’ half title pasted over with ‘The Coasting Pilot, Chap. V’, 25 engraved charts on 23 map sheets, of which one is folding, bookplate of William Constable, original full calf, fillet border, spine in seven compartments separated by raised bands, rebacked, rubbed.

SELLER’S RARE COASTAL PILOT DETAILING THE ‘SOUTHERN NAVIGATION’ FROM ENGLAND TO THE STRAITS OF GIBRALTAR

The Coasting Pilot. Describing the Sea-Coasts of England, Holland, Flanders and France, with the Sands and Shoals, Rocks and Dangers, and Soundings, Buoys, Beacons and Sea-Marks upon the said Coasts. As also the Bays, Roads, Harbours, Rivers and Ports, and how to bring a Ship into any of them; shewing the Courses and Distances from Place to Place; With an Account of the Tides, and Setting of the Streams alongst the Coast. Being furnished with new Charts and Descriptions, Corrected by the Information of divers Able and Expert Navigators of our English Nation.

Author
SELLER, John

Publication date
[c.1680].

Publisher
Published by John Seller, Hydrographer to the King,

Publication place
[London],

Physical description

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Dimensions

Notes

John Seller (1630–1697) was one of the most important individuals in the early history of the atlas trade in England, yet his grand ambition – to rival the great atlas publishing houses of Blaeu, Janssonius, and Goos – would lead to bankruptcy and eventual failure.

Before entering the atlas market, Seller traded in nautical instruments from his shop ‘at the Sign of the Mariner’s Compass’ in Wapping – at the time the heart of the maritime trade. In 1669 he published ‘Paxis Nautica: Practical Navigation’, which established his credentials within the maritime community. His place was further strengthened when, in 1671, he was appointed hydrographer to Charles II.

That same year, Seller published his first sea atlas, the ‘English Pilot: The First Book’, covering the northern navigation. In the following few years, Seller would go on to publish the second, third, and fourth books of the ‘English Pilot’, covering the Southern, Oriental, and North American navigations; a ‘Coasting Pilot’ detailing the coasts of Britain the Low Countries; and a sea atlas, the ‘Atlas Maritimus’. Although much of their contents were taken from Dutch works by the likes of Goos, Blaeu, and Janssonius, one has to admire Seller’s sheer industry. This industry, however, was not allied with enough business acumen, and by 1677 a consortium of map publisher’s – most notably William Fisher and John Thornton – had taken over his business. It would seem that the terms of the rescue were quite harsh, as when the consortium broke up in 1679, Fisher kept the publication rights to the ‘Atlas Maritimus’ and the ‘English Pilot the Southern Navigation’, and Thornton received some of Seller’s plates.

The present pilot would appear to be an unusual highbred: the first eight pages of text are taken from Seller’s ‘Coasting Pilot’, and contain instructions for the Thames Estuary and the eastern coast of England. The subsequent pages of text are made up from his ‘English Pilot the Second Book’, with instructions for sailing from England to Gibraltar. Seller has pasted over the half title with the text: ‘The Coasting Pilot, Chapter V’, thus making it appear that the text is a natural continuation. One explanation for the fusing of the two text might have been to circumvent Fisher’s publication rights to the second book of the English Pilot, which Fisher had gained after the break up of the consortium in 1679. The pilot can be dated to around the break up as two of the 25 charts are by Thornton and five be Fisher.

All editions of Seller’s pilots are rare and – due to Seller’s constant financial problems – somewhat composite in nature, with Seller using whatever plates he had to hand at the time of publication. An example housed in the National Maritime Museum, dated 1672, and bound with the first part (or Northern Navigation) contains 22 charts on 17 map sheets.

Please see below for a full collation:

1. THORNTON, John. A Plat of Europe Describing all the Sea Coasts, from Greenland to the Straits mouth. By John Thornton At the Signe of England, Scotland and Ireland in the Minories, London
2. FISHER, William and Richard Mount. A Plat of the North Sea. By William Fisher and Richard Mount, at the Postern on Tower Hill, London.
3. SELLER, John. A Draught of the Sands, Channels, Buoyes,Beacons, and Sea Marks upon the Coast

of England from the Southforeland to Orfordness… Made and Sold by John Seller, John Colson, William Fisher, James Atkinson, John Thornton. London. Inset chart of the Thames.
4. SELLER, John. A Chart of the Sands, Shoals, Buoys, Beacons, & Sea-marks. Upon the coast of England. By John Seller Hidrographer to the King.
5. SELLER, John. A Chart of Part of England and Part of Scotland. By John Seller Hydrographer to the King.
6. [SELLER, John]. The Coast of England and France from Dover to the Isle of Wight and from Calice to Cape de Hague. Inset of the Isle of Wight.
7. [SELLER, John]. The Coasts of England & France from the Arendelto to the Start and from Cape de Basleur to I de Bass.
8. [SELLER, John]. The Coasts of England & France from the Start to
the Isles of Silly & from Isle de Bass to Ushant.
9. [SELLER, John]. The Coast of Holland From the Maes to the Texel.
10. [SELLER, John]. A Chart of the Sea-coasts of Zealand from Wacheren to the Maes.
11. [SELLER, John]. A Description of the Coast of Flanders From the Isle of Walcheren to Calice.
12. FISHER, William and Richard Mount. A Chart of the Channel. By William Fisher and Richard Mount at the Postern on Tower-hill, London.
13. FISHER, William and Richard Mount. A Plat of the Channel Describing the Sea Coasts of England, Scotland, Ireland and part of France. By William Fisher and Richard Mount at the Postern on Tower hill. London.
14. THORNTON, John. A New Sea Chart of ye Coast of Ireland. With ye Depths of Water & Dangers on ye said Coast. And also ye West Coast of England from ye Landsend to ye South part of Scotland. By John Thornton Hydrographer at the Platt in the Minories. London.
15. FISHER, William and Richard Mount. A Chart of France, Spain, and Portugal and the Straits Mouth. By William Fisher and Richard Mount at the Postern on Tower-hill. London.
16. SELLER, John. A Chart of the Bay of Biscaia By John Seller, John Colson, William Fisher, James Atkinson, and John Thornton.
17. SELLER, John. A Description of the Sea-Coast of France from Olone to Bayone in Biscay and part of that Coast thence to Cape. By John Seller Hydrographus Regis. Inset of the mouth of the Garonne River.
18. SELLER, John. A Chart of the Sea-Coast of Biscay Shewing all the Ports Roads Harbours Between Cape Machicaca and Cape de Pinas. By John Seller, Hydrographer to the King’s most excellent Matie. London.
19. SELLER, John. A Chart of the Sea-Coasts of the Galisia between Cape Pinas and Cape Finister By John Seller. Hydrographer to the King’s most Excellent Majestie dwelling at the Hermitage in Wapping.
20. SELLER, John. A Chart of the Seacoast of Portugall, between the Burlings: and Cape de St. Vincent. By John Seller Hydrographer to the King’s most excellent Majestie And are to be Sold at his Shop at the Hermitage in Wapping.
21. SELLER, John. A Chart of part of the Sea coasts of Gallisia and Portugall betweene Cape de Finisterre and the Burlings with all the Havens ans Harbours layd downe upon theyr true courses and distances by John Seller and are to be sold at his shop at the signe of the Mariner’s Compas at the Hermitage in Wapping.
22. SELLER, John. A Description of the South Coast of Elcondoda and Andalusia Between Cape St. Vincent and the Straits of Gibralter with part of ye coast of Barbary By John Seller. Hydrographer to the King’s most excellent Majestie And are to be sold at his shop at the Hermitage in Wapping.
23. [SELLER, John]. A Chart of the Straits of Gibralter.
24. [SELLER, John]. A Chart of the Sea-Coast of Spain From the Straits mouth to C. de Gar And of the Sea-Coast of Barbary From the Straits mouth to C. de Hone.
25. FISHER, William and Richard Mount. A Chart of the Sea-Coast of Barbary. By William Fisher & Richard Mount at the Postern on Tower-hill, London.

Bibliography
NMM 421.

Provenance

Price:

Inventory reference: 1959

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