

Engraved chart on two sheets, joined.

THE MANY ISLANDS OF THE CELEBES ARCHIPELAGO

A new chart of the Straits of Macassar between the islands of Borneo and Celebes with the adjacent seas.

Author
LAURIE, Robert; and James WHITTLE

Publication date
12th May 1799.

Publisher
Laurie & Whittle,

Publication place
London,

Physical description
Engraved chart on two sheets, joined.

Dimensions
640 by 470mm. (25.25 by 18.5 inches).

Notes
An exceptionally detailed chart of the Celebes archipelago and the relatively narrow strait between the islands of Borneo and Celebes. The tracks of several English vessels from the late 1780s are recorded, and the chart is filled with helpful notes and depth soundings. Coastal profiles are included along the side edges.

From Laurie & Whittle's 'East India Pilot', which was published as a practical guide to navigators aboard ships of the Royal Navy and East Indiamen, and often taken to sea, and this chart appears to be no exception. All variants of Laurie and Whittle's 'Oriental' pilots of eastern waters are scarce, and were published under several titles, each with a different complement of charts. Variants include: 'The Country Trade East-India Pilot, for the Navigation of the East-Indies and Oriental Seas, within the limits of the East-India Company', 'The Complete East-India Pilot, or Oriental Navigator', 'The East-India Pilot, or Oriental Navigator', and 'The Oriental Pilot; Or, East-India Directory' focusing on the most important charts used for the journey.

The foundation of the partnership of Robert Laurie (1755–1836) and James Whittle (1757–1818) was the existing stock of Robert Sayer's printing plates, both for maps and atlases and also decorative prints. Laurie had originally apprenticed to Robert Sayer in 1770, and made free in 1777. He was a skilled artist, who exhibited at the Society of Artists from 1770, winning a silver palette for a drawing in 1770, and he was also an accomplished engraver of mezzotint portraits and produced views and other decorative items. In about 1792 he returned to the Sayer business and took it over from the ailing Sayer in 1794. Whittle was apprenticed into the Needlemakers' Company, evidently made free by 1792, and joined with Laurie to take over the Sayer business in 1794.

Laurie retired in 1812. His son Richard Holmes Laurie replaced him in the partnership and, eventually, took over the firm after Whittle's death in 1818. Presumably under the influence of Richard Holmes Laurie, the partnership became noted as chartmakers and publishers, with the business existing to the current day as Imray, Laurie, Norie and Wilson.

Bibliography

Provenance
With numerous annotations in pencil and in ink, recording positions of previously unrecorded shoals.

Price: £750

Inventory reference: 17614

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