



Dudley's distinctive sea chart of northern Brazil

DUDLEY, Robert.

Carta particolare della Brasilia Settentrionale... D'America Carta XVI.

Florence: Francesco Onofri, 1646-7. Two sheets conjoined, total 480 x 750mm.

£2,600

A very fine example of Robert Dudley's sea-chart of the coast of Brazil from Sao Luis south to Porto de Pedra, marking Pernambuco and Olinda. It is engraved in Antonio Francesco Lucini's unique style for Dudley's 'Dell'Arcano del Mare' (Secrets of the Sea), an encyclopaedia of maritime knowledge. The 'Arcano' was the first sea-atlas by an Englishman to be printed (albeit engraved and published in Italy), breaking the Dutch monopoly of such publications. The engraver Lucini wrote in the introduction to the second edition that he worked for 12 years on the copper plates, which weighed 5000 lbs. Dudley was the son of the Earl of Leicester, favourite of Queen Elizabeth I, and was born in secret to avoid her jealousy. Well educated, he joined the Elizabethan maritime adventurers and led an expedition to the Orinoco in 1594, raiding Trinidad en route. After failing to prove his parents married, which would allow him to assume his father's titles, he left England for Italy in 1605. There he assumed the titles of 'Earl of Warwick and Leicester' and 'Duke of Northumberland' in 1620, which caused James I to seize all Dudley's English properties. He died in 1649, two years after the first edition of the 'Arcano'.



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