

A set of eight plates from "The tapestry hangings of the House of Lords: representing the several engagements between the English and Spanish fleets, in the ever memorable year MDLXXXVIII (1588), with the portraits of the Lord High-Admiral, and the other noble commanders, taken from the life. Drawn by Clement Lempriere, engraved and published by John Pine in 1739

Sold



REF: 10107

Description

John Pine's celebrated work depicts the defeat of the Spanish Armada by the English Fleet under the command of Lord Howard of Effingham in 1588. The Spanish were driven towards Flanders and tried to escape through the northern seas above Scotland and Ireland, but were dispersed by storms.

Shortly after the defeat of the Armada, Lord Howard of Effingham commissioned a series of charts of the various phases of the action from Robert Adams. The tapestries depicted ten charts of the sea-coasts of England, and a general one of England, Scotland, Ireland, France, Holland, &c. showing the places of action between the two fleets; ornaments with medals struck upon the occasion, and other suitable devices.

Adams' works were then passed on to Hendrick Vroom (1563-1640), who produced ten tapestry designs based on them. The tapestries depicted ten charts of the sea-coasts of England, and a general one of England, Scotland, Ireland, France, Holland, &c. showing the places of action between the two fleets; ornaments with medals struck upon the occasion, and other suitable devices. These designs were subsequently woven by Francis Spring of Haarlem in Holland 1592-5. The ten completed works were later sold to James I and eventually ended up in the House of Lords. Eight of the tapestries were destroyed in the fire of 1834 at the Palace of Westminster and the surviving two are now at Hampton Court. Fortunately the tapestries were recorded in John Pine's engravings which constitute the only visual record of these valuable images.

Pine's prints were engraved after drawings by Clement Lempriere and embellished with elegant borders incorporating emblematic figures by Hubert Gravelot, the French artist who had travelled to England in 1732. Each border contains medallions with portraits of Armada heroes identified by name such as of captains Sir Francis Drake, Sir John Hawkins and Martin Frobisher.

Pine evidently regarded the armada prints as one of the major projects of his career, since he used his influence to ensure that the Copyright Act of 1735 gave him the exclusive right to copy the tapestries, the insertion of a clause to this effect at the third reading of the bill in April 1735 indicating that the scheme took at least four years from inception to publication"

Sheet Height 38.10 cm., 1ft 3 in., Length 61 cm., 2 ft.

In ebonized wooden frames.

Frame Height 46 ½ cm. 18 in. Length 70 cm. 27 ½ in.

Five plates show action between the fleet and bordered with portraits of The Lord Admiral, Sir Robert Cary, Earl of Northumberland, Sir William Winter, Sir Roger Toundsand, Sir Thomas Garrat, Sir John Hawkins, Sir Martin Forbisher. One plate shows the Spanish being driven away and bordered with portraits of the 22 commanders. Two plates show the English coast and the position of the fleets, bordered with portraits of Sir Frances Drake and Queen Elizabeth.

ADAMS, Robert (d 1595)

An architect and surveyor who, apart from drawing a number of town plans, prepared famous charts showing the engagements day by day between the Spanish Armada and the English fleets. Subsequently the charts were used as the basis for the design of tapestries made for the House of Lor...