



Rare Books, Manuscripts, Maps & Photographs (589)

19th February 2020, Edinburgh

Viewing Times:

Sun 16th February 12pm - 4pm
Mon 17th February 10am - 5pm
Tues 18th February 10am - 5pm
Morning of the sale from 9am

Lot 39

Estimate: £15000 - £20000 +Fees

Nicolay, Nicolas de, Seigneur d'Arfeville [and Alexander Lyndsay or Lindsay]

La Navigation du Roy d'Ecosse Jacques Cinquiesme du Nom, autour de son Royaume, & Isles Hebrides & Orchades, soubz la conduite d'Alexandre Lyndsay excellent Pilote Escossois, recueille & redigee... par Nicolay d'Arfeville. Paris: Gilles Beys, 1583. First edition, 4to, (224 x 147mm.), ff. [vi], 37, fine large folding map (383x288mm. to plate-mark), with ships, compass rose, and a sea monster, also with a folding scale, and 6 large woodcuts in the text (compass rose, prevailing winds, tides and currents, hazards, aids to direction-finding), inscription on endpaper noting the gift of Claudius Phalempin to Maximilian Noircarmius, contemporary vellum, blue morocco slipcase, the map with 4 small modern slips of paper stuck to the margin captioned "Plate VI", "Nicolay D'Arfeville 1583"; "Collection of D. Alan Stevenson Esq.", "J.B. & S.E.", a few light spots, vellum slightly soiled and with small repairs to spine, lacks ties

Literature: Royal Scottish Geographical Society. *The Early Maps of Scotland to 1850*, (Revised and enlarged, with A History of Scottish Maps by D.G. Moir), Edinburgh, 1973. (Moir's third chapter is devoted to "Nicolas de Nicolay and Alexander Lyndsay,"); Taylor, Adams & Fortune. *Alexander Lindsay, a rutter of the Scottish Seas c.1540*. (National Maritime Museum Monographs 44), 1980; Moore. *The historical cartography of Scotland*. Aberdeen, 1991. For John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland (1504-1553), a key figure in the transmission of the principal text as well as in the political events of the period, see the entry by David Loades in the *Oxford DNB*.

Note: Nicolay's *La Navigation du Roy d'Ecosse Jacques Cinquiesme du Nom, autour de son Royaume* is an early navigational guide, the oldest Scottish "rutter" (an early sixteenth century term for a set of sailing directions, from the French *routier*). It is one of only a handful of such works of any origin to have come down to us, accompanied by the first accurate delineation of Scotland: created by the Scots for the purpose of containment; mysteriously obtained in manuscript by the English, copied by Nicolay and taken to the French king, then put into almost immediate use to avenge the murder of Cardinal Beaton at St. Andrews; and on two subsequent occasions with a view to supporting the Scottish succession.

The voyage of James V named on the title-page is that of 1540, when the King, with several nobles, set out to subdue the unruly Lords of the Western Isles. "The King visited Orkney, Skye, Lewis, Ross and Kintail and continued by sea

to Dumbarton, where he left his fleet and rode back to Edinburgh, which he reached before 29th July (when he wrote to Henry VIII that he had visited the north and south isles), while the ships returned round the north of Scotland...." Alexander Lyndsay was the pilot, and Nicolay credits him with having compiled the rutter by command of the King for the purpose. There would appear to be little doubt that this is true, as the guide, laboriously drawn from Lyndsay's experience - and from material gathered from other sources, as the volume and geographical range of the information suggest - starts from Leith as the expedition did, gives the route which James's fleet followed, and provides a suitable course through the Western Isles for meeting the island chiefs.

In Scotland, extreme tidal conditions, a shallow seabed, and variable winds and visibility retarded the development of astronomical observations for navigation; northern pilots generally made their way by setting courses from one headland to the next, and by keeping in mind the effect of tidal streams and the risk of hidden rocks and other hazards. It required only a compass, a sand-glass, traverse-board, and a lead and line. Lyndsay's rutter is, therefore, typical as a guide to coastal waters before detailed charts and sophisticated instruments came into use. It contains nearly 200 items of information and advice about tides, courses and havens, soundings and hazards (all but one of 150 place-names can be identified with relative certainty), and, though far from faultless, it clearly served the purpose for which it was laboriously compiled.

Little is known about the work's true originator, Alexander Lyndsay, but Nicolay is well documented. Nicolas de Nicolay (1517-1583) travelled widely throughout Europe and the Middle East, wrote several narratives of his journeys, and published *De l'Art de Naviguer*, translated from the Spanish. In 1544 he published a marine chart of Europe (the basis of the Ortelius map of Europe in his first atlas, 1570), a chart of America in 1554, and a map of the Boulonnais in northern France in 1558. He was appointed Géographe (or Cosmographe) du Roy in 1566.

Nicolay relates how he acquired both the work and the map in his dedication to the Duc de Joyeuse, Admiral of France. In 1546, Lord Dudley, Admiral of England, was in Paris to ratify the peace treaty between Henry VIII of England and François of France which put an end to two years of war. Dudley, a powerful and cunning politician and military strategist, well versed in Anglo-French and Anglo-Scottish affairs, had played a crucial role in the conflict, but had established good relations with his principal antagonist d'Annebaut. Having met Nicolay, whose skills as a navigator were widely known, Dudley persuaded Nicolay to return with him to England, where he stayed about a year: "very well treated and favoured, even to the extent of having revealed to me several important matters concerning [Dudley's] office as Admiral, among which, in order to draw me more fully into his designs, he communicated to me a little book written by hand in the Scottish language, containing the navigation of the King of Scotland...with all the outstanding particulars worthy of note in such a navigation; together with the sea chart, rather roughly made, for the instruction of all other mariners." (Moore suggests that Dudley obtained a copy of Lyndsay's rutter - "by foul means more probably than fair" - while he was Warden of the Scottish Marches in 1542-43, stationed at Berwick.) Dudley, presumably by design, permitted Nicolay to make a copy of this powerful little document, "avec combien

de grands traveaux ce peu de papier avoit esté escrit," and on the latter's return to France, at the accession of Henry II, had the rutter translated into French "with the assistance of the late Maitre Jehan Ferrier, a very learned Scotsman, and having made a fair copy of it with its chart, I presented it to his Majesty, who immediately sent it to Sieur Leon Strozzi, Prior of Capua, captain general of his galleys, and he and I also went with sixteen galleys, and other forces to besiege the castle of St. Andrews." Elsewhere Nicolay confirms that he was with this fleet to assist the Regent Arran to avenge the murder - at the hands of anti-French Protestants - of Cardinal Beaton. (The castle capitulated on 31st July 1547, and John Knox was among the defenders taken prisoner, spending eighteen months in the French galleys before his release.) Nicolay was thus given an opportunity to survey the Scottish coastline and improve upon the map he had obtained from Dudley.

The rutter continued to be put to use. A manuscript version at the British Library dating from about 1559 contains a dedication to the Cardinal of Lorraine: French troops were then being sent to Scotland to support Mary of Guise, sister of the Cardinal and the widow of James V. Nicolay's eventual publication of the work in 1583 seems again to have arisen out of the political situation. "In 1581-2 Spain and France were intriguing with Catholic nobles in Scotland - Spain being the instigator - with a view to an attack on England through Scotland. A massive naval expedition was secretly mooted" (Taylor), which would "assist in putting Mary Stuart on the throne of England." (Moir)

The "Description de l'Isle et Royaume d'Ecosse, et lles Hebrides et Orchades," which is followed by the "Navigation" with separate title, is accompanied by a striking and "greatly improved map of Scotland on the scale of c.21 miles to an inch...[which] gave a much better outline of Scotland than any previous map - an outline which was in fact more accurate than any later maps of the 17th century...." As Taylor and Moore separately conclude, Lyndsay's rutter would have preceded the chart, which was possibly based on an earlier map corrected through reference to other sources including the rutter; and, as the knowledge required for compiling a chart was essentially different from that for compiling a rutter, Lyndsay may have had little part in its fabrication.

Be that as it may, its prominence in the history of Scottish cartography is well established. Moir points out that "Although the printed map is dated 1583 the author tells us that the original manuscript map was obtained by him in 1546, and so the map in its origin is earlier than Mercator's 1546 map of the British Isles, and possibly earlier even than Lily's map of 1546.... Nicolay's map marks a great advance in the cartography of Scotland. Not only is the shape of Scotland shown with considerable accuracy, but it is much more accurate than the later Gordon-Blaeu map of 1654 or the Moll map of 1714.... In 1688 John Adair had a new plate of the 1583 map engraved by James Moxon for his Description of the Sea-Coast and Islands of Scotland, on the ground that it was the most accurate map, and in 1734 John Cowley recorded that when preparing his own map of Scotland he found Nicolay's map to be more exact than any other.... Accepting Nicolay's statement that the original of his map was drawn in 1540...it is a remarkable production and shows quite an advanced skill in cartography...." (Moir omits to mention that Nicolay had opportunities to improve upon the original during the French punitive expedition of 1546.)

This remarkable volume brings together many strands of interest: in the history of navigation and cartography, certainly; but perhaps more significantly it gives us an insight to the workings of diplomacy, espionage and intrigue in sixteenth century international relations.