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The City of Tanger

Stock#: 73057

Map Maker: Ogilby

Date: 1670 circa

Place: London

Color: Hand Colored

Condition: VG

Size:

Price: SOLD



Description:

An Early English Colony in Africa - The Proto-Gibraltar.

Interesting engraved bird's-eye view of the English colony of Tangier by R. White for John Ogilby.

This view is based on a larger one by Hollar after Jonas Moore.

We previously sold a manuscript of the colony, which can be seen here: <https://www.raremaps.com/gallery/detail/61976>

This was one of the new plates engraved for Ogilby's Africa, and is consequently surprisingly rare.

English Tangier

Tangier and Bombay were part of the dowry of Charles II's Portuguese queen, Catherine of Braganza. The marriage contract was signed in June 1661, when Tangier seemed much the greater prize; Bombay in comparison was considered too distant. Tangier was turned into a massive, and very expensive, fortress at the entrance to the Mediterranean, more than fifty years before the English took control of Gibraltar in 1713. The colony was supposed to help suppress Barbary pirates, ward off foreign powers, and generally project English power into the Mediterranean.

The Tangier Colony became a major focus of English geopolitics (and internal politics) in the latter part of the seventeenth century, culminating with its abandonment and destruction in 1683 (elaborated below). The Tangier episode was an important experiment that yielded vital lessons for English imperialism in its early phase, particularly with respect to Africa and Gibraltar.



The City of Tanger

The abandonment and leveling of English Tangier

A 1676 survey of Tangier showed that there were 2,225 inhabitants of the colony, of whom fifty were army officers, 1,231 of other ranks, with 302 army wives and children. Parliament was concerned that the garrison was costing a hefty £140,000 a year to maintain. The King's frequent requests for more troops for the garrison raised suspicions that a standing army was being retained in Tangier to ensure a Catholic succession and absolute monarchy. In 1680 Parliament told the King that it would only grant supplies if he assented to a Bill of Exclusion to disinherit the Duke of York. The King refused to sacrifice his brother's right of succession to save Tangier.

In 1683, George Legge, Lord Dartmouth, went to Tangier in the company of naval official and diarist Samuel Pepys. In August of that year, Dartmouth, as Admiral of the Fleet and governor and captain general of Tangier, sailed from Plymouth. Pepys, as an observer, wrote an account of the expedition, which had a clandestine purpose. Dartmouth carried secret orders from Charles II to abandon Tangier. Dartmouth was to level the fortifications, destroy the harbor, and evacuate the troops.

Once in Tangier, Lord Dartmouth had several concerns. One was the evacuation of sick soldiers and their families and possessions. 114 invalid soldiers and 104 women and children sailed in October in the ships *Unity* and *Diamond*, arriving in England in December. Dartmouth was also eager to free English sailors held captive in North Africa. He negotiated the release of nearly forty men, including several officers, some of whom had spent ten years in the hands of the Moroccans.

Dartmouth's final task was to blow up the English fortifications, leaving nothing for Moroccans or other powers who might follow. This took a considerable amount of work by the soldiers still stationed in the colony. They demolished the harbor wall and fortress buildings in the early weeks of 1684. As a final measure, they studded the walls of the fort with mines, to be blown as the last troops left the garrison. The official evacuation took place on February 5, 1684, with all troops free of the area by March.

It is likely that Phillips began this plan while in Tangier, although he may have also drafted or corrected it upon return to England. It was then needed by officials, perhaps to prove the thoroughness of the destruction. Prior to the final detonation of the mines, there had been much discussion about the efficacy and placing of the mines, and Phillips may have been trying to prove that he and his colleagues had done a systematic job.

Not all the residents of Tangier returned to England. Some of the departing soldiers were rewarded with large land grants in the newly acquired province of New York. Thomas Dongan, the 2nd Earl of Limerick and a former lieutenant-governor of Tangier, became New York provincial governor. William "Tangier" Smith, the last mayor of Tangier, obtained fifty miles of Atlantic oceanfront property on Long Island.



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Detailed Condition:

Minor centerfold toning.