



The story of the Spanish Armada from the House of Lords tapestries

PINE, John.

[The English sending the fire-ships in among the Spanish Fleet.]

London, John Pine, 1739. Printed from three plates, outer plate 380 x 610mm.

£800

A pair of sea charts of the English Channel, printed in blue, within a decorative border printed from a third plate. The left plate shows the Spanish Armada at anchor off Calais, and the eight fire-ships bearing down on them, blown by a delicately-engraved windhead. The right plate shows the Armada, having cut their anchors to escape the fire-ships, fleeing north in disarray. The decorative border has roundel portraits of Elizabeth I, Pope Sixtus V, Phillip II of Spain and Alessandro Farnese, governor of the Spanish Netherlands, and two putti weeping over the loss of life. A lighter note is struck by the text in Latin and English: 'Upon the disappearance of this mighty Fleet, the following Writing was fixed up to Pasquin at Rome. The Pope from the Plenitude of his Power will grant Indulgences for a thousand Years, if any one will inform him with certainty, what is become of the Spanish Fleet, where it is gone; whether it be taken up into Heaven, sunk down into Tartarus, suspended somewhere in the Air, or floating upon some Sea.' This is a plate from 'The Tapestry Hangings of the House of Lords', drawn by Hubert-François Gravelot, engraved and published by John Pine. It depicts one of ten tapestries commissioned from the Dutch marine painter Hendrik Cornelisz Vroom by Lord Howard of Effingham in 1591 to commemorate the defeat of the Armada. Unfortunately they were destroyed when the Houses of



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Parliament burnt down in 1834, leaving Pine's book as the only record. It is lucky that Pine worried that "Time, or Accident, or moths may deface these valuable shadows'.

MCC: 4.

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