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A MEDITERRANEAN CRUISE WITH A DIFFERENCE

Willyams, Rev. Cooper (1762-1816) *A Voyage up the Mediterranean in His Majesty's Ship the Swiftsure, one of the Squadron under the Command of Rear-Admiral Sir Horatio Nelson, K.B... with a Description of the Battle of the Nile on the first of August 1798, and a Detail of Events that occurred subsequent to the Battle in various parts of the Mediterranean.*

London: T. Bensley for J. White, 1802

First Edition, 4to: titlepage, [iii] to xxiii including engraved dedication to Earl St Vincent, folding uncoloured aquatint map, pp. 309, complete with 41 aquatint plates by J.C. Stadler in sepia. They include a plan of the battle by Capt. R.W. Miller of the Theseus composed "the following morning". Wood-engraved tail-pieces in text. Contemporary polished calf, with previous decorative backstrip and letterpiece preserved. Modern endpapers.

CONDITION: Very small wormhole close to fore-edge developing from circa p. 39 onwards, turning into small trace in last few leaves. Plates and text unaffected. Leading corners of binding a little bumped, with damage to gilt tracery at lower right corner of upper cover. Contents generally very clean. OVERALL A FINE COPY.

SIZE: 285 x 225mm, 11¼ x 9 ins.

In 1798 Willyams, Vicar of Exning, Suffolk, served as chaplain of HMS Swiftsure (Capt. Hallowell), in the squadron under the command of Admiral Nelson. A competent draughtsman, he had previously served as chaplain of HMS Boyne and produced views during the British campaign of 1794 in the West Indies. He was present at the great British victory at the Battle of the Nile 1-3 August 1798 and provides an eyewitness account of the fighting. His is "the first, the most particular, and the most authentic account of the battle" (DNB). He remained with the ship for a further two years.

The illustrations from drawings on the spot include views of Sicily, Egypt, Venice, Minorca and Gibraltar, as well as inhabitants of the Mediterranean seaboard and British servicemen on and off-duty, also Egyptian antiquities. According to his Preface, Willyams felt only a seaman was qualified to depict scenes of the actual fighting, and for accuracy commends three large engravings after Capt. Weir to the reader. 32 of the plates were reprinted for the posthumously published *Selection of views in Egypt, Palestine, Rhodes, Italy, Minorca, and Gibraltar*, in 1822.

A large paper edition was published.

REF: Abbey Travel 169 (with coloured plates).

PRICE: £2,200

Stock number: 85