



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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John Nicholson. *Mappesiani bibliopolii Cant. custos*

Stock#: 92741
Map Maker: Reinagle / Caldwell / Nicholson
Date: 1790
Place: Cambridge
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 15 x 22.5 inches
Price: \$ 2,800.00



Description:

"The Richest Biblioplist that is, or ever was, in Cambridge."

Fantastic, and rare, piece of bookseller ephemera, being the James Caldwell engraving of Philip Reinagle's life-size portrait of the Cambridge bookseller John Nicholson, now hanging in the Cambridge University Library.

The image shows John "Maps" Nicholson crossing the Trinity College Great Court with a pile of books, evidently on his way to deliver them to some undergraduate or fellow. The engraving was published supposedly at the request of the students, fellows, and regents of the university, and Nicholson promised to give the proceeds to Addenbrookes Hospital.



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The self-published engraving adheres to Nicholson's myth as a driven mapseller. Nicholson was affectionately referred to as "*Maps*" by students and fellows of the University, supposedly for his catchphrase "*Maps and Pictures*" that he would cry out at the base of college staircases.

Nicholson was born in 1729 or 1730 to a farming family. He became involved in the book trade by setting up a street stall, but got a leg up in the business when he married Mary Anne Watts, the daughter of a bookstore owner by King's College. Nicholson eventually took over the business and expanded it until his death in 1796.

The Reverend Michael Tyson remembered Nicholson as follows:

One Nicholson, I remember my Father told me, used to come up the staircases of St. John's and other Colleges, and cry out, "Maps and Pictures." He soon got the nickname of Maps, which his Son, high in your time and to this hour Maps, still inherits; but this Maps is now said to be the richest Bibliopolist that is, or ever was, in Cambridge. I aver that "Maps and Pictures" never was a general phrase, but merely confined to this Family.

However, a darker side of the business also helped Nicholson to achieve is standing. According to some, for suitable payment, he could provide essays ("themes") to undergraduates in manuscript form.

Detailed Condition:

Small tears and areas of reinforcement at top of image, expertly and invisibly restored