

Some small maps, including five miniatures about 70 x 135 mm., come from volume four of an eight volume work on natural history. The author was a French priest, l'Abbé Noël-Antoine Pluche (1688 –1761). This was not a scientific book, but one written for a wide audience and it was soon in great demand throughout Europe. Publication commenced in Paris in 1732, the next two volumes appearing in 1735 and the fourth in 1739. The next three volumes were issued in 1746 and the last one was finally published in two parts in 1750.



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The first volume of an English translation appeared in London in 1733 and Dutch, German and Spanish editions followed. There were very many reprints too, often before the next volume was issued and sets are invariably made up of a variety of issues: something of a bibliographical nightmare, hence the lack of details below of all the later editions and issues.



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The original five French plates were engraved and mostly signed by Pierre Bourgoïn:

*Le Port d'Ophir et l'ancienne route de Tarsis* (unsigned map of Africa with a vignette below);

*Les Colonies des Européens en Amerique;*

*Grece et Ionie;*

*La Navigation du Nord* (Scandinavia);

*Les aspects du Ciel* (five thumbnail roundels).

Later engravers pretty well copied the originals, except for the language.

*Le Spectacle de la nature. Tome IV.* Paris, Jacques Estienne's widow, 1732-1750.