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The Abolition of  
*the* English Slave Trade

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## The Abolition of the English Slave Trade

### *Introduction*

By the middle of the eighteenth century, Britain had become the largest slaving nation in the world with a vast commercial network that conducted trade in human flesh on four continents. The products of this commerce were woven into the daily lives of all social classes – from the sugar used to sweeten afternoon tea to the clothing on people’s backs. It provided tangible benefits and was generally perceived to contribute to the nation’s prosperity.

Yet there were dissident voices. At first singly or in small groups and often discordant but as the century progressed, they grew in number, harmonized and merged. It was nonconforming Christians such as the Quakers, businessmen such as Josiah Wedgwood, former slaves such as Ignatius Sancho, evangelical Christians such as John Newton, artists such as William Blake, politicians such as William Wilberforce, and many other, often anonymous, voices that formed this motley chorus. The passage of time has obscured the boldness and sheer ambition of the abolitionists – to rend and remake the fabric of society – and their unlikely chance for success.

The original books, manuscripts and related objects offered for sale in this catalogue were carefully assembled and painstakingly researched over a two year period. They describe the slave trade – how it began, functioned and was eventually abolished. Particular attention is given to the period 1787-88 when the abolitionist movement gained form and a staggering degree of public support.

The movement was a sophisticated endeavour. The abolitionists not only conveyed their ideas with words, primarily through the traditional medium of print, but they also created images that clearly and powerfully communicated their message across a variety of media. As a testament to their genius, many of the images have outlived the ephemeral circumstances of their creation to become enduring cultural icons that have been widely reproduced and adapted. Social reformers, artists and historians – professors and pop stars alike – have employed these representations of human suffering as well as the innate nobility of man.



Items 45 (left) and 32 (right)

The catalogue also touches on the necessarily related topics of early British involvement in Africa, changing British perceptions of the African peoples and their continent, and the difficult truth that often a demonstrable good can produce unintended ill consequences, in that one can see some of the roots of African colonialism in the success of the abolitionists.

Nevertheless, the British campaign to abolish the slave trade has been called the greatest social movement that the world has ever seen and this catalogue attempts to portray the triumph of humanitarian and spiritual values over entrenched economic interests and the inertia of comfort and prosperity – an inspiring and empowering story for the modern world.

John Q. O'Mara

Maggs Bros. Ltd., March 2009

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## THE WEALTH OF AFRICA REVEALED

**1 VILLAULT** (Nicolas, sieur de Bellefond). A Relation of the coasts of Africk called Guinee; with a description of the countreys, manners and customs of the inhabitants; of the productions of the earth, and the merchandise and commodities it affords; with some historical observations upon the coasts. Being collected in a voyage by the Sieur Villault, escuyer, Sieur de Bellefond, in the years 1666, and 1667. Written in French and faithfully Englished.

**Second edition in English.** 12mo., [8], 280 pp. Title-page browned and lightly frayed at edges, some intermittent light browning and soiling but otherwise a good copy bound in modern calf and marbled boards, antique style.

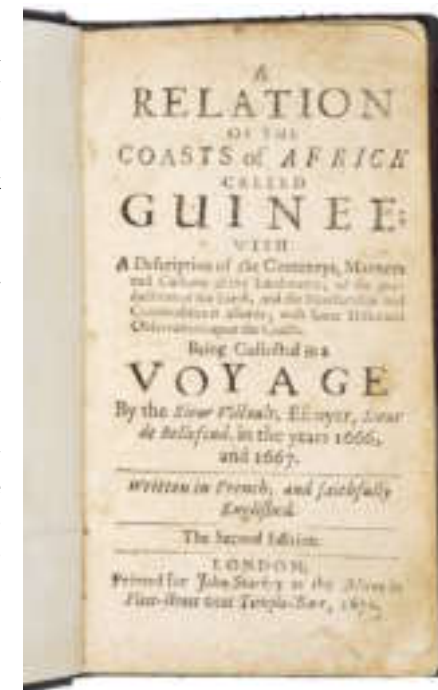
London: for John Starkey, 1670.

£2500

ESTC records the **British Library, Birmingham University Library, Foreign and Commonwealth Office Library (largely dispersed), All Souls College - Oxford University, Bodley only in U.K. and Folger, Huntington and New York Public Library only in North America.**

The first edition is recorded by ESTC in nine locations in the U.K. and four in America: Biomedical Library of the University of California at Los Angeles, William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, University of Minnesota and Yale.

**Rare account of a voyage to Guinea by a French traveller that discusses the flora, fauna, people and their customs - including very detailed descriptions of their trade and religion.** It is an anonymous translation of the French *La Relation des costes d'Afrique, appellees Guinee* (Paris, 1669).



The slave trade is mentioned early in the work when the author discusses the lucrative trade on the west coast of Africa and how native Africans are “transported for slaves into America; and contribute exceedingly to the profit of those plantations” (9).

There is also an important early description of the practice of slavery by the natives: “They have not many slaves upon this Coast, it not being permitted to any but Nobles, to Trade in that nature by which means they are not allowed to entertain any but for their necessary service in their families or fields. These slaves are commonly [sic] such poor miserable Creatures, as having not wherewithall to maintain or keep themselves alive, are glad to sell themselves to the rich merchants of that Countrey... if they endeavour to escape, for the first time they cut off one ear, and for the second the other, if they attempt it a third time, and be taken, they either sell them away, or cut off their heads, as they please. The children of these poor people are slaves as well as the Parents, and obliged to do whatever they are commanded” (196-97).

Later in the work, eight pages (198-206) is devoted to discussing the various diseases of Guinea and their treatment.

Provenance: Earls of Macclesfield, of Shirburn Castle, Oxfordshire, with a facsimile North Library bookplate; acquired privately.

#### CANNIBALISM & SLAVERY IN OLD CALABAR - AN EARLY SOURCE FOR THE ENGLISH SLAVE TRADE

**2 [WATTS (JOHN)].** A True Relation of the Inhumane and Unparallel'd Actions, and Barbarous Murders of Negroes and Moors: Committeted on three English-men in Old Calabar in Guinny. Of the Wonderful Deliverance of the Fourth person, after he had endured Horrid Cruelties and Sufferings: who lately arrived in England, and is now in his Majesties Fleet. Together with a short, but true Account of the Customs and Manners and Growth of the Country, which is very Pleasant.

**First & Only Edition.** Small 4to., 19, [1] pp. Lightly browned throughout, lower outer corners slightly frayed but otherwise a good copy bound in late nineteenth century half brown morocco and marbled boards for Sotheran.

London: for Thomas Passinger, and Benjamin Hurlock, 1672. £3200

Wing T2970 recording the **British Library, Cambridge, Corpus Christi - Oxford, Longleat House only in the U.K. and Folger, Huntington, John Carter Brown, New York Historical Society, New York Public Library, and Yale only in North America.** ESTC adds no additional copies.

**A rare and important early account of West Africa and the British slave trade.**

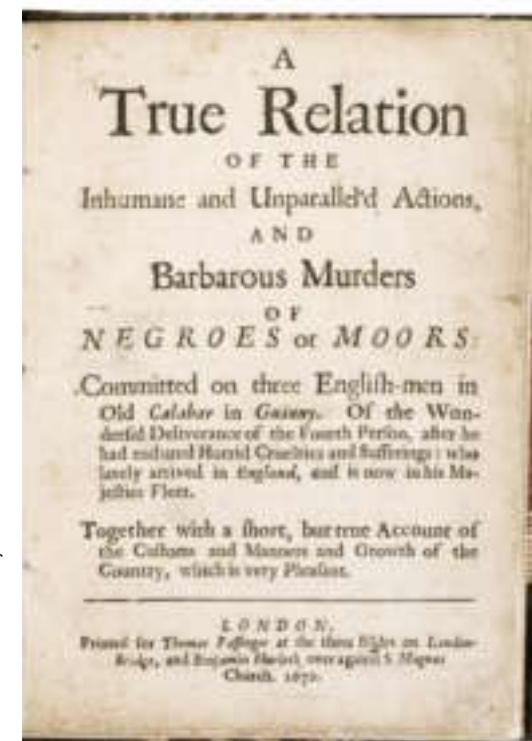
The work contains a gruesome description of cannibalism as practiced by the native Africans. **Such descriptions, whether based on fact or not, circulated in this and other works and helped to form the British perception that Africans were savages in need of civilising.**

“While most of the charges concerning the black craving for human flesh were expressed by individuals who lacked direct experience and were merely passing along hearsay reports, some accounts purportedly derived from firsthand observations. For those anxious to label Africans as savages, such reports were of considerable utility. An account published in London in 1672 contained the narrative of a youth ‘not above eighteen years old’ who with three others had been siezed by natives near Old Calabar [Calabar is now in the Cross River State in southeast Nigeria – the heart of the English slave trade in the seventeenth century]. He graphically described how his three companions were eventually served at luxurious banquets, beginning with the boatswain, who had been wounded by the blacks at the time of their capture” (Wax, 16).

The four men described above were mates on the British slave ship *Peach-tree* bound for Guinea “intending there to take in Negroes, and to transport them to the Barbadoes” (3). They touched land on the Gold Coast and then sailed to Old Calabar.

As they were about to set sail with their cargo of slaves the Master ordered the boatswain and three other men, including Watts, to return to shore with their remaining copper bars [which were used as currency] to try to sell them. Soon after reaching the shore, the natives attacked the men and captured them after a fight of about three hours. The boatswain received a mortal wound in the groin and collapsed in the boat. The others attempted to swim to safety but were captured. The natives immediately cooked and ate the boatswain. Two weeks later one of the other men fell ill and was also killed and eaten, and the third ten days later. However, Watts survived and the “Natives who were daily expecting another banquet, met with disappointment: either their customs or their overruling power of God would not suffer them to destroy him; he continuing still in health”

Watts’s story (pp. 3-11) is followed by a **remarkable early account of the people and the region of Calabar** “taken from his own mouth” (pp. 12-19). This is divided into short sections: the people, language, country, provisions, weapons, houses, habit, god, burial, king, slaves and their treatment, birth, marriage, punishment of prostitutes and thieves, treatment of wounds, weather, canoes, and dressing of victuals.



It provides some of the earliest evidence for the use of copper bars by the English as currency to buy slaves in the Cross River area.

Watt's account also provides a historically important description of how the natives procured slaves to sell to the English – they were prisoners of war. “The Kings war much against one another. They have no Holds, Castles, nor Prisons; but for keeping those they have taken, until the next Ship comes in, with withies [withies] they fasten them to a pole, that they cannot untye themselves, and get home. They are also perswaded that they go to help that King to fight against his enemy, and that they shall live idely, and eat good victuals, drink good liquor, and have cloaths, and that the King will give them great rewards. But if half were performed that is promised, they would be more ready to go then we to fetch them.”

Probably on account of its sensational content, this pamphlet was heavily plagiarised by later authors. The pseudonymous Alexander Smith copies the account for his *Memoirs of the Life and Times of the famous Jonathan Wild, together with the History and Lives of Modern Rogues* (2nd. edn., 1726; pp. 226-29) as does Charles Johnson a few years later for his *General History of the Lives and Adventures of the most famous Highwaymen, Murderers Street-Robbers, &c.* (1734; pp. 248-31). It is inserted as part of the life of Jack Blewit, a highwayman and murderer who was executed in 1713 (but remarkably without the accounts of cannibalism) and it also later appeared in *The Complete Newgate Calendar*.

Provenance: Bookplate to the front free endpaper roughly removed. Rev. Donald McFarlan, director of the Scottish Mission in Calabar in the 1940s; by descent.

#### A CALL FOR FREE TRADE IN AFRICA WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE SLAVE AND TOBACCO TRADE

**3 ANONYMOUS.** A True state of the present difference between the Royal African Company, and the separate traders: shewing the irregularities and impositions of the joint-stock managers; the uselessness of their forts; the expence they are at in the maintenance of the same; the charge of supporting them in a condition of defence; the vast sums they have receiv'd by the ten per cent duty thereunto, and what has been misapply'd to their own private uses; the advantages and reasonableness of an open trade to Africa; and, lastly, the danger of an exclusive trade, not only to the traders of South and North Britain but, to our American plantations.

**Only edition.** 4to., 40pp. With a large woodcut (295 x 310 mm) illustrating the layout of the Royal African Company's fort on the river Gamboa in Africa with quarters for slaves outside the walls. Title-page soiled and lightly stained, verso of last leaf soiled, fore-edge trimmed a bit close to text (no loss of text), lower margin of A2 and A3 lightly soiled, some occasional browning and spotting, a few small wrinkles and minor tears to the folding plate, recently bound in calf and marbled boards, antique style.

London: [n.p.], 1710.

£1500



**Only edition of an important work advocating that English merchants have unrestricted commercial access to Africa.** The work decries recent attempts by the Royal African Company to create a monopoly by “obtaining an Act to exclude all others of Her Majesty’s subjects from the beneficial commerce of those parts” (3).

The anonymous author states that he writes “to acquaint my country with the great dependances the British nation in general, as well as our American plantations, have, upon the benefit of a free commerce with those wealthy kingdoms [of Africa]” (3) - in short, he believes that free trade is the life blood of both the colonial and British economies and that an act granting a monopoly to the Company would reduce the wealth of both Britain and her colonies.

According to the author, the main complaint of the Royal African Company is that they spent large amounts of money to found and maintain forts along the African coast that facilitate and ensure safe trading. The independent merchants benefit from the protection of these forts but contribute very little to their upkeep - at the time, the merchants paid the company 10% on all goods exported to Africa and “5 pounds per cent” on all imports, which the company claims does not meet the cost of the forts and has reduced the value of the shares of the Royal African Company “to an inconsiderate value” (3).

In trying to sway parliament to their side, the author argues that the Company has made many “unwarrantable stretches” and “fictitious Insinuations” all “in hopes thereby to bring the Legislative Power into a compassionate Temper of doing them that extravagant piece of justice they seem to require at their hands” (3). To counter these, the author begins by providing a description of the Company’s most considerable fort in Africa at Gamboa and alleges that it is “so far short of the disbursements they alledg’d” (4). The scope of the work is not limited to a single fort as the author writes on the following page that

“nor shall I omit afterwards what is necessary to be said of their other Forts and Castles” (5).

There is also much material related to the slave and tobacco trades. For example on page 35, in discussing the advantages that the American colonies obtained from trade with independent merchants, the author outlines the slave purchasing and tobacco producing activities in Maryland and Virginia.

One of the more interesting aspects of *A true state of the present difference* is the folding plate, inserted after page 4, depicting the plan of the Royal African Company fort at Gamboa including the quarters for slaves located next to the cemetery.



#### AUTHORIZING THE SLAVE TRADE IN THE SPANISH COLONIES AND THE BEGINNING OF THE SOUTH SEA BUBBLE

**4 GREAT BRITAIN.** The Assiento, or, contract for allowing to the subjects of Great Britain the liberty of importing negroes into the Spanish America. Sign'd by the Catholick King at Madrid, the twenty sixth day of March, 1713.

One of two editions printed in 1713. 4to., [4], 48 pp. With Spanish and English text in parallel columns. A small hole in the imprimatur leaf, preceding the title, that affects four letters, some intermittent light foxing throughout (more pronounced at the beginning and end of the work), some light waterstaining to the upper right corner of the first eight pages, previously folded in fours with light creases, but otherwise a good copy, recently bound in calf and marbled boards, antique style.

London: John Baskett, 1713.

£1500

ESTC differentiates between two issues printed in 1713. One has a semicolon after “assiento” and no punctuation after “or” in the title. The other has commas after “assiento” and “or” in the title.

#### A foundational document for both the history of the slave trade and the South Sea Company.

This bilingual *assiento* between the Spanish and English governments granted the latter exclusive rights to import slaves into the Spanish Americas. The English government awarded the privilege to the South Sea Company whose primary business activity became the traffic of slaves.

“*Assiento* is a term of Spanish public law which designates every contract made for the purpose of public utility, for the administration of a public service, between the Spanish Government and private individuals” (Scelle, 614). The *assiento* associated with the 1713 Treaty of Utrecht and the later, but related, “vessel of license” privilege “gave an exceptional situation in the two oceans [Atlantic and Pacific] to British commerce, and, if one considers the length of time which the contract had to run, one begins to regard it no longer as a monetary advantage, but rather as a permanent statute granted to the English nation in the West Indies” (Scelle, 654).

Most importantly, the *assiento* stipulated that 4800 slaves would be imported into the Spanish West Indies. The document includes 42 articles which outline all other important aspects of the agreement - duties to be paid on slaves, their manner of transport i.e. on English or Spanish ships, and a prohibition of selling anything other than slaves on Spanish soil.

#### “WHAT A GLORIOUS AND ADVANTAGIOUS TRADE THIS IS...”

**5 HOUSTOUN (James).** Some new and accurate observations geographical, natural and historical. Containing a true and impartial account of the situation, product, and natural history of the coast of Guinea, so far as relates to the improvement of that trade, for the advantage of Great Britain in general, and the Royal Africa Company in particular.

**Only edition.** 8vo., [4], 62 pp. Lacking the advertisement leaf I4 announcing a forthcoming work on the Royal African Company. Some occasional browning and spotting, but otherwise a very good copy bound in calf and marbled boards, antique style.

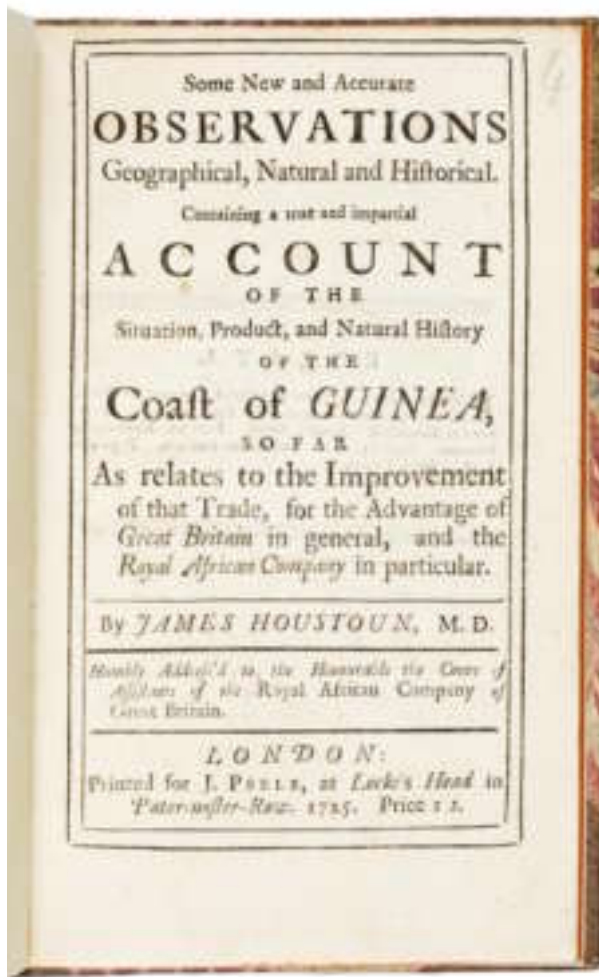
London: printed for J. Peele, [1725].

£1250

ESTC records nine locations in the U.K., Alexander Turnbull Library in New Zealand but **only Harvard, Johns Hopkins, Library of Congress, Illinois and Yale in North America.**

**Only edition of an important account of the west coast of Africa in the early eighteenth century with a focus on the slave trade and the author’s plans for its expansion.**

Houstoun believes the slave trade is “the hinge on which all the trade of this



globe moves on... put a stop to the Slave Trade, and all the others cease of course” (43-44) and calls on “every true Briton” (44) to “unanimously join to concert Measures, how to center this advantagious trade in England” (44).

The Royal African Company employed Houstoun as a physician in their settlements on the west coast of Africa. After visiting all of them, he produced this account “to give your honours [Directors of the Company] a true and impartial account of your settlements” and how far they “may be improved for the real advantage of trade, and what obstructions and hindrances they lie under at this present time” (2).

One of Houstoun’s more important duties was checking the health and vigour of the slaves that the Company handled to

ensure that their money was wisely invested. He writes of “his honest exertions ‘reviewing the slaves, and rejecting those that were not merchantable’, and of his vain protests against ‘fifty four old, lame, and decrepid invalids, not worth a Farthing, and several children... that were not Ten Years of Age’ being loaded on a ship. He also enters enthusiastically into the numbers of slaves the coast could yield, and the amount of money those slaves would fetch, if only the trading were properly handled” (Richardson, 17).

*Some new and accurate observations* also provides an important account of “the diseases so fatal to your servants abroad, with their causes and remedies” as well as “some few proposals for the better preservation of your servants health abroad” (52).

Provenance: Earls of Macclesfield, of Shirburn Castle, Oxfordshire, with a facsimile North Library bookplate; acquired privately.



“... AN INEXHAUSTIBLE FUND OF WEALTH AND NAVAL POWER TO THIS NATION”

**6 POSTLETHWAYT (Malachy).** The National and private advantages of the African trade considered: being an enquiry, how far it concerns the trading interest of Great Britain. Effectually to support and maintain the forts and settlements in Africa; belonging to the Royal African Company of England...

**First edition.** A second edition was published in 1772. 4to., [4], 128 pp. **With a large (395x460mm) “New and correct map of the coast of Africa” dated 1746** (small tear, smaller than one inch, to the inner folded margin). The map is not found in all copies i.e. both copies at the British Library, National Library of Scotland and University of Minnesota. A few blank corners folded over and a little bit dusty and occasionally browned but otherwise a very good copy with generous margins, recently bound in calf and marbled boards, antique style.

London: printed for John and Paul Knapton, 1746. £5000

**First edition of an important pro-slavery economic work often cited by abolitionists and written by “a commentator too frequently neglected in histories of British Antislavery thought” (Brown, 269).**

Written in support of the Royal African Company, *The National and Private Advantages* offers mercantilist arguments for greater direct British involvement in Africa. “Few before the American Revolution went further than Postlethwayt in imagining West Africa as a future seat of British power” (Brown, 271).

In the first chapter of *The National and Private Advantages...* Postlethwayt outlines the “triangular trade” and its benefits to Great Britain. He explains further

that the slave trade is self-sustaining in that nine-tenths of slaves “are paid for in Africa with British produce and manufactures only; and the remainder with East-India commodities. We send no specie or bullion to pay for the products of Africa, but ‘tis certain, we bring from thence very large quantities of gold; and not only that but wax and ivory” (3).

Later he advocates a plan for trading directly with Africa with the protection of forts and under the aegis of a trading company - specifically the Royal African Company. He believes that a lack of governmental support, in the form of official investment, and regulation would mean “throwing the slave trade into the arms of European competitors... Whereas France kept the purchase price of slaves low by restricting the number of French ships on the African coast, British merchants drove up their own costs through reckless bidding wars on each cargo. Only the Royal Africa Company, Postlethwayt insisted, could discourage such free-for-alls by negotiating for all British traders a set price from African suppliers” (Brown, 271).

Postlethwayt’s *The National and Private Advantages...* outlived the occasion that necessitated its publication and was read by later abolitionists. “The first abolitionists leaned heavily on those authorities like Malachy Postlethwayt who had envisioned radically different ways of organizing the African trade. Anthony Benezet drew his portrait of Africa from a variety of sources, most of which he generously cited. In tone and substance, though, key passages seemed to owe an unacknowledged debt to the work of Postlethwayt, the erstwhile propagandist for the Royal African Company” (Brown, 323).

Malachy Postlethwayt (c.1707-1767) wrote other works on economics in the 1740’s and 1750’s. His best known work was *The Universal Dictionary of Trade and Commerce* which appeared in instalments between 1751 and 1755. “It has been argued that he was a paid agent of the Royal Africa Company in whose interests he published three separate pamphlets. In the first of these, *The African Trade the Great Pillar and Supporter of the British Plantation Trade in America*, appeared in 1745, followed by another in 1746” (ODNB).

“The content of Postlethwayt’s work on the African slave trade provided Eric Williams with compelling evidence for his thesis in *Capitalism and Slavery* (1944)” (ODNB) in which he argued that the British abolition of the slave trade was motivated primarily by economic concerns.



AN EARLY ENCYCLOPAEDIA FOR CHILDREN WITH AN ILLUSTRATED “ACCOUNT OF THE LAND OF THE NEGROES”

**7 ANONYMOUS.** A Museum for young gentlemen and ladies: or, a private tutor for little Masters and Misses... Interspersed with Letters, Tales, and Fables for Amusement and Instruction, and illustrated with Cutts.

**First edition.** 16mo., vi, 226 pp. **With 27 woodcuts in the text including depictions of “A Negroe Man and Woman, in their proper Habits” (p. 111) and “An American Man and Woman in their proper Habits” (p. 115).** A small hole to the lower blank margin of C3 (not affecting text), closed tear to bottom of F3, but otherwise **an excellent copy in contemporary sheep** (spine expertly repaired) preserved in a custom-made cloth box.

London: for J. Hodges... J. Newberry... and B. Collins, [1751?]. £2000

Roscoe, S. (*John Newbery and his successors 1740-1814*), J253. **Rare.** ESTC records copies at the **National Library of Wales** [lacking the title-page, pp. 95-96, 115-128 and 221-222], **Bodley and Sussex Archaeological Society only in the U.K.** and **Chillicothe and Ross County Public Library** [ex David McKell], **Pierpont Morgan, Toronto Public Library** [imperfect], **UCLA** [lacking p. 59-60] and **Yale only in North America.** Roscoe adds Department of Education and Science (London). We can locate an additional copy in the Cotsen Collection at Princeton University.

**An excellent complete copy of the first edition of a popular illustrated encyclopedia for children. The work provides basic instruction in a variety of subjects but also forms attitudes towards native Africans that uphold the slave trade [see below].**

*A museum for young gentlemen and ladies* appeared in 19 editions before 1800. The work provides, among other things, a history of England, an illustrated “account of the Solar System, adapted to the capacities of Children”, an illustrated description of the seven wonders of the ancient world and perhaps most interestingly, accounts of different parts of the world each with illustrations depicting people in their native dress.

The work describes Africa on pp. 107-115 and includes “An Account of the Land of the Negroes” (pp. 111-112) which describes native Africans as “savage and brutal”, morally and spiritually underdeveloped, and “continually at War with one another” and selling their prisoners into slavery. The woodcut on p. 111 depicts a male and female African in their native dress with the male holding a spear while an elephant walks in the background. Into this Hobbesean world of strife and conflict the Portuguese shine the civilizing light of commerce but the native Africans are only “somewhat civiliz’d by their Commerce with the Portuguese” (113).

There is also a description of America, with a charming woodcut of “An American Man and Woman in their proper Habits”, including, among other things, “An account of Florida” where “The Floridans are tall, well proportion’d, Warriors” (117), “An account of Canada”, and accounts of Peru and Brazil.

#### AN AFRICAN PRINCE SOLD AS A SLAVE

**8 ANONYMOUS** The *Royal African: or, memoirs of the Young Prince of Annamaboe*. Comprehending a distinct account of his country and family; his elder brother’s voyage to France, and reception there; the manner in which himself was confided by his father to the captain who sold him; his condition while a slave in Barbadoes; the true cause of his being redeemed; his voyage from thence; and reception here in England. Interspers’d throughout with several historical remarks on the commerce of the European nations, whose subjects frequent the Coast of Guinea.

Second edition. 8vo., 55, [1] pp. Title-page and verso of final leaf lightly soiled, some occasional smudging and soiling throughout, but overall a good copy recently bound in calf and marbled boards, antique style.

London: Printed for W. Reeve... G. Woodfall, and J. Barnes ..., [1754?]. £2500

**Rare.** ESTC records the **British Library, Cambridge University Library, and Bodley only in the U.K.**; Royal Irish Academy (Dublin) in the E.U.; and **Boston Public Library, Duke, Folger and New York Public Library only in North America.**

The first edition, printed in 1749, is more common. ESTC records a dozen copies in the U.K. and a dozen in North America.

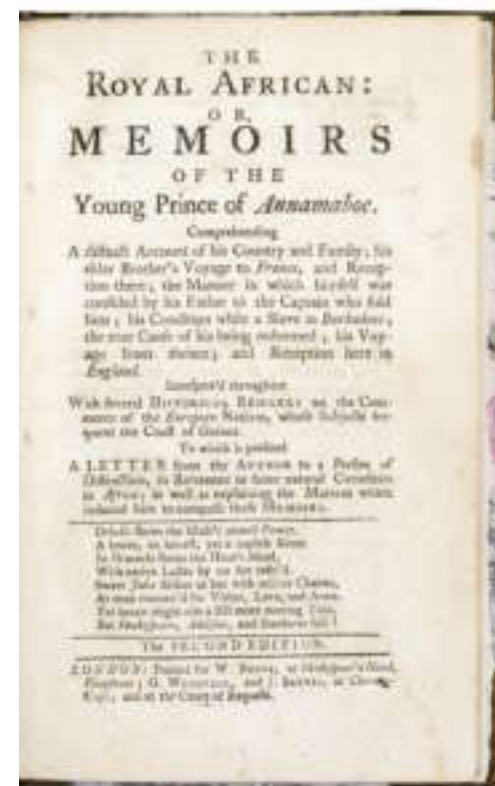
**Rare edition of one of the earliest accounts of a “Royal African” to visit London. Such visits occurred throughout the eighteenth century and captured the minds and hearts of not only primitivists and abolitionists but also the general public.**

The earliest published account of a “Royal African” visitor is likely Thomas Bluett’s *Some Memoirs of the life of Job, the Son of Solomon, the High Priest of Boonda* (London: 1734) which describes the visit of Job Ben Solomon, a Muslim prince of Boonda (one of the Muslim African states located along the Senegal river in the north of modern day Senegal or southern Mauritania). After being kidnapped by an English slave trader, he was eventually ransomed and travelled to London where he translated Arabic manuscripts and inscriptions on medals for Sir Hans Sloane.

*The Royal African* is ostensibly the memoirs of William Unsah Sessarakoo (or Ansah Sasraku) who was the son of John Corrantee [or Currantie, Corrente] a powerful Fanti Caboceiro [Portuguese for “chief” or “headman”] who sold gold and slaves near a trading post established by the

Dutch on the Gold Coast of West Africa (present day Ghana). Like many of his eighteenth century counterparts along the west African coast, Corrantee sent his sons to be educated in Europe. His eldest to France and his younger son, and heir, Sessarakoo, to England. As recounted in *The Royal African*, the captain to whom the latter was entrusted “sells him as a slave in Barbadoes. No one objects to this treachery until the Caboceiro hears of it; he at once prohibits all trade with the British and turns to the French. The British merchants, in consternation, ransom the Prince ... When the prince is taken to London, he attracts the ‘kind notice’ of ‘those who have a becoming Concern for natural Equity and Justice, as well as for the Reputation and Honour of the British People’” (Sypher, 241).

The *Gentleman’s Magazine* adds that the prince was brought to London ““under the care of the right hon. the earl of Hallifax [sic], first commissioner of trade and plantations.’ They were presented at court, ‘richly dressed, in the European manner’” (Sypher, 242). Later Sessarakoo took in a staging of *Oroonoko* which caused a sensation: “They were received with a loud clap of applause, which they acknowledged with a very genteel bow” (ibid) and took in the play which in many instances mirrored their own circumstances and produced “that generous grief which pure nature always feels, and which art had not yet taught them to suppress; the young prince was so far overcome, that he was obliged to retire at the end of the fourth act. His companion remained, but wept the whole time; a circumstance which affected the audience yet more than the play” (ibid). Sessarakoo later returned to his native Africa.



Dr. Johnson, who held no illusions about the nature of native peoples, nevertheless revered Sessarakoo for his royal lineage: “In our time, princes have been sold, by wretches to whose care they were entrusted, that they might have an European education; but when once they were brought to a market in the plantations, little would avail either their dignity or their wrongs” (as quoted in Sypher, 244).

Despite an inherently compelling story that is the life of Sessarakoo, the majority of *The Royal African* focuses on intrigues and competition between English and French traders in west Africa.

**According to ABPC, no copies have appeared at auction in more than 30 years.**

“... THEIR CAPACITY IS AS GOOD, AND AS CAPABLE OF IMPROVEMENT AS THAT OF THE WHITES.”

**9 [BENEZET (Anthony)].** A short account of that part of Africa, inhabited by the negroes. With respect to the fertility of the country, the good disposition of many of the natives, and the manner by which the SLAVE TRADE is carried on. Extracted from divers authors, in order to shew the iniquity of that trade, and the falsity of the arguments usually advanced in its vindication. With quotations from the writings of several persons of note, viz. George Wallis, Francis Hutcheson, and James Foster, and a large extract from a pamphlet, lately published in London, on the subject of the SLAVE TRADE.

**First U.K. edition.** Third edition overall. Large 8vo., 80 pp. The edges of a few leaves curled and part of text on p. 77 lightly printed due to type being improperly inked (about 20 words replaced in contemporary manuscript), otherwise a very good copy recently bound in calf and marbled boards, antique style.

London: W. Baker and J.W. Galabin, 1768. £500

This is the first U.K. edition following the two Philadelphia editions of 1762 (both printed by W. Dunlap) and a German language edition of 1763 printed in Ephrata, Pennsylvania.

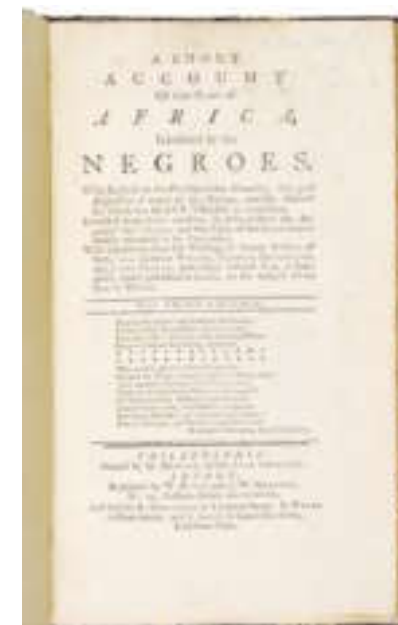
**An important work that argues that native Africans have an innate nobility and are inherently equal to Europeans written by “the most prolific anti-slavery propagandist during the period of the American Revolution” (Bruns, 230).**

“In order to prove that the intellectual and moral differences between the races were not innate, Benezet portrayed the Negro in his ‘Natural’ condition in his African homeland. His defense of the Negroes’ African society and culture gave to his antislavery argument much fresh and valuable information... He drew an idyllic picture of a fruitful West African country, constantly yielding fresh supplies of food, abounding in cattle, temperate in climate, rich in soil... Eden, innocence, nature’s unspoiled natives - the Negro in his own land was noble” (Bruns, 233-34).

“Benezet drew his portrait of Africa from a variety of sources, most of which he generously cited. In tone and substance, though, key passages seemed to owe an unacknowledged debt to the work of [Malachy] Postlethwayt [see item 6], the

erstwhile propagandist for the Royal African Company. Benezet dwelled at length on the fertility of the African soil in his three major publications on the slave trade, first printed in 1762, 1767, and 1771, respectively... Benezet intended these statements to show that European demand for slave labor destroyed otherwise peaceful and productive societies” (Brown, 322-323).

Anthony Benezet (1713-1784), Quaker schoolteacher and abolitionist, was one of the central figures of the American abolitionist movement in the middle half of the eighteenth century. His unfailing efforts in Quaker committees, distributing abolitionist literature, maintaining correspondence with other abolitionists in America and abroad, working with colonial assemblies, all illustrated his basic belief that black Africans were intellectual, spiritual and moral equals - a view that was not held by many of his abolitionist counterparts.



#### ACCOUNT OF A SLAVE REVOLT IN NEW YORK CITY

**10 HUMPHREYS (David).** An Account of the endeavours used by the society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, to instruct the Negroe Slaves in New York. Together with two of Bp. Gibson’s Letters on that subject...

Second edition. 8vo., 45, [1] pp. (A-E4, F3 [lacking F4, blank]. Some light ink staining to the lower blank margin of page 7, otherwise **an excellent copy with generous margins** in recent calf and marbled boards.

[Philadelphia?: s.n., 1768?]. £450

Essentially a reprint of the London edition printed in 1730. ESTC hypothesizes that this edition was printed in Philadelphia cir. 1768 but it more than likely was printed in London.

**Important work outlining the efforts by Church of England missionaries to convert American slaves to Christianity.**

In 1704 The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts opened a school in New York City for converting slaves to Christianity. Many of the moderate abolitionists believed that Christianizing slaves, along with ensuring that they were properly lodged, fed and clothed, would provide them with stable, healthy and long lives. This would in turn allow the slave population to grow naturally without further importations from Africa and the slave trade would slowly die off.

The work opens with an account of the slave revolts in New York City in 1712 involving “Negroes of the Carmantee and Pappa nations” which the author laments has “opened the mouths of many, to speak against giving the negroes instruction” (9).

The remaining portion of the work consists of an anonymous “Address to serious Christians...”, two letters by the Bishop of London, Edmund Gibson (1669-1748) “to the Masters and Mistresses of Families in the English Plantations abroad” and “to the Missionaries in the English Plantations” exhorting them to instruct their slaves in religion, and Humphrey’s “conclusion of the editor”. In the latter, Humphrey explicitly states that “the profession of Christianity makes ‘no alteration in civil property’” (35) i.e. that conversion to Christianity neither confers nor encourages freedom for slaves.

David Humphreys (1690-1740) was a Church of England clergyman who, in 1716, was appointed secretary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, a position he held until his death. “In 1725 he sent out a circular letter urging missionaries to instruct in the Christian religion, and baptize, any black slaves working in their houses” (ODNB). Unlike some of his contemporaries, Humphreys believed that slaves had souls and ought to be converted to Christianity.

## SLAVES! OBEY YOUR MASTERS!!

**11 SHARP** (Granville). The Law of Passive Obedience, or Christian Submission to Personal Injuries, Wherein is Shewn, that the Several texts of Scripture, which command the entire Submission of Servants or Slaves to their masters, cannot authorize the latter to exact an involuntary Servitude, nor, in the least degree, justify, the claims of modern Slaveholders.

**Only edition.** 4to., 102, [4] pp. With the final errata leaf but lacking the final four pages of advertisements. Some light, minor staining to the gutter of the title-page but otherwise a very good copy in recent calf and marbled boards.

[London: n.p., 1776?].

£350

**Only edition of Sharp’s important response to the popular argument - used frequently at the time in America and the West Indies - that the New Testament tolerates slavery.**

Sharp also addresses the related but more subtle and difficult to refute argument that Christianity does not release slaves “from the obligation they were under according to the custom and law of the Countries, where it was propagated” (6).

Sharp opens not by refuting the argument but rather he grants that it is true “in some respects” and that his work that follows will “demonstrate wherein this truth consists, which will afterwards enable me to point out such a due limitation of the doctrine, as will render it entirely consistent with the hypothesis, which I have so long laboured to maintain, viz. *the absolute illegality of slavery among Christians*”(7).

After citing numerous texts supporting “the absolute necessity of an unfeigned

obedience in the behaviour of christian servants to their masters” (8), Sharp builds his argument that slavery itself is not supported by the Bible. After citing a passage in Colossians (iii, 2) Sharp states: “Thus it is plain that the service was to be performed ‘as to the lord,’ and ‘not to men,’ and therefore it cannot be construed as an acknowledgement of any right, or property really vested in the matter” (15).

“From 1776 Sharp began to publish tracts on slavery and correspond energetically with many leading members, lay and clerical, of the political establishment... Although Sharp was never a popular or even accessible writer, his work was of immense importance to the anti-slavery movement in Britain. It was partly through his efforts that it gained public attention and sympathy and that it transformed itself from a benign climate of opinion to a highly organized campaign. Thomas Clarkson regarded him as the founder of the movement; according to Francis Horner, he was one of those who started it” (ODNB).



## THE ECONOMICS OF EMPIRE AND THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION WITH A PLAN FOR SLAVES TO BUY THEIR FREEDOM

**12 ANONYMOUS.** Essays commercial and political, on the real and relative interests of imperial and dependent states, particularly those of Great Britain and her dependencies: displaying the probable causes of, and a mode of compromising the present disputes between this country and her American colonies. To which is added an appendix, on the means of emancipating slaves, without loss to their proprietors.

**First edition.** 8vo., [2], viii, [1], [4], 147, [1] pp. The last leaf of the preface, c1, and the contents leaf, c2, appear twice. **With a folding table “Of the Population, Imports, Exports, &c. of the British-American Continental Colonies” bound before the title-page.** Table foxed and lightly chipped on left edge with loss of a

few letters in each line, title-page, second leaf and final two leaves heavily foxed, title-page and last leaf lightly browned. Recently bound in calf and marbled boards, antique style.

Newcastle: T. Saint for the author; and sold by J. Johnson... London, 1777.  
£950

**Written during the American Revolution, this work analyzes the commerce between England and her North American colonies, including the effects of duties and taxation, and, in the appendix (pp. 127-147), presents an innovative plan for slaves to buy their freedom which “should not clash with the interests of those whom the laws allow to oppress a part of their species” (ii).**

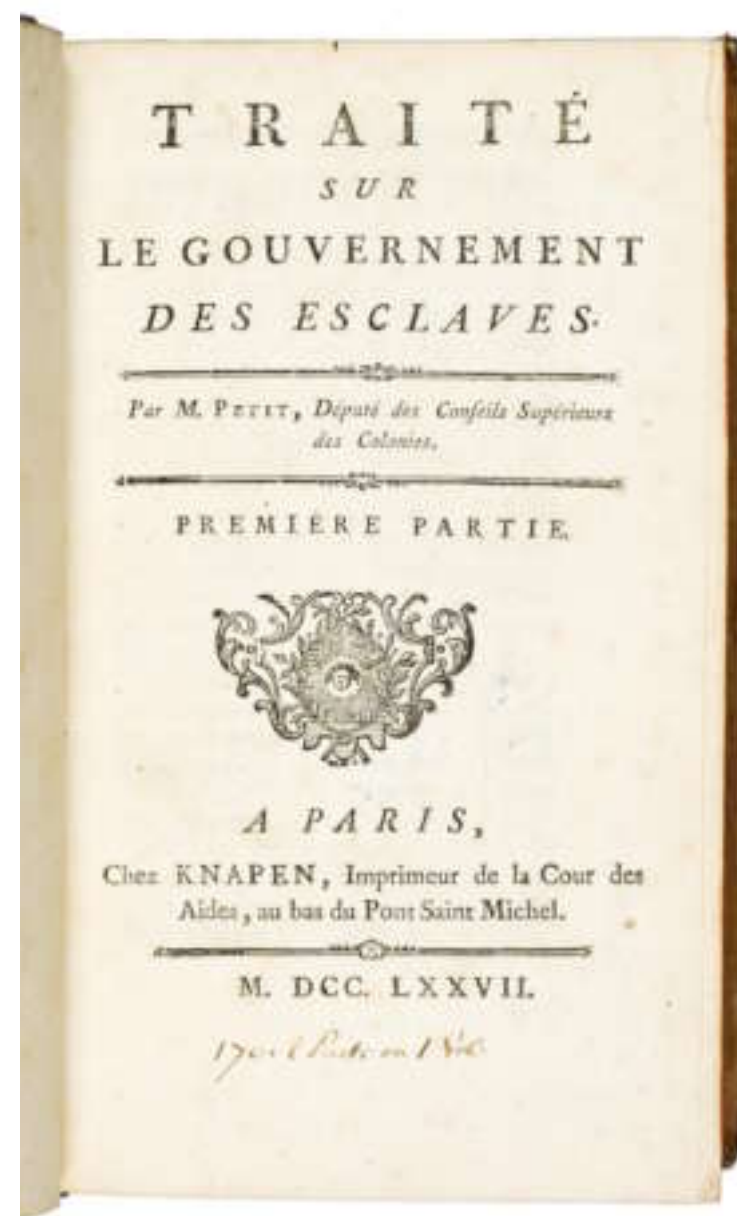
In outlining a plan for freeing slaves, the anonymous author recognizes that “the chief and evident cause that militates against their [slaves] liberation is, the unwillingness of men in general to give up any property or power they have attained” (129). To overcome this, the author suggests that slaves buy their freedom by gradually paying their owner the price for which they were purchased.

The plan, based on an earlier scheme by Quaker abolitionist William Dillwyn (first published as *Brief considerations on slavery* [Burlington, N.J., 1777]), stipulates that “every proprietor should encourage his negro to save money, which may be done by various means - by paying him proportionately for working above his task-work - by allowing him, where land is plentiful, to cultivate at his leisure hours, a spot of ground for himself, and purchasing the produce of him at its full value, if no other market be near - likewise by other means that particular situations and circumstances may point out: And when the negro has acquired what is equal to one-sixth of his time, that is, one day in the week... he will, in due time, be enabled to purchase another” (138) and so the process will continue until he has purchased six days of the week. The seventh day would be retained by the master as security so that the freed slave never becomes a burden to the state because if he did, the master would be responsible for him.

If enacted, the plan would also eliminate the threat of insurrection that looms in the American colonies. Without which, “we shall certainly some day see as powerful an insurrection, and as formidable a colony of negroes, in the fastness of the Apalachian [sic] Mountains, as now is in Guiana, St. Domingo, or the Blue Mountains of Jamaica” (146).

This anonymous work has been variously attributed to Maurice Morgann (1725-1802) the American colonial administrator, literary scholar and private secretary to William Petty, second earl of Shelburne. In 1772, Morgann published a strong condemnation of slavery in his *Remarks upon the Slave Trade* and predicted a racial war in the colonies. See Morgan, Philip D. and Sean Hawkins (editors). *Black Experience and Empire*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004., p. 121 for the attribution to Morgann.

ESTC notes that this work is “sometimes attributed to William Chapman” based on the attribution by E. Mackenzie in his *Descriptive and historical account... of Newcastle*, 1827, v.2, p. 470.



THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE SYSTEM -  
COLONIAL SLAVE LAW ANALYSED

13 PETIT (Emilien). Traite sur le gouvernement des esclaves.

**First edition.** Two parts in one volume. 8vo., [2], iv, 466; [2], 330, [2] pp. Light worming to the final two leaves of text and some occasional spotting, but otherwise a very good copy bound in full contemporary French calf.

Paris: chez Knapen, imprimeur de la Cour des Aides, 1777. £6500

OCLC records ten locations world-wide, some of which are the first part of the work only.

**A very good copy of a work “that most graphically illustrates the nature of slave law” (Ghachem, 7).**

“Petit was a judge on one of the two high courts of Saint-Domingue who had earlier been hired by the French Naval Minister, the official responsible for overseeing colonial administration under the Old Regime, to begin the development of a systematic colonial code. The very title of Petit’s work, ‘government of slaves,’ reflects the language of eighteenth century political economy, and reminds us that slavery was once conceived not simply as a form of individual property ownership, but rather as a complex and coordinated economic project with political overtones” (Gachem, 7).

“The wealth of detail in Petit’s treatise about the punishment, nourishment, and clothing of slaves highlights not only the sheer volume and complexity of French slave legislation, but also what might be called (in the language of contemporary political economy) the ‘collective action’ problem of Caribbean slave ownership. If mercantilism was driven above all by the desire to maintain exclusive economic control of New World colonies, that effort depended as much on the ‘prudent’ management (or ‘police’) of sugar plantations as it did on the apprehension of illicit traders on the high seas” (Gachem, 8).

The second part of the work is a comparative analysis of the French, Spanish and English colonial law codes relating broadly to “people of colour, slaves, and free slaves (by birth or liberation)” (Petit, *Seconde Partie*, p. 1). In the second part, Petit “juxtaposed the various slave codes of the New World in the hope that such an exercise would prove ‘useful’ to both planters and colonial administrators. Armed with an awareness of those laws that were ‘common’ to the sugar colonies, and those that were unique to each of them, ‘the reader will be in a position to compare the government of slaves in the colon[ies] where he does not reside’ (Petit, 1:i-ii)... If a particular British or Spanish law tended to produce more discontent among the neighboring island slave populations then it was advisable from a strategic point of view, [then] the French planter or colonial administrator could learn from this deficiency and avoid similar mistakes on his own territory” (Gachem, 8-9).

#### THE ZENITH OF BRITISH HYMNWRITING - AN INSPIRATION TO ABOLITIONISTS AND SLAVE TRADERS ALIKE

**14 NEWTON** (John). **COWPER** (William). Olney hymns in three books.

**First edition.** 12mo., xxvii, [1], 427, [1] pp. **With an extra portrait of Cowper, by Caroline Watson after a portrait by George Romney, bound after the half-title.** Some occasional light discoloration but otherwise **a very good copy**, lightly pressed and bound in late nineteenth or early twentieth century straight grain red morocco.

London: W. Oliver, 1779.

£1500

**First edition of “one of the most important single contributions made to the field of evangelical hymnody” (Osbeck, 30) which includes the first publication of the iconic “Amazing Grace”.**

“Amazing Grace”, which appears in *Olney Hymns* as “Faith’s review and expectation”, has transcended the time and place of its creation to be employed by generations of abolitionists, reformers and social activists to express the difficulties and inherent dignity of a noble struggle and the certainty of eventual triumph.

By the late 1760s, the reformed slave trader Newton had triumphed in his long struggle to become an ordained Anglican minister and moved to the small market town of Olney in Buckinghamshire to become the curate-in-charge of the local parish. “In 1767 the poet William Cowper, having recently come to evangelical convictions, settled at Olney. Cowper shared in the religious life of the parish and in 1771 he and Newton began to collaborate formally on a project to publish a volume of their collected hymns. It was to be a sort of mutual *Festschrift*, celebrating their friendship and spiritual ideals ... Many of the *Olney Hymns* (1779) addressed specific situations in the parish but the hymnbook became popular more widely” (ODNB).

While *Olney Hymns* was a collaborative effort, Newton wrote the majority of the hymns - 282 to Cowper’s 67. “Newton’s satisfaction with what he had contributed to the hymnal is displayed in this comment: ‘The hymns ... taken altogether, contain a full declaration of my religious sentiments.’ ... Newton intended that the hymns be used more widely than in his and other Anglican congregations. Rising above sectarianism, he struck an ecumenical note in his preface: ‘As the workings of the heart of man, and of the spirit of God, are in general the same, in all who are the subjects of grace, I hope most of these hymns, being the fruit and expression of my own experience, will coincide with the views of real Christians of all denominations’” (Phipps, 156).

“The collection was divided into sections with the longest one consisting of hymns written on sermon texts, arranged by biblical books. By drawing imagery from most of the books of the bible, Newton displayed its centrality in his thought. Approximately half of his total compositions were based on scriptural texts. A few of these hymns, as we have noted, have become accepted as among the best loved of all religious songs, in large part because of their scriptural quality. Other sections of the hymnbook were organized around themes such as praise to God, comfort amid conflict, and seasons of the year. Leigh Bennett aptly attributes the lasting influence of the Newton hymns to a mixture of his ‘rich acquaintance with scripture, knowledge of the heart, directness and force, and a certain sailor imagination’” (ibid, 157).

“During the century after Newton’s collection was first published, hundreds of thousands of copies were distributed both inside and outside the Anglican communion. Sung in informal settings, the hymns provided a corrective in the Church of England, where veneration for dignity tended to depreciate warmth of expression. Louis Benson says of the hymnbook: ‘It was the evangelical theology put into rhyme for singing, but even more for reading and remembering. It became an evangelical handbook, printed over and over in England and America, and it exerted an immense influence.’ ... A half-century after *Olney Hymns* was

first published, James Montgomery, the renowned Scottish hymnist, wrote: “The collection has become a standard-book ... of every evangelical denomination” (ibid, 157).

The modern form of “Amazing Grace” is a product of the marriage of Newton’s lyrics and an early American folk tune that was originally sung by slaves on southern plantations. “The earliest known publication of this tune was found in a book entitled *The Virginia Harmony*, compiled by James P. Carrell and David S. Clayton and published in 1831 in Winchester, Virginia. Scarcely a hymnal appeared throughout the South during the remainder of the nineteenth century that did not include this hymn” (Osbeck, 31).

Provenance: 1. Major William Van R. Whitall, of Pelham, New York. Bookplate to front pastedown. This was lot 301 in the auction sale of Whitall’s library at American Art Association on 14-16 February, 1927. 2. Seth and Ward Terry, bookplate to front pastedown. This was lot 106 in the auction sale of the Terry library at American Art Association on 4-5 December 1935. 3. Charles E. Pont, (1898-1971), twentieth century bookplate to front pastedown. Pont was a baptist minister, artist and graphic designer.

“... A CRUEL AND CRIMINAL TRADE...”

**15 BENEZET** (Anthony). A Short account of the people called Quakers; their rise, religious principles and settlement in America, mostly collected from different authors, for the information of all serious inquirers, particularly foreigners.

Second edition. 8vo., 36 pp. First six leaves and two leaves in gathering C heavily browned, otherwise a good copy with a number of deckle edges, recently bound in full modern sheep with gilt tooled spine.



Philadelphia: Joseph Crukshank, [1780].

£350

**Second edition of an important work that outlines the history and beliefs of the Quakers, written by the Quaker abolitionist Anthony Benezet, including a strong statement of their anti-slavery views.**

In the section “On slavery” found on page 30, Benezet writes that the slave trade “being one of the great evils now prevailing amongst the professors of christianity... hath particularly engaged the attention of this religious society [i.e. the Quakers]” (30) and that they have taken important internal steps against it. First they have prohibited any member from being “in any respect, concerned in the support of this infamous traffic” (30), and also that any

member owning slaves should immediately set them free. Any member failing to do so would “be considered as no longer in fellowship” with the Quakers and “to have renounced their right of membership” (30).

Benezet also discusses the efforts made by the Society to educate current and former slaves and, arguably, it was in this and other parallel areas that his greatest contributions to society lay, in short - his commitment to teaching people who lacked educational opportunities.

“Benezet is most noted for a brand of abolitionism that challenged assertions of innate black inferiority... Slavery, Benezet held, was inconsistent with both ‘Christianity’ and ‘common justice’... Benezet’s abolitionist circle of correspondents included Benjamin Franklin, Abbe Raynal, Granville Sharp, John Wesley, and John and Samuel Fothergill. Active in Philadelphia’s anti-slavery societies, Benezet helped secure emancipation in Pennsylvania” (ODNB).

“... AN UNTUTORED AFRICAN MAY POSSESS ABILITIES EQUAL TO AN EUROPEAN”

**16 SANCHO** (Ignatius). Letters of the late Ignatius Sancho, an African. In two volumes. To which are prefixed, memoirs of his life.

**First edition.** Two volumes. 8vo., [4], lvii, [1], 204; [4], 224 pp. **With two engravings by Francesco Bartolozzi (1728-1815), one of which is after the Gainsborough portrait of Sancho.** Small stain to the blank corner of C1 (not affecting text) and some spotting to gathering C in volume one. In volume two, some light foxing to the title-page and frontispiece and a few spots to gathering H. Overall a very good copy bound in nineteenth century blind stamped calf (spine labels chipped).

London: printed by J. Nichols..., 1782.

£2500

**First edition of a landmark in Anglo-African literature that also ranks “among the best and most successful examples of abolitionist rhetoric produced in the years leading up to the establishment of a formal abolition movement” (Carey, 63) written by the former slave turned man of letters, and exemplum of African assimilation to British culture, Ignatius Sancho.**

Sancho “started life on a slave ship in the mid-Atlantic. He arrived in England aged two, finding himself in the austere household of three sisters in Greenwich. Yet from these unpromising beginnings, Sancho went on to become a servant in the Duke of Montagu’s household, a move which provided him with the opportunities to pursue an education and finally to leave service and open up his own grocery in London’s Mayfair. It was then that Sancho became a dedicated correspondent. A devoted husband to a black West Indian wife, Anne Osborne, and father to six children, most of Sancho’s letters concern the domestic travails of a grocer in ill-health trying to keep together body and soul. However, Sancho also feels moved to comment upon both political and literary life in Britain, and he does so with a deep love of the country and a thwarted desire to belong” (King, 11-12).

Despite his status as a former slave and lack of formal education, Sancho

participated in British high culture - he widely and deeply read the classics of English literature, regularly attended the theatre, published his musical compositions, befriended authors and artists alike, and conducted correspondence with many *litterati* including Laurence Stern. He initially wrote to Stern to praise his strong anti-slavery stance in his sermon *Job's Account of the Shortness and Troubles of Life* (1760) and the ensuing correspondence "became one of the most celebrated in the mid-eighteenth-century world of letters" (Carey, 57).

Consequently, Sancho became well-known to his contemporaries as a man of taste and refinement and his judgment was often sought on cultural matters. The artist John Hamilton Mortimer "frequently consulted Sancho about his paintings. Others sought his literary advice. For example, the aspiring author George Cumberland read some of his works to Sancho because 'he is said to be a great judge of literary performances'" (ODNB).

As a black arbiter of taste, Sancho inverted the traditional racial hierarchy of patronage by treating as protégés a number of younger white artists and writers such as John Meheux and John Highmore, to whom he addressed a number of letters found in *Letters of the late Ignatius Sancho*. In another letter, also found in the collection, he becomes the first black literary critic of the Boston slave Phillis Wheatley, whom he describes, in a letter to J. Fisher (found in *Letters*, pp. 175-176), as a "Genius in bondage" whose poems "do credit to nature". As a critic and patron, Sancho represents, not only to his contemporaries but also to posterity, "the most complete assimilation of an African writer into British culture in the period" (Ellis, 59).

Two years after Sancho's death, Frances Crew collected his letters, "from the various friends to whom they were addressed" (i), arranged them chronologically and published them. The first edition of *Letters* had over 1,160 subscribers - an indication of Sancho's far-reaching appeal. The work appeared in four further editions before 1803. Crew writes that while "wishing to serve his worthy family" her secondary motivation in publishing the letters is "the desire of shewing that an untutored African may possess abilities equal to a European" (ii). "There were few precedents for such a venture. The narratives of the lives of [former slaves] Briton Hammon and Ukawsaw Gronniosaw had been taken down by amanuenses, and published in 1760 and 1772" (Carey, 61) and the poems of the afore-mentioned Phillis Wheatley appeared in Boston and London in 1773 but these works lacked the scale and range of personal experience apparent in Sancho's *Letters*.

While "the predominant tone [of the work] is playfulness expressed through light satire, gentle humour, and a pervading delight in verbal and typographical witticisms" (Carey, 59), *Letters* nevertheless "offers many personal and political arguments against slavery, and shows evidence of having been constructed with those arguments in mind" (Carey, 63). For example, in letter LVII, found on page 174 of volume one, he thanks a Mr. Fisher for sending books "upon the unchristian and most diabolical usage of my brother Negroes", discusses briefly the horrors of the slave trade before articulating his deeply held belief that a person's race or religion are of little consequence and that we ought to "honour virtue - and the practice of the great moral duties - equally in the turban - or the lawn-sleeves" (175).

As a former slave living in Great Britain, Sancho letters also address the challenges of assimilation - "the fate of the British black community, a community which was itself forged by slavery" (King, 102). Through *Letters* we learn about what life was like in London for a former slave - how he endured slurs and abuse on a family night out, struggled with poverty and participated in the community of former African slaves living in London.

Sancho was immediately adopted by the abolitionists and "by the second half of the 1780s Sancho's *Letters* was cited by the abolitionist movement as an outstanding refutation of the idea that black people lacked souls, intellects or rational faculties. Over the next couple of decades Sancho was profiled and his correspondence reprinted in various anthologies of negro biography and literature compiled by English, French and American abolitionists" (King, 67).

*Letters of the late Ignatius Sancho* includes an important prefatory biography of Sancho by Joseph Jekyll (1754-1837), the literary-minded lawyer and politician, who stepped in for Dr. Johnson after the latter failed to deliver his promised memoir of the life of Sancho commissioned for this work. Jekyll wrote his account, which is the best single source for information about Sancho's life, 'in imitation of Dr Johnson's style' (ODNB).

## THE FIRST ATTEMPT AT ABOLITION

**17 SOCIETY OF FRIENDS** (London yearly meeting). The Case of our fellow-creatures, the oppressed Africans, respectfully recommended to the serious consideration of the legislature of Great-Britain, by the people called Quakers.

Second edition. 15, [1] pp. Disbound. Uncut and unopened. Some light marginal soiling but otherwise a very good copy with large margins.

London: James Phillips, 1784.

£350

**Second edition of the first petition to parliament to abolish the slave trade.** Initiated by the Quakers, the petition brought the inhumanities of the slave trade to the attention of British MP's, members of local government and others in positions of authority.

Often attributed to Anthony Benezet, this pamphlet is in fact "written by William Dillwyn and John Lloyd on behalf of the Society of Friends' Meeting for Sufferings" (ESTC). Dillwyn and Lloyd were members of the Quaker Abolition Committee - a predecessor of the Committee for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade.

"On June 16 [1783], 273 Quaker men signed a petition to the House of Commons that declared the 'suffering situation' of 'the enslaved Negroes' 'a subject calling for the humane Interposition of the legislature' and asked members to consider an abolition of the slave trade. The politicians surprised [the] Friends with their response. 'Favourably received,' a relieved David Barclay told the London Meeting for Sufferings several days later. 'Well received,' William Dillwyn recorded in his diary ... the politicians had few reasons to speak ill of the Quaker petition. The

Society of Friends gave them an opportunity to voice their support for liberty and humanity ... it is true, the Friends' petition made no impact on parliamentary politics or government policy ... But Friends experienced these events as a step forward, and a spur to action, rather than a setback" (Brown, 422-23).

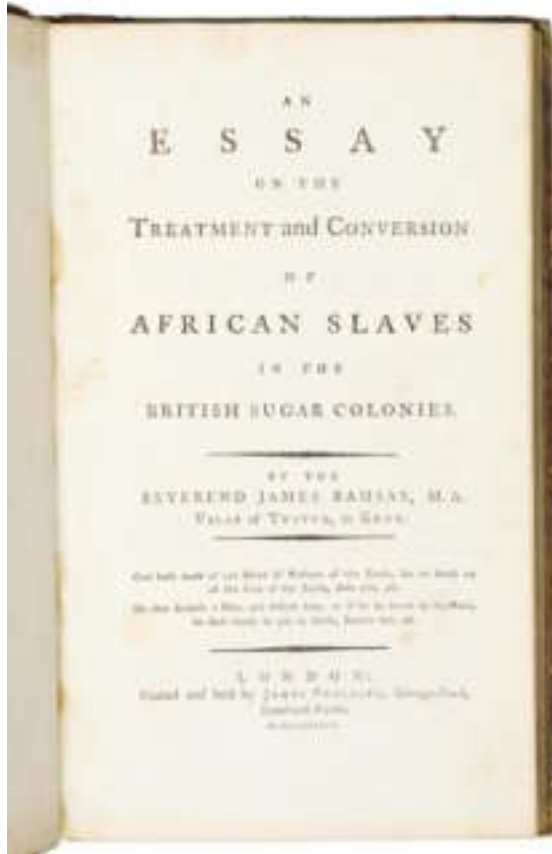
## DEFINING THE ANTI-SLAVERY AGENDA

**18 RAMSAY (James).** An Essay on the treatment and conversion of African slaves in the British sugar colonies.

**First edition.** 8vo., xx, 298, [4] pp. With the often lacking final advertisement and errata leaves, the latter bound after the former and not after p. xx as specified by ESTC. Title-page with a few spots and stained along inner gutter, repaired tear to p. iii, and some occasional foxing and light spotting, otherwise a good copy bound in contemporary calf (recently rebacked, corners lightly worn).

London: James Phillips, 1784.

£1750



**“The abolition of the British slave trade in 1807 probably owed more to James Ramsay’s personal integrity, ethical arguments, and constructive proposals than to any other influence” and it was his *Essay on the treatment and conversion of African slaves* that was “the most important event in the early history of the anti-slavery movement” (ODNB).**

In his *Essay* Ramsay “reviewed the status of slaves in history, their moral rights, their ill treatment in British colonies, and the influence of nutritional deficiency, overwork, and mutilating punishments upon morbidity, mortality, and output, with examples of the enlightened management” (ibid). He also perceived the problems related to immediate emancipation and “proposed a programme of preparation which

would encompass education, Christian teaching, the inculcation of family and social values, and the passing of equitable laws. The book received immediate

acclaim but was followed by a flood of vituperation from the planter community in anonymous letters to national and colonial newspapers” (ibid).

“The *Essay* differed from previous commentaries on Caribbean slavery in several ways. First there was its scope and ambition. The volume stretched over three hundred pages... Secondly, there was its authority. The product of nearly two decades of living, writing, and thinking in the West Indies, the author possessed an unusual command of his subject. Many British men and women who published antislavery statements in the eighteenth century had never seen plantation slavery for themselves. Ramsay had not only lived in the Caribbean, but he was himself a former slaveholder, like many Anglican clergy who had lived in the West Indies. These experiences allowed Ramsay to describe the mores of British Caribbean society in detail, to dispense with the moving but generic narratives established by the legends of stock characters such as Oroonoko or Inkle and Yarico. He replaced those fictional archetypes with concrete examples of how the enslaved men and women lived, how sugar plantations functioned, what West Indian society was like. Third, there was the effusive praise from the critics. When published in 1784, the *Essay* received special treatment from the press” (Brown, 364-65).

For a cogent discussion of the metamorphosis of Ramsay’s *Essay* from manuscript to print see pp. 244-253 of Christopher Brown’s *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006.

Much like the reformed slave trader John Newton, James Ramsay experienced a dramatic conversion to the cause of abolition. On 27 November 1759 the *Arundel* intercepted the British slave ship *Swift* and Ramsay along with other ship mates boarded the vessel. “Ramsay found over 100 slaves wallowing in blood and excreta, a scene of human degradation which remained forever in his memory and so distracted his attention that, on returning to his ship, he fell and fractured his thigh bone. It was the more serious of two such accidents and he remained lame for life” (ODNB).

The scene that Ramsay observed on the *Swift* altered the course of his life. After the conclusion of his service in the Royal Navy, Ramsay returned to Britain and sought ordination in order to work among slaves. The bishop of London ordained Ramsay in November of 1761. Soon after Ramsay departed for the West Indies where he worked as surgeon on several plantations. “This enabled him to see the conditions under which slaves laboured, the brutality of many owners and overseers, and the mutilating punishments and cruel injustice meted out to them” (ibid). This first hand experience provided Ramsay with the material that he would use later in his many abolitionist publications when he returned to Britain.

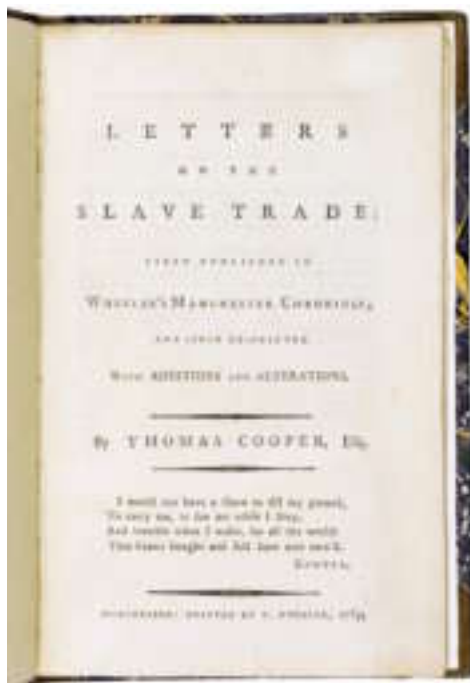
A MANCUNIAN RADICAL WRITES  
AGAINST THE SLAVE TRADE

**19 COOPER** (Thomas). Letters on the slave trade: first published in Wheeler's Manchester Chronicle; and since re-printed with additions and alterations.

**Only edition** 8vo., 36 pp. Recto of final leaf lightly soiled, otherwise a very good copy recently bound in calf and marbled boards, antique style.

Manchester: C. Wheeler, 1787.

£850



[Bound with]

**COOPER** (Thomas). Supplement to Mr. Cooper's Letters on the Slave Trade.

**Only edition.** 8vo., 50 pp. Title-page and recto of last leaf very lightly soiled, otherwise a very good copy.

Warrington: W. Eyres, 1788.

**Two anti-slave trade works by the Manchester 'Jacobite' turned American state's rights advocate Thomas Cooper.**

Cooper writes in his preface to *Letters* that the work "contain[s] the substance of four letters on the Slave Trade, which I wrote for the purpose of contributing my mite of information, upon a subject of importance, to the inhabitants of Manchester" (3). He further notes that the letters are reprinted "for the

purpose of being dispersed gratis" (3). *Letters* includes an appendix of "the arguments, or rather the excuses which slave-dealers and slave-holders alledge in reply to the charges adduced against them... and the obvious replies" (29).

The *Supplement* contains the facts that support his earlier *Letters* but also includes some "miscellaneous considerations" (pp. 44-50) among which is a call for an immediate abolition of the slave trade.

In both works, Cooper attacks the slave trade in the strongest terms. First in *Letters*, he states that: "We are in honour bound to assist in exterminating the most diabolical exertion of political tyranny, which the annals of oppression can exhibit an instance of... how can we do otherwise than discountenance a practice, which involves almost every vice that fills the black catalogue of human iniquity" (4).

There is a similarity between the lives of Thomas Cooper (1759-1839) and another famous Thomas – Paine. Both were philosophical radicals who spent significant

amounts of time in America and wrote controversial works that addressed pressing issues. In Great Britain, Cooper acquired a reputation for radicalism, largely due to his steering of Manchester Abolition Committee in a more radical direction which hurt the abolitionist movement's attempts to gain broad-based support. In many publications, Cooper and Paine were mentioned in the same breath as Wilberforce.

In 1834, after Cooper settled in America, at the height of the tariff controversy, and in reversal of the position taken in these two works, Cooper supported African slavery as a just and necessary institution that was integral to the southern way of life. He called on southern states to consider succession from the union in order to protect their interests which he believed were threatened by the industrial north whose system was setup "to increase the wealth of a few capitalists, at the expense of the health, life, morals, and happiness of the wretches who labour for them" (ODNB). He is best remembered today "as the 'schoolmaster of the state's rights' to the generation of South Carolinians that fought the American Civil War" (ibid).

A CLARKSON PREVIEW

**20 CLARKSON** (Thomas). A Summary view of the slave trade, and of the probable consequences of its abolition.

One of two editions printed in 1787. 8vo., 14, [2] pp. With the final advertisement leaf that lists books "Lately published, by J. Phillips". Title-page very lightly soiled, but overall **an excellent copy** bound in modern calf and boards, antique style.

London: Printed by James Phillips, 1787.

£450

ESTC records 11 copies in the U.K.; National Library of Australia, but **only Columbia, Haverford College (PA), and New York Public Library in North America.**

ESTC records another slightly more common edition also printed by James Phillips in 1787. It also consists of 16 pages but does not include the advertisement leaf found in the present edition. However, it includes a preliminary leaf that describes the aims of the recently founded Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade and lists the Society's Committee members. This preliminary leaf does not appear in our edition.

**An excellent copy of an early publication of the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade that includes a "preview" of Thomas Clarkson's *Essay on the Impolicy of the African slave trade.***

The first eight pages of the work summarize the four main arguments against the slave trade that were discussed at the second meeting of the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade in the summer of 1787.

Beginning on page eight, the work presents an outline for Thomas Clarkson's sequel to his landmark *An Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species*,

particularly the *African* (1786). *An Essay on the impolicy of the African slave trade* appeared in 1788 (see item 23) and published for the first time the results of his exhaustive peripatetic researches on the realities of the slave trade. **The outline for Clarkson's *Essay on the impolicy* found in the second half of *A Summary view* is of importance because it circulates many of the author's ideas and conclusions well in advance of the publication of the full work.**

“TRUTH REQUIRES ADDITIONAL LUSTRE  
FROM EVERY NEW ATTACK”

**21 RAMSAY** (James). A Letter to James Tobin, Esq. Late member of His Majesty's Council in the Island of Nevis. From James Ramsay, A.M. Vicar of Teston.

**Only edition.** 8vo., [2], viii, 40, [2] pp. With the half-title and advertisement leaves which are lacking in at least half of the known copies. Some off-setting to the half-title and the recto of the advertisement leaf, but otherwise a very good copy recently bound in calf and marbled boards, antique style.

London: James Phillips, 1787. £450

**Only edition of an important work that was part of a controversy that “contributed perhaps more than any other to the parliamentary enquiry’ into the slave trade” (Brown, 364) written by the “morning star of the anti-slavery movement”.**

Initially, those in James Ramsay's Teston circle hoped only to encourage Christian missions in the West Indies, but the publication of Ramsay's *Essay on the Treatment and Conversion of African Slaves in the British Sugar Colonies* (1784) [see item 18] “introduced a new set of issues for consideration. By calling attention to West Indian practices and, in effect, away from North American hypocrisy, the text caused a dramatic shift in the public discussion of antislavery measures. The pamphlet produced a prolonged exchange about the character of British Caribbean slavery, the nature of metropolitan responsibility for the sugar colonies, and the prospects for rectifying the horrors of human bondage” (Brown, 364).

Ramsay's *Essay* “left the West Indian interest apoplectic. The volume drove them into paroxysms of outrage. Each one of the nine pro-slavery tracts published in Britain from the summer of 1784 through 1787 represented either an explicit or implicit reaction to Ramsay's *Essay*... Replies piled on top of replies thereafter. James Tobin of Nevis answered in 1787 with a *Short rejoinder to the Reverend Mr. Ramsay's Reply*. Ramsay came back a month later with *A Letter to James Tobin* (Brown, 366-67).

Ramsay in *A Letter* addresses in a point by point manner the arguments raised by the *Short rejoinder*, a work he believes is not actually written by James Tobin but rather by “a man writing in a fictitious name” (3) or with “the corrections of a learned friend, or the borrowed labour of an hireling” (35).

The work includes a five-page appendix that describes a means of producing sugar in the East-Indies far more cheaply with freemen than with slaves.



“FASHION... PROMOTING THE CAUSE OF  
JUSTICE, HUMANITY AND FREEDOM” - CLARKSON

**22 WEDGWOOD** (Josiah). **HACKWOOD** (William).

Jasperware cameo with the iconic image of a kneeling slave in chains with the motto “Am I not a Man and a Brother?” produced cir. 1787-88. **A remarkable survival preserved in a contemporary or near contemporary frame.**

2.9 x 3.1 in. With blue painted mount and glass surrounded by a gilt painted moulded plaster frame with moulded round beaded inner border. Some wear to gilt paint along edges revealing a red paint undercoat, but otherwise in good condition. The cameo itself is in pristine condition with a strong impression of the kneeling slave. £2500

**An early cameo of the “first and most identifiable image of the 18th century abolitionist movement” produced in jasperware “the most significant ceramic invention since that of porcelain by the Chinese” (ODNB) by the dynamic and innovative Wedgwood firm.**

Josiah Wedgwood (1730-1795) was one of the earliest supporters of the Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade - his name appears on the first subscribers list and in August of 1787 he became a full member. “Wedgwood's achievement was to make abolition fashionable at a period when social emulation and emulative spending already had a powerful hold over the lives of many middle-class men and women” (Oldfield, 155-156).

“Wedgwood’s knowledge and influence are discernible, above all, in the design of the London Committee’s seal, adopted in 1787, depicting a kneeling slave together with the motto ‘Am I not a Man and a Brother?’ The Committee decided on the idea of an official seal at a meeting in July 1787” (Oldfield, 156) and it was one of Wedgwood’s employees, William Hackwood who produced the actual design. “... the whole concept was brilliantly conceived, drawing on existing images of kneeling black figures as well as religious and secular belief in the equality of mankind. As Hugh Honour points out: it ‘neatly encapsulated ideas already widely accepted while giving them a more specific meaning’” (Oldfield, 156).

After the design was produced for the Committee, Wedgwood “took it upon himself to produce a black and white jasper medallion incorporating the same design” (Oldfield, 156). The medallions were produced in Wedgwood’s revolutionary jasperware, an innovation that first went into production in 1777. “Jasper was an original white stoneware body which was capable of being stained by metallic oxides and ornamented in bas-relief to produce the two-colour appearance of the cameos” (ODNB).

“The first of these cameos appeared early in 1788 - a small consignment was sent to Benjamin Franklin in Philadelphia on 29 February... Many of them were distributed to Wedgwood’s friends and sympathisers with the abolitionist cause. But others were marketed in the usual way, that is through Wedgwood’s trade catalogues, his various showrooms, and his small team of travelling salesmen” (Oldfield, 156).

According to the Bridgeman Art Library ([www.bridgeman.co.uk](http://www.bridgeman.co.uk)), Wedgwood produced at least five editions of the cameos. Ours, in unglazed jasperware with a white background, is the first and was soon followed by others also in unglazed jasperware but with yellowish, black and blue backgrounds. There were also later editions of glazed jasperware or porcelain with black, white or blue backgrounds.

The cameos were an immediate hit, especially among women who often wore them as necklaces or mounted them on bracelets, pins and the like and by doing so identified themselves with the abolitionist cause. Commenting on their ubiquitousness, abolitionist Thomas Clarkson writes in his *History of the Abolition of the Slave Trade* that “some had them inlaid in gold in the lids of their snuff boxes, of the ladies some wore them in bracelets and others had them fitted up in an ornamental manner as pins for the hair. At length, the taste for wearing them became general and thus a fashion which usually confines itself to worthless things was seen for once in the honourable office of promoting the cause of justice, humanity and freedom”.

The equally iconic *Description of the slave-ship* is another example of the revolutionary way the Committee commissioned the design of a emotive image that conveyed their most powerful arguments and then disseminated it, with the help of enterprising publishers, entrepreneurs and tradesmen, through the various channels of visual culture and engaged the general public with their cause.

## THE SLAVE TRADE IS NOT GOOD ECONOMIC POLICY

**23 CLARKSON** (Thomas). An Essay on the impolicy of the African slave trade. In two parts.

**First edition.** 8vo., [2], iv, 3-134, [2] pp. With the final advertisement leaf. A touch of very light foxing to the upper left corner of the first two leaves as well as some additional very occasional light marginal foxing, otherwise **an excellent, clean and crisp copy** recently bound in calf and marbled boards, antique style.

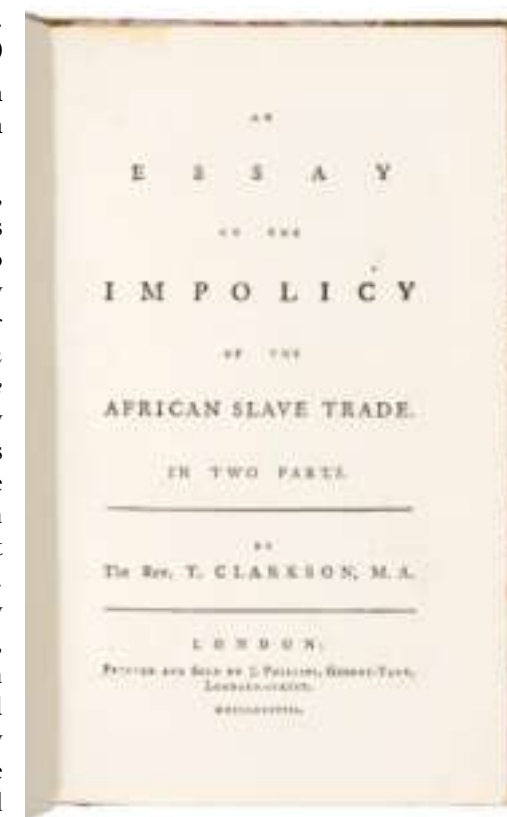
London: Printed and sold by J. Phillips, 1788. £500

**First edition of a landmark work in the history of the British abolition movement.**

Dedicated to William Wilberforce, “whose publick and private actions are founded on principle, and who are content with doing your duty without the tribute of popular applause” (i), Clarkson’s *Essay on the impolicy of the African slave trade* seeks to demonstrate that contrary to popular belief and the arguments put forth by supporters of the slave trade, the practice is not based on sound economic policy and is in fact a great waste of national resources. Clarkson states in his introductory chapter that “In a former Essay, on the ‘Commerce of the Human Species,’ I particularly enlarged on the injustice and inhumanity of that, which is exhibited in the African trade. In the present, I shall undertake to shew (unless I deceive myself greatly) that it is as impolitick, as I have proved it to be inhuman and unjust” (3).

In the preface, Clarkson outlines the subjects that he will address in the body of his work – “the productions of Africa are the first objects of consideration in this work... The cruelties, practised by the officers of slave vessels on the persons of their unfortunate crews, (which is another object of consideration)... The loss of seamen, both in the slave trade and other trades, (which is a principle object of consideration in this work)” (iii).

Thomas Clarkson (1760-1846) was the only member of the Committee for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade that did not have professional commitments



(he had a small private fortune). As a consequence of this, he “took on the essential job of seeking out every possible source of information, with an eye to an impending inquiry by the privy council and later proceedings in parliament. He had already made investigations in the port of London. Now he got on his horse again and set off for Bristol. He was to ride some 35,000 miles in the next seven years...Wherever he went he received enthusiastic assistance from the Society of Friends; anti-slave-trade societies sprang up in his wake, and boroughs began to petition parliament for abolition - in the long run perhaps his most important achievement. His researches, pursued to the point of physical and mental exhaustion, and at substantial personal risk (an attempt was made to drown him at Liverpool), empowered the abolitionists for the first time with a comprehensive and irrefutable knowledge of the trade. Clarkson’s findings filled his writings, such as his *Essay on the Impolicy of the African Slave Trade* (1788), which the committee assiduously printed and distributed in large numbers, and lay behind the twelve propositions which Wilberforce put to parliament in his first great abolitionist speech on 12 May 1789” (ODNB).

“THE FIRST PIECE OF ABOLITIONIST PROPAGANDA”  
(ODNB)

**24 FALCONBRIDGE** (Alexander). An Account of the slave trade on the coast of Africa.

**First edition.** 55, [1] pp. Title-page and recto of last leaf heavily foxed and soiled in places, otherwise a good copy with two edges uncut and very generous margins recently bound in calf and marbled boards, antique style.

London: J[ames] Phillips, 1788.

£1250

**The first edition of a detailed and influential “insider’s” account of the slave trade by a ship’s surgeon who witnessed its atrocities first-hand. Generations of abolitionists world-wide referred to Falconbridge’s *Account* as an important source of information on the slave trade and it is cited not only by abolitionists in Great Britain but also by those in Denmark and France among others.**

Between 1780 and 1787 Falconbridge (c.1760-1792) took part in four slaving voyages to the west coast of Africa as a surgeon before leaving the trade due to moral objections. In the spring of 1787, Thomas Clarkson met Falconbridge in Bristol while he was there gathering evidence against the slave trade. Clarkson immediately recognized that Falconbridge not only possessed powerful experiences but, more importantly, he was willing to testify publicly to them. After giving evidence to a privy council committee, Falconbridge, with the aid of an abolitionist lawyer Richard Phillips, sifted through his thoughts and experiences and distilled them into a powerful, gritty account of the slave trade.

Falconbridge writes in his preface that his *Account* outlines “the hardships which the unhappy objects of it [slave trade] undergo, and the cruelties they suffer, from the period of their being reduced to a state of slavery, to their being disposed of in the West India islands” (iii). He writes vividly and with great detail in order

to bring the reader on board the slave ship as a witness to what the sailors and slaves experience. For example, when Falconbridge describes the slave quarters one begins to imagine the cruel and dehumanized conditions that both the slaves and sailors lived in: “The deck, that is, the floor of their rooms, was so covered with the blood and mucus which had proceeded from them in consequence of the flux, that it resembled a slaughter-house. It is not in the power of human imagination, to picture itself a situation more dreadful or disgusting” (25). He further describes the diet of slaves, the medical conditions that afflicted them, and the interactions between slaves and sailors. Here he is very direct when discussing the relations between sailors and female slaves: “the common sailors are allowed to have intercourse with such of the black women whose consent they can procure... The officers are permitted to indulge their passions among them at pleasure, and sometimes are guilty of such brutal excesses, as disgrace human nature” (24).

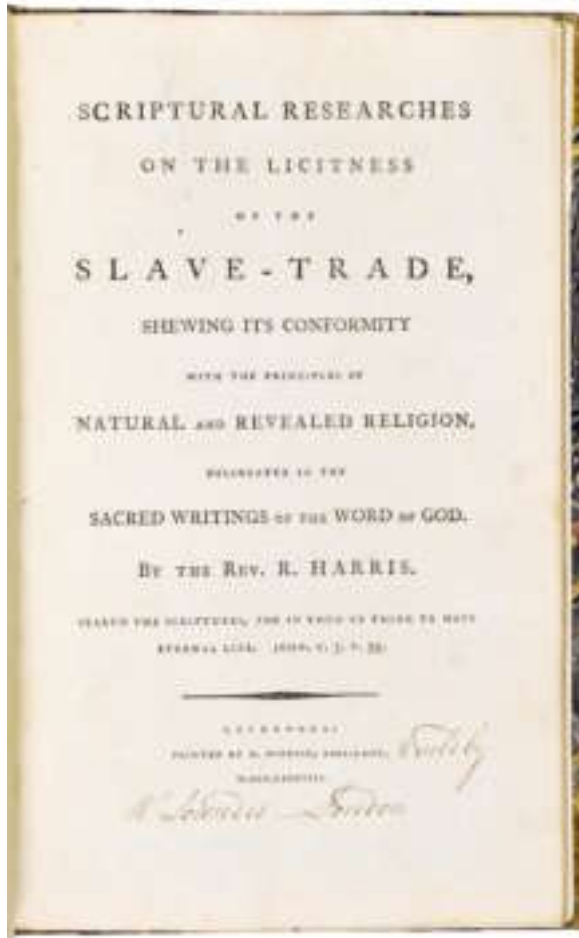
Much like his friend John Newton (see item 28), Falconbridge decries the slave trade for its effect not only on slaves but also the seamen who worked on the slave ships. He writes in his introduction to *An account* that he will also “treat of a subject, which appears not to have been attended to in the manner its importance requires; that is, the sufferings and loss of seamen employed in this trade” (iii). Thomas Clarkson discusses the novelty of this observation when he recounts his initial meeting with Falconbridge in Bristol: “There was one circumstance of peculiar importance, but quite new to me, which I collected from the information which Mr. Falconbridge had given me. This was, that many of the seamen, who left the slave-ships in the West-Indies were in such a weak, ulcerated, and otherwise diseased state, that they perished there. Several also of those who came home with the vessels, were in the same deplorable condition” (Clarkson, 142-43).

The impact of Falconbridge’s *Account* was immediate. It was read and cited by many on both sides of the slave trade argument. For example, an engraving of the iconic slave ship the *Brooks* produced by the London Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade included a lengthy quotation from Falconbridge’s *Account*, and his work was even mentioned by Danish abolitionists for helping to inspire a slave trade bill in 1792 which abolished the Danish slave trade beginning in 1803 (for a detailed discussion of the abolition of the Danish slave trade, see: Black, 407).

Clarkson recruited Falconbridge to head an expedition to Sierra Leone to refound a colony of free black settlers but the plan was marred with difficulties. Falconbridge’s wife, Anna Maria, would later write that the expedition was “a premature, hair-brained, and ill digested scheme”. Falconbridge took heavily to drink and spent the last years of his life in near permanent intoxication before dying in December of 1792 in Freetown.

“... THE SLAVE-TRADE HAS THE INDISPUTABLE SANCTION  
OF DIVINE AUTHORITY...”

25 **HARRIS** (Raymund). (pseudonym) [**HORMOZA** (Raymondo)].  
Scriptural researches on the licitness of the slave-trade, shewing its conformity  
with the principles of natural and revealed religion, delineated in the sacred  
writings of the word of God.



**Probably the first edition.**  
8vo., 77, [3] pp. With the  
often lacking errata leaf cut  
down (no loss of text) and  
inserted after p. [78]. With  
a small piece torn (paper  
flaw?) from the blank mar-  
gin of the last five leaves,  
and some very light occa-  
sional browning but oth-  
erwise a very good copy  
recently bound in calf and  
marbled boards, antique  
style.

Liverpool: H. Hodgson,  
1788. £2750

ESTC records 11 copies in  
the U.K., Pretoria State Li-  
brary in South Africa but  
**only Brown, Duke, Library  
Company of Philadelphia  
and Tulane University in  
North America.**

**This Liverpool edition is  
not reproduced on ECCO.**

Two additional editions ap-  
peared in 1788 - one printed  
in London by Stockdale and  
another, the “second edi-

tion”, in Liverpool also by Hodgson. It is likely that our earlier Hodgson edition precedes the London edition as the author resided in Liverpool and dedicated the work to “The Worshipful the Mayor, Recorder, Aldermen, Bailiffs, And other Members of the Common Council of the ancient and loyal Borough and Corporation of Liverpool”.

**An excellent copy of a compelling moral defense of the slave trade based on scripture that made a case “which was very hard to answer, and which abolitionists were not very successful in meeting” (Anstey, 295).**

*Scriptural Researches* “was an apologia for the slave trade in which the author -

though, or, as some said, because [he was] a Jesuit - took his stand four-square on Scripture, deducing from it that slavery was nowhere declared intrinsically unlawful” (Anstey, 295).

“... early in 1788, just as the Privy Council began its investigation of the African slave trade, a new pamphlet circulated among the wealthy and influential gentlemen of London’s West End. Purportedly written by a ‘Reverend Raymond Harris,’ it was entitled *Scriptural Researches*... In February Lord Hawkesbury, president of the Privy Council Committee, had learned that Harris’s real name was Don Raymondo Hormoza, that as a Jesuit priest he had been expelled from Spain in 1767, and that after living in various European countries he had finally settled in Liverpool, where he ran a school for young gentlemen” (Davis, 542).

“Since Harris relied on the same texts and Scriptural arguments that had been used before, it is not immediately apparent why his pamphlet should have caused such a stir. The answer lies partly in the lucidity and logical consistency of his work. It was easy enough for abolitionist writers to expose the special pleading of most merchants and planters, but in Harris they faced a formidable opponent on their own supposedly secure ground of moral philosophy. To make matters more embarrassing, Harris came close to parodying Protestant orthodoxy regarding the primacy of scripture, and thus forced his opposition to reveal how far they had gone in assuming the primacy of man’s moral sense” (Davis, 544).

“The main points of his argument can be briefly summarized. He first disarmed his opponents by conceding that oppression can never be vindicated by appeals to tradition or to widespread practice. Nor would any enlightened man wish to justify whatever wrongs were genuinely associated with the slave trade. The only question at issue, Harris emphasized, was whether the slave trade was intrinsically illicit, regardless of incidental circumstances. Obviously, there were abuses and malpractices in many lawful callings, and it would be absurd to infer from the abuses, which could be dealt with separately, that the callings were in themselves illicit. But how, then, were men to know whether a practice was intrinsically lawful or unlawful? For Harris, speaking to a Protestant audience, the Bible was the only possible guide. Tradition, habits, ‘mere human reason and sense’ - all were fallible... Having boxed his readers within this framework of orthodox Protestant assumptions, Harris proceeded to show that slavery had been positively sanctioned by God during the period of natural law, in the time of Abraham and Joseph; during the period of Mosaic law; and during the earliest Christian dispensation” (Davis, 543-44).

Perhaps the most dangerous aspect of Harris’s work, from a Christian perspective, was his question that if one looked to the Bible for moral laws applicable to daily life, then “how was one to judge God’s specific decisions if their general application violated the universal laws of justice?” (Davis, 546). The abolitionists could not muster a compelling reply. Most, like William Roscoe, dodged the question and pleaded that “men could not know God’s reasons or purposes from the ‘external circumstances’ of a particular case” (Davis, 546).

Harris also foresees one of the long-term consequences of abolition, and the age of revolutions, in that if the Golden Rule oft-quoted by abolitionists was “applied to social position, it would outlaw any subordination of one man to

another. Thus the abolitionists' premises were far more subversive than they knew" (Davis, 545).

Abolitionists immediately saw the pernicious effects of Harris's work. "Clarkson claimed that the Liverpool faction had distributed copies of the pamphlet among men of weight, and that 'many, who ought to have known better, were carried away by it; and we had now absolutely to contend... against the double argument of the humanity and holiness of the trade.'... At least six replies to Harris appeared within a year" (Davis, 543).

Provenance: inscription to the title-page, "& sold by W. Lowndes -- London", indicating that this copy was sold by William Lowndes (1753?-1823), bookseller who was located at 77 Fleet St. and was the father of William Lowndes (1793-1843) the bibliographer.

#### DANNETT'S REPLY TO HARRIS WITH SATIRICAL "RESEARCHES" ON THE LICITNESS OF PERSECUTION AND KEEPING A CONCUBINE

**26 DANNETT** (Henry). A Particular examination of Mr. Harris's scriptural researches on the licitness of the Slave Trade.

**One of two editions.** 8vo., [2], x, [2], 8, 146 pp. Some occasional light browning and staining to the margins and the last four leaves, but otherwise a very good copy recently bound in calf and marbled boards, antique style.

London: T. Payne... and D. Prince and Cooke, Oxford, 1788. £600

ESTC records 6 locations in the U.K. but **only Brown, Cornell, New York Public and Providence Public Library (two copies) in North America.** This edition includes an eight page section entitled: "A few preliminary principles; and reasonings from them, applied to the slave-trade" not found in the other edition.

Another edition (issue?) also printed in 1788 with J[ames] Phillips included in the imprint is known in the Canterbury Cathedral Library copy only.

**Rare reply to Raymund Harris's controversial *Scriptural Researches.***

Before addressing Harris's arguments in full, Dannett outlines his first principles "and reasonings from them, applied to the slave-trade". Thereafter, he addresses Harris's arguments individually.

Perhaps Dannett's most important argument is his objection to a literal use of scripture as the highest authority on moral issues and his advancement of conscience and reason as final arbiters. He writes: "Now, I have always understood, that conscience, or the moral sense, is our delegated and appointed guide in all our judgements and actions. Scriptural decisions, indeed, relative to morals, when properly understood and justly limited, will never contradict our ideas of right and wrong: it is, however, the province of conscience and reason properly to interpret, and justly to limit them" (iii). This argument was to one of the legacies of the Harris controversy: "**In the Harris controversy one glimpses a transitional moment in the evolution of the modern social conscience. The**

**African Slave trade, which had aroused so little protest in earlier decades, was beginning to stand as a symbol of the ultimate injustice"** (Davis, 549).

The work concludes with two artfully constructed satires on Harris's work. The first, entitled "Scriptural Researches on the licitness of persecution, shewing its conformity to the Principles of Revealed Religion, delineated in the Sacred Writings of the Word of God" attempts to prove "that the practice of persecution is perfectly conformable to the principles of the Mosaic dispensation, and the Christian law" (124). One of the examples cited is from St. Luke's Gospel when Christ gives the disciples guidelines for the spread of Christianity. When he says "compel them to come in" Dannett argues that Our Lord "in these words does not say, persuade, or invite; but, 'compel them to come in'; whence we may infer, that compulsion is licit in religion" (131).

The second satire, argued along similar lines, is "on the licitness of keeping a concubine".

#### RAMSAY'S REPLY TO HARRIS

**27 RAMSAY** (James). Examination of The Rev. Mr. Harris's Scriptural Researches on the Licitness of the Slave-Trade.

**Only edition.** 8vo., 29, [3] pp. With the final advertisement leaf. A small stain to the lower gutter of pages 10-11, but otherwise **an excellent copy** bound in modern calf and marbled boards, antique style.

London: James Phillips, 1788.

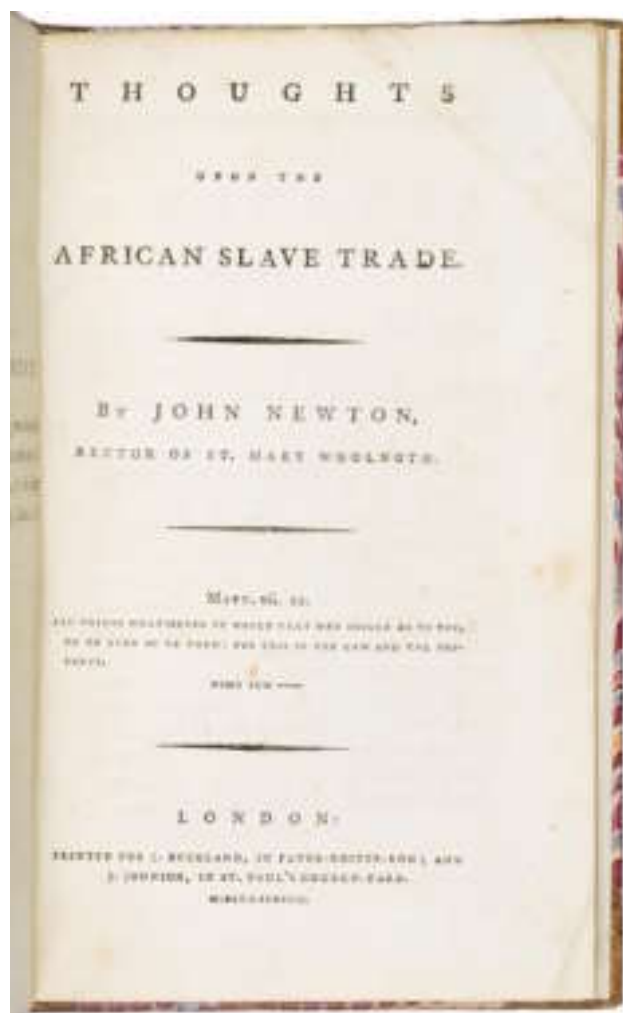
£750

**An excellent copy of Ramsay's reply to Raymund Harris's *Scriptural Researches.***

In Ramsay's "Advertisement" to the reader, he acknowledges the effect that Harris's work has had on the public: "But on coming up to town, and understanding that Mr. Harris's reasoning had produced effects on certain people... it has been judged proper to give it [his work] at once to the publick" (3).

At once Ramsay strikes at one of Harris's strongest arguments, namely that when an act or behaviour is not condemned in the Old and New Testament, then it is given tacit approval. Ramsay argues that "there are many things... that pass without censure, and are seemingly allowed there, which we know to be forbidden to us, and which will not apply to the improved state of mankind... The drunken incest of Lot is not censured. It was the means of producing two mighty nations; from which, according to the author's manner of reasoning, he ought to conclude it was approved of; yet I suppose he will not recommend the imitation to any person in these days" (5).

He also addresses Harris's claim that Abraham and Joseph received God's approbation to own slaves. Ramsay argues, not so convincingly, that "the keeping of slaves, which the author constantly calls 'the slave-trade,' was a custom then generally prevalent over the world. Neither were masters or slaves prepared for a general manumission. The spirit of Christianity was suffered gradually to undermine the mass of oppression, and wherever the gospel has prevailed [sic], it has in fact abolished it" (24).



### AMAZING GRACE

**28 NEWTON (John).** *Thoughts upon the African slave trade.*

One of four editions printed in 1788, this one distinguished by line 8 in page 3 ending with “but the”. 8vo., [4], 41, [1] pp. With the half-title. Half-title lightly soiled, some light spotting and foxing throughout, otherwise a good copy recently bound in calf and marbled boards, antique style.

London: printed for J. Buckland... and J. Johnson, 1788. £4000

*Thoughts upon the African slave trade* “was of vital importance in converting public opinion to the abolitionist cause” (Aitken, 242). It was written by one of the inspirational figures in the English abolitionist movement, John Newton, who was a mentor to both William Wilberforce and Hannah More. *Thoughts upon the African slave trade* is the only publication in which Newton focuses entirely on the slave trade.

*Thoughts upon the African slave trade* “was skillfully constructed to have a political as well as a moral and humanitarian appeal” (Aitken, 242). In the work Newton attacks the slave trade on two fronts: “first, with regards to the effects it has on our own people; and secondly, as it concerns the Blacks” (8).

“With his old shipboard diaries for the years 1750-54 beside him as he wrote, he described in horrendous detail the brutalizing treatment and tortures meted out to the 100,000 or more slaves who were transported each year in English vessels” (ibid, 243).

Newton also advocated the view, revolutionary for the time, that “African women deserved to be respected as much as their European equivalents in matters such as personal modesty and honour” (ibid, 244) which indicates that many abolitionists not only attacked the practice of slavery but also were “in the business of overturning misguided attitudes towards the African people as well” (ibid, 244).

“Newton’s *Thoughts upon the African Slave Trade* made a considerable impact, both commercially and politically. In commercial terms, the pamphlet was an instant success. It was to be printed and distributed by two prominent booksellers... They were evidently optimistic about the sales potential of their author, for on the day of publication, 26 January 1788, the two booksellers jointly placed a large advertisement for *Thoughts* in the *Morning Chronicle*, reprinting it on three successive days in this popular newspaper. Such publicity was unusual and had the desired effect. Even at the expensive price of one shilling, the pamphlet became a best-seller... What made Newton’s pamphlets stand out so exceptionally was the authenticity of its eyewitness reporting; the reputation of its author; and the linkage to the imminent parliamentary proceedings” (ibid, 245).

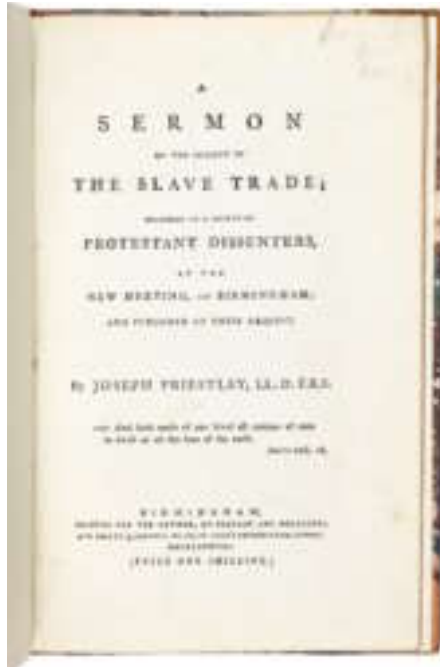
John Newton (1725-1807) is one of the great stories of the abolitionist movement. His transformation from hardened slave trader to committed abolitionist, ordained minister of the Church of England and composer of the iconic hymn “Amazing Grace” has been widely celebrated. What is less-known, however, is his place as mentor and inspiration to various members of the abolitionist movement. In the case of William Wilberforce, who had recently undergone a spiritual awakening and felt torn between the life of an MP and a life serving God as a minister of the church, Newton was pivotal. “John Newton’s contribution to the life of William Wilberforce as a mentor, confidant, co-campaigner and close friend has often been underestimated... Persuading Wilberforce to stay in ‘the right track’ and to combine the life of a Christian with the life of a politician was John Newton’s finest hour as a pastor... What would have happened if Newton had recommended to Wilberforce that he should cut himself off from public life and explore what he thought was his call to a religious vocation? The loss to British politics, to parliamentary history and, above all, to the cause of the abolition of slavery, would have been devastating” (ibid, 225-230).

THE DISCOVERER OF OXYGEN CALLS FOR CHRISTIANS  
TO UNITE AGAINST SLAVERY

**29 PRIESTLEY** (Joseph). A Sermon on the subject of the slave trade; delivered to a society of Protestant dissenters, at the new meeting, in Birmingham; and published at their request. By Joseph Priestley, L.L.D., F.R.S.

**First and only edition.** 8vo., xii, 40 pp. Some very light occasional spotting, otherwise an excellent copy recently bound in calf and marbled boards.

Birmingham: Printed for the author, by Pearson and Rollason..., 1788. £1800



**Important ecumenical sermon by “a major figure in the British Enlightenment” (ODNB) calling on all Christians to unite in their opposition to slavery.**

Priestley notes in his well-written preface that “I publish this discourse not only in compliance with the request of a society of christians whom I think myself happy in every opportunity of obliging, but also because I thought that some of the arguments on which I have insisted had not been sufficiently urged by other writers on the same subject” (iii).

He continues that “We [Christians] have juster ideas of the dignity of human nature, and of the common rights of humanity, than the heathens ever had. At the same time that we justly think that every man is a great and exalted being (i.e. capable of becoming such)... These are just, noble and elevating sentiments,

peculiar to believers in revealed religion; and they are common to all believers. We find among them papists, as well as protestants, and among those who are favoured by civil establishments of christianity, as well as those that are frowned upon by them (vii-viii).

From the preface we can also glean some information regarding Priestley’s philosophy of law. Near the end he states that “Under humane masters, slaves may, no doubt, enjoy a certain degree of happiness; but still they are slaves, subject to the wills, and consequently the caprices, of others; and there is no proper security from the greatest outrages, but in the protection of law” (xi). For Priestley, well-conceived laws provide protection and freedom from arbitrary action.

Priestley (1733-1804) a natural philosopher chiefly known for his discovery of oxygen was known more in his lifetime for his theological writings and his unitarianism. During the period that he lived in Birmingham (1780-1792) he

moved in circles that included other prominent abolitionists – many of whom, like himself, were members of the Lunar Society – the master potter Josiah Wedgwood – whom he advised on airs entrapped in ceramic clays; the physician and botanist William Withering; and classical scholar and schoolmaster Samuel Parr among others.

Priestley and his family left England for America in 1794 and they lived in Pennsylvania until his death in 1805. “Priestley’s most effective activities in exile were in education and theology. He had an extensive correspondence with Jefferson on the establishment of the latter’s new college for the state of Virginia... Of more than twenty theological publications [he wrote] while in America the most noteworthy is perhaps *Socrates and Jesus compared* (1803), which was among Jefferson’s favorite reading” (ODNB).

THE SLAVE TRADE IS UNNECESSARY TO  
POPULATE THE WEST INDIES

**30 NICKOLLS** (Robert Boucher). Letter to the treasurer of the society instituted for the purpose of effecting the abolition of the slave trade. From the Rev. Robert Boucher Nickolls, Dean of Middleham. A new edition with considerable additions.

Later edition. 8vo., 58, [2] pp. With the final two pages consisting of “Books lately published by James Phillips”. Title-page and recto of advertisement leaf lightly soiled, the latter slightly more so, otherwise a nice crisp copy recently bound in calf and marbled boards, antique style.

London: James Phillips, 1788.

£650

For this edition, ESTC records the **British Library, a private collection, Trinity College – Cambridge University, Canterbury Cathedral, Library of the Religious Society of Friends only in the U.K.; and Columbia, Cornell, Harvard and Trinity College (Ct.) only in North America.**

The first edition of Nickolls’s 16-page *Letter* in 1787 excited such a storm of criticism that the work was expanded in subsequent editions to address criticisms. Five editions appeared in 1788. This edition, probably the second or third, numbers 58 pages and includes a preface (pp. 4-12), a postscript (pp. 31-[34]), three appendices (pp. 35-56) and a two page “Observations on the sugar of Cochin China” (57-8) – a great expansion of the 16 page letter as it was originally published.

**A crisp copy of a controversial work which argues that the slave trade is unnecessary because the numbers of slaves already in the West Indies would increase naturally if they are treated humanely.**

Later editions of Nickolls’s *Letter* are of great interest because they include his replies to the various criticisms levelled at the first edition of his work capturing an important debate leading up to the first bill regulating the slave trade – Dolben’s Bill of 1788 [see item 42].

The additional material is also important in and of itself. For example on page 46 Nickolls addresses the claims made by supporters of the slave trade that

Africans have inferior intellectual capacities. He cites two former slaves, Phillis Wheatley, who “wrote correct English poetry within a few years after her arrival in Boston from Africa” (46) [see also item 39] and Francis Williams, who wrote “a Latin ode of considerable length” (46), whose intellectual prowess was celebrated across the Atlantic.

The best account of the content and circumstances surrounding the publication of Nickolls’s *Letter* resides in chapter XX of Thomas Clarkson’s *History of the Rise, Progress and Accomplishment of the Abolition of the African Slave-Trade by the British Parliament*. Clarkson, describing a meeting of the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade, writes: “The last letter was from Robert Boucher Nickolls, dean of Middleham, in Yorkshire. In this he stated that he was a native of the West Indies, and had travelled on the continent of America. He then offered some important information to the committee as his mite, towards the abolition of the Slave Trade, and as an encouragement to them to persevere. He attempted to prove, that the natural increase of the negroes already in the West Indian islands would be fully adequate to the cultivation of them, without any fresh supplies from Africa; and that such natural increase would be secured by humane treatment. With this view, he instanced the two estates of Mr. MacMahon and of Dr. Mapp, in the island of Barbados. The first required continual supplies of new slaves, in consequence of the severe and cruel usage adopted upon it. The latter overflowed with labourers in consequence of a system of kindness, so that it almost peopled another estate. Having related these instances, he cited others in North America, where, though the climate was less favourable to the constitution of the Africans, but their treatment better, they increased also. He combated, from his own personal knowledge, the argument, that self-interest was always sufficient to insure good usage, and maintained that there was only one way of securing it, which was the entire abolition of the Slave Trade. He showed in what manner the latter measure would operate to the desired end: he then dilated on the injustice and inconsistency of this trade, and supported the policy of the abolition of it, both to the planter, the merchant, and the nation.

This letter of the Dean of Middleham, which was a little Essay of itself, was deemed of so much importance by the committee, but particularly as it was the result of local knowledge, that they not only passed a resolution of thanks to him for it, but desired his permission to print it.”

“... BURSTING THEIR BONDS AND DARING TO BE FREE ...”

**31 PRATT** (Samuel Jackson). *Humanity, or the rights of nature, a poem*; in two books. By the author of *Sympathy*.

**Only edition.** 4to., [2], iv, 114, [2] pp. Lacking the half-title and the advertisement leaf. **With manuscript corrections to pages 4, 12 and 21 (see below).** Title-page, and pages 5-9 lightly soiled, errata leaf lightly foxed, otherwise a very good copy with generous margins recently bound in calf and marbled boards, antique style.

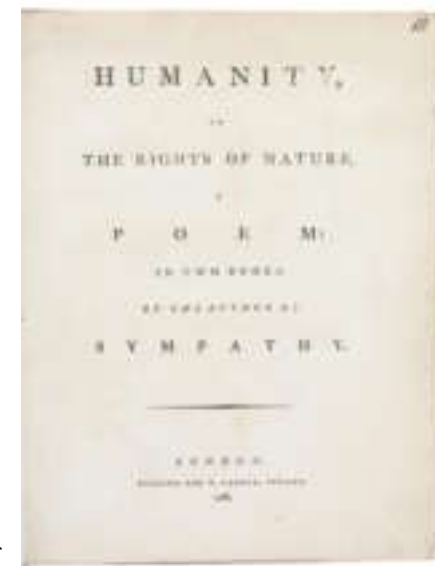
London: Printed for T. Cadell, 1788.

£850

ESTC records the **British Library, Birmingham University Library, Cambridge University Library, William Salt Library (Stafford), and the Wisbech and Fenland Museum only in the U.K.**, Niedersächsische Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek in Germany, three copies in Australia/New Zealand and 17 copies in North America.

**Rare work that addresses slavery and includes a poetic description of the slave trade.**

Pratt writes in his preface that he hopes that *Humanity* will move his audience to consider slavery “but not only that species of it which consists in buying and selling our Fellow-Creatures in Africa -- but every other kind, in every other place” (i). Pratt foresees the actions of nineteenth century reformers who, having vanquished slavery, turned their attention to segments of the population they perceived as being *de facto* slaves i.e. the working poor. Pratt writes that “it is not the *name* of slave in *itself*, which produces the great mischief. An hired servant in Europe may be as little at his own command, and destined to as hard labour as a purchased Negro in Africa; but the essential difference consists in the one being guarded by the laws of the land ...” (ii). Pratt calls not just for a

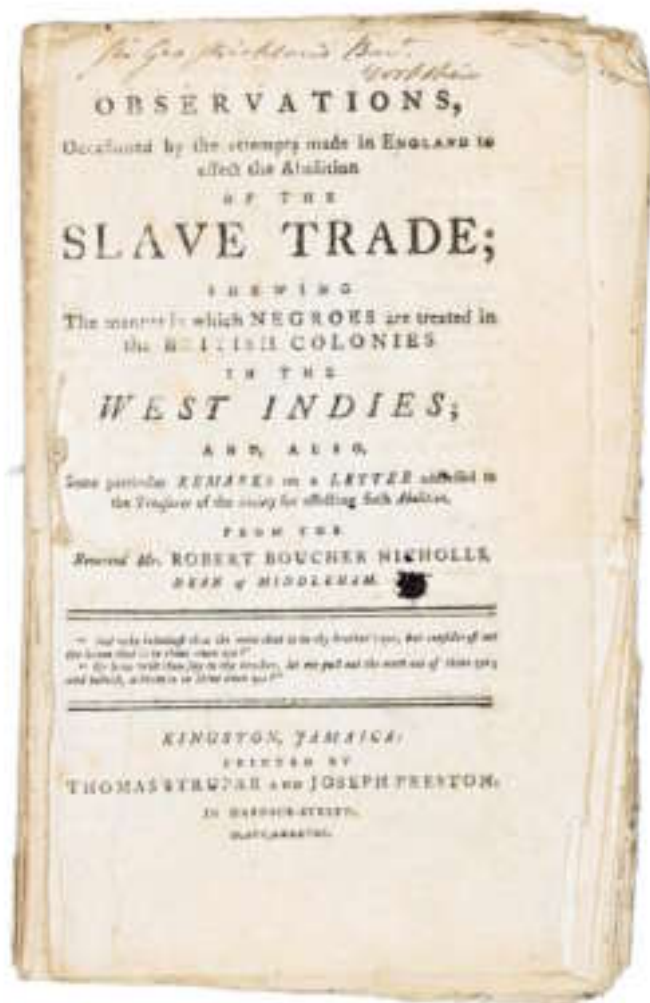


limited abolition of slavery but rather for a wider distribution of the “Rights of Nature” to every human being so that “that the laws of subordination, in the different classes of society, should not violate the laws of humanity” (iii).

Despite his calls for an extension of basic human rights, Pratt strangely seemed unopposed to the slave trade. In his preface, he calls the treatment of slaves “more criminal than the traffic” (ii) and later in the work idealizes the slaver William Snelgrave who gained a reputation as a beneficent slave ship captain for feeding his slaves regularly and allowing them to visit the main deck.

Beginning on page 76, Pratt portrays a scene that he argues conveys the depth of human emotion that black Africans are capable of expressing which he argues is indicative of their basic humanity. He describes how captain Snelgrave, moved by pity, rescued from a native sacrificial ceremony the baby of a slave woman he had purchased for transport. He bought the baby from the king and returned to his slave ship and gave the woman her child. In an outpouring of gratitude, the woman praises Snelgrave: “All that a parent, all that a slave can give, / O God-like White, O Indian God receive” (76). They soon depart and Pratt writes of the Middle Passage that followed “Thro’ the long voyage obedient they remain, / Nor sounding whip was heard, nor clanking chain” (77).

The six manuscript corrections to the text on pages 4, 12 and 21 are identical to those reproduced in the ECCO copy.



A LANDMARK WORK IN DEFENSE OF THE SLAVE TRADE,  
PRINTED BY SLAVES IN JAMAICA –  
THE VERY RARE FIRST EDITION

**32 FRANCKLYN** (Gilbert). *Observations, occasioned by the attempts made in England to effect the Abolition of the Slave Trade; shewing the manner in which Negroes are treated in the British Colonies in the West Indies and, also some particular remarks on a letter addressed to the Treasurer of the Society for effecting such Abolition from the Reverend Mr. Robert Boucher Nicholls, Dean of Middleham.*

**First edition.** 8vo., xi, [1], 64 pp. (A4, B2, B4, C4, C4, D-H4). **Unbound, uncut and stitched as issued.** Some very light browning to the title-page, a few pages with corners folded over, and inky finger prints to the verso of F1 and the recto of F2 (not affecting the text).

Kingston: Thomas Strupar and Joseph Preston, 1788.

£8500

**No copies in the U.K. ESTC records New York Public Library only in America and the Pretoria State Library in South Africa.** *Observations* was known to Cave (*Printing and the booktrade in the West Indies*. London: Pindar Press, 1987) only from advertisements that appeared in the *Jamaica Gazette* for 11 October 1788 [see below].

**ECCO reproduces only the London 1789 edition.**

A second edition appeared in the same year printed at “A. Smith’s Navigation Shop” in Liverpool (ESTC records only two copies – Birmingham University Library and Liverpool Central Library). A third edition was printed a year later in London [see item 40].

**An excellent copy of the rare first edition of an important work defending the slave trade by one of its most active West Indian supporters. Francklyn’s work is also a rare example of early printing in the West Indies and most remarkably, the printing for *Observations* was carried out by slaves [see below].**

Francklyn’s work appeared on the heels of the great publishing campaign in 1787-88 by the Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade. The committee sought to arouse “the general moral feeling of the nation” (Anstey, 256) through publications that focused on the moral and economic realities of the slave trade. The Committee oversaw the publication, usually through James Phillips, a member of the Committee, of a number of works by Thomas Clarkson, Anthony Benezet, and John Newton among others. “Such was the scale of the propaganda effort that in fifteen months £1,106 19s 9d had been spent on the ‘printing of books’ in quantities ranging from 15,050 copies of the *Summary View* to 1,500 of Benezet’s *Historical Account*.” (Anstey, 257).

To counter this effort, the pro-slavery lobby responded with great strength but their response was too late – they put forth their greatest efforts in 1792 and 1793. “All in all the propaganda of the West Indians was not of the volume, and quality, and could not possess the moral fervour, of that of the abolitionists” (Anstey, 295).

Pro-slavery works are much scarcer in commerce. This is perhaps explained by the fact that there were far less of them produced – for the period 1784-1807, L.J. Ragatz (cited in D.M. Porter *The Abolition of the Slave Trade in England, 1784-1807*. Hamden: Conn., 1970) has located only 47 pamphlets published in defense of the slave trade, but 109 against it. While these numbers probably are not accurate since Ragatz’s work was published nearly forty years ago, the ratio is probably close to being correct.

Francklyn states in his preface that the purpose of his work is to correct the “many calumnies, industriously propagated, against the proprietors of negro slaves in the West Indies” (iii). It is his years of practical experience with slaves in the West Indies, Francklyn argues, that informs his beliefs regarding slavery – something which the great promoters “of all these mistaken acts of humanity” [citing Granville Sharp in particular] (vi) lack and renders their arguments baseless and their ideas impractical if not dangerous. Francklyn believes that experience has taught him that slaves can not govern themselves (see pp. v and vii for examples of slaves who wanted to return to their masters after they had been freed) and that “the present attempt to cram liberty down the throats of people

who are incapable of digesting it can with propriety, be resembled to, nothing so well as to the account of poor Gulliver, when he was carried out of his little cabinet to the top of the house, by the Brobdignag monkey” (viii).

Foreshadowing claims of “States Rights” advocates in the American South, and making *Observations* into an important political work, Francklyn claims that the colonies have a right to self-government since “surely none can have a right to make such laws, but the members of the community who are to governed by them” (viii). Essentially, Francklyn is deploying many of the same arguments used by the American colonies in their successful campaign for independence but in this case the legal autonomy is sought to restrain the liberty of a certain segment of the West Indian population.

Francklyn’s work is roughly divided into two parts. Until page 33, he focuses on what he believes are the inaccuracies and exaggerations of the abolitionists – he often cites an unnamed pamphlet by Granville Sharp as being particularly offensive. More importantly, he advances a strong argument that the evils of slavery are not nearly as bad as the plight of the poor in England: “Is purchasing negroes in Africa, and keeping them in slavery, so great an act of cruelty as the declaring them free, and then suffering them to perish with cold, hunger, and disease in the streets of the metropolis? Such is too frequently the lot of the poor of Great Britain, to be regarded, the members of the society met in the Old Jewry profess their abhorrence of West Indian cruelty, while they seem not to be shocked at the scenes of misery which are daily before their eyes” (9).

From page thirty-four onwards, Francklyn addresses Rev. Dr. Robert Boucher Nickolls, Dean of Middleham. This reference has now become obscure but from Thomas Clarkson’s *History of the Abolition of the African Slave-Trade* (London: Taylor, 1808. vol. 1), we learn that Francklyn was attacking one of the more damaging pieces of evidence at the time against the slave trade in the West Indies.

During the 30 October 1787 meeting of the Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, letters sent to the Committee were read, as was the usual custom. Clarkson states that: “The last letter was from Robert Boucher Nickolls, dean of Middleham in Yorkshire. In this he stated that he was a native of the West Indies, and had travelled on the continent of America. He then offered some important information to the committee... He attempted to prove that the natural increase of the Negroes already in the West Indian Islands would be fully adequate to the cultivation of them without any supplies from Africa, and that such natural increase would be secured by humane treatment.... He combated, from his own personal knowledge, the argument that self-interest was always sufficient to ensure good usage, and maintained that there was only one way of securing it, which was the entire abolition of the Slave trade. He showed in what manner the latter measure would operate to the desired end. He then dilated on the injustice and inconsistency of this trade, and supported the policy of the abolition of it, both to the planter, the merchant, and the nation”. Clarkson later writes that “this letter of the Dean of Middleham, which was a little Essay of itself, was deemed of so much importance by the committee, but particularly as it was a result of local knowledge, that they not only passed a resolution of thanks to him for it, but desired his permission to print it”.

The work was published by the Committee, as usual through James Phillips, and was one of the great successes of their propaganda campaign of 1787-88 (see item 30). The work appeared in six editions in 1787 and 1788 and Francklyn himself testifies to the importance of the work when he writes in “except what has been written in the news papers, it is the only tract I have seen on the subject of this intended abolition of the Slave Trade” (34).

From page 34 onwards, Francklyn addresses Nickolls’s arguments individually and often reproduces the latter’s text in full. First he points out that Nickolls never provided sources to verify the facts that he cites. Later on, Francklyn provides a wonderful insight into the demographics of the slave trade when he addresses the argument that “the natural increase of the negroes already in the islands will be more than adequate to the cultivation of them” (38). He argues that “of the slaves annually brought off the coast, not so much as a third part are females, and amongst them many are past child bearing. This disproportion of males to females, you must naturally see, will prevent any considerable increase, and occasion a new supply to be wanted” (38). He further examines what he calls the inaccuracies relating to the diet, diseases, and religion of the slaves among other things.

Printing came late to Jamaica. It arrived in Kingston in 1718 and most of the early productions were acts of government or speeches in the colonial assembly. Only in the 1770’s and 1780’s did the presses begin to focus on printing works for popular consumption. **Remarkably, slaves printed *Observations* since the dated inventory of one of the printers of this work, Thomas Strupar, names two slaves, Chelsea (valued at £20) and Tom (valued at £90) who worked as pressmen for him.** Strupar also had 6 other slaves who worked in his printing house. While slaves were rarely used in the printing houses of the American colonies, the practice did occur occasionally in the West Indies. “The first direct evidence for the use of slaves as pressmen comes in the inventory of Ann Woolhead dated 29 November 1783, in which ‘The apparatus belonging to the printing Business with the pressman Bacchus Cannon Jack John and Primus was valued at £800” (See Cave, Roderick. *Printing and the Book Trade in the West Indies*. London: Pindar Press, 1987. pp. 31-33 and 157).

Gilbert Francklyn was a Jamaican planter who had a long-standing affiliation with the Society of West India Planters and Merchants, and his participation in the slave trade sub-committee first set up in 1788 to secure favourable publicity and sponsor the writing and distribution of pamphlets, indicates that Francklyn was an important figure in the opposition to abolition. In addition to this work, Francklyn wrote four other works relating to slavery.

A modern edition of *Observations* appears in *The British Transatlantic Slave Trade* (edited by Kenneth Morgan) in four volumes (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2003).

Provenance: contemporary inscription to the title-page “Sir Geo[rge] Strickland Bart. Yorkshire”. This is more than likely Sir George Strickland, 5<sup>th</sup> Baronet (1729-1808).

## ABOLITIONISM AS A PLOT TO DESTROY BRITISH PROSPERITY

**33 [RENEWICK (Michael)].** An Address to the inhabitants in general of Great Britain, and Ireland; relating to a few of the consequences which must naturally result from the abolition of the slave trade.

**Only edition.** 8vo., 32 pp. (A-D4). Title-page with a couple of light spots, otherwise **an excellent, fresh copy** recently bound in calf and marbled boards, antique style.

Liverpool: Printed by Mrs. Egerton Smith, and sold by her at the Navigation Shop..., 1788. £1500

ESTC records the **Anti-Slavery Society and Bodley only in the U.K.; New York Public Library only in North America** and the Royal Irish Academy (Dublin).

**An excellent copy of an important pro-slave trade work that alleges that the abolitionist movement is a plot by the enemies of Great Britain to destroy her commercial prosperity. The work was printed by a woman in Liverpool, the stronghold of support for the slave trade.**

Renwick's work was published soon after William Wilberforce gave notice in late 1788 of a parliamentary motion for the abolition of the slave trade. This work has been attributed to the Liverpool merchant Michael Renwick (b. 1740) on the basis of a manuscript note on the title-page of the Anti-Slavery Society copy.

Renwick argues that the slave trade is a pillar of national strength and that to abolish it would be "the occasion of overturning one great source of our commerce, of weakening our national strength, and, in consequence of this, of subjecting us to the tyranny and oppression of our enemies" (4). He states that abolitionism is in fact a plot by "the natural enemies of this country" who "after having found it impracticable, by long, obstinate, and bloody wars, to conquer us by force of arms, or to equal us in raising resources" (4) have now hatched a plot to "ruin this source of our commerce [slave trade], from which, in a great measure, the kingdom derives its present prosperous situation" (6).

He insinuates, with malice towards the landed gentry, that the abolitionists have preyed on "many unsuspecting people" not only from the lower classes but also "particularly those whose employment consists chiefly in the pleasure resulting from the exercise of social duties and the culture of their estates, and who find more entertainment arising from these circumstances than they would do from any attention to the more bustling avocations of life; in these persons the passions are in general appealed to... by which means they become an easy prey to the measure of bad and designing men" (4).

Beginning on page 9 Renwick offers three main arguments in defense of the slave trade. First he presents a legal and anti-cultural imperialist argument, namely that "no foreign nation ought to deprive the Africans of their natural privileges without their consent; that it is fair and just for these people to dispose of their slaves, prisoners of war, or felons, according to their own established laws and customs" and that "it is lawful for any foreign nation to purchase slaves

for the consideration agreed on by each party" (12). The second argument is a humanitarian argument that slaves are better off "under the protection of a kind master" and enjoy "great, nay even greater advantages than when under their own despotic governments" (7) and that if no slave trade existed and there were prisoners of war or felons, they would be killed rather than sold since no market existed. The final argument is that the slave trade is essential not only for economic prosperity of Great Britain but also for the civilization of Africa.

This work bears the imprint "printed by Mrs. Egerton Smith, and sold by her at Navigation Shop...". Ann Smith (Prescott) was the widow of Egerton Smith (d. 1788) a Liverpool printer who also specialized in making navigational instruments.

"... THE NATURE OF SLAVERY, NOT THE DISPOSITION OF  
THE MASTER IS CHARGEABLE ..."

**34 RAMSAY (James).** Objections to the abolition of the slave trade, with answers. To which are prefixed, strictures on a late publication, intitled, "Considerations on the Emancipation of Negroes, and the Abolition of the Slave Trade, by a West India Planter"

**First edition.** 8vo., [4], 60 pp. With the half-title. Half-title and verso of the last leaf very lightly stained and soiled, but overall **a very clean copy** bound in calf and marbled boards.

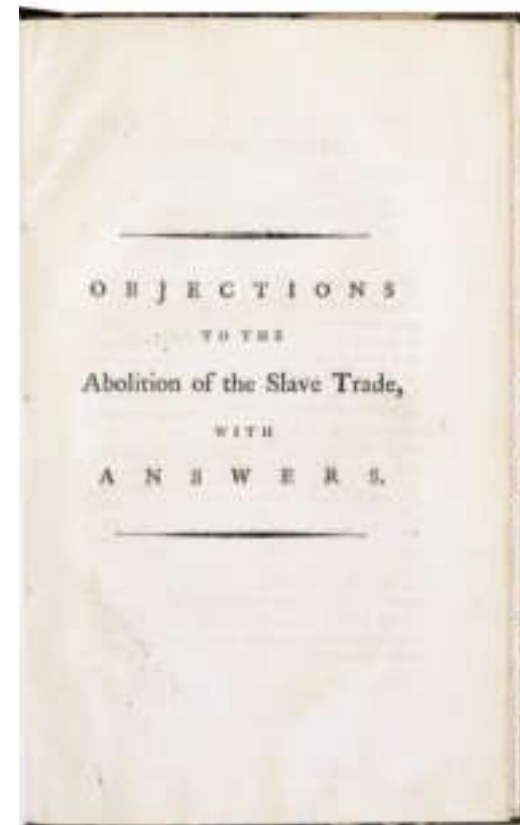
London: James Phillips, 1788.

£850

**First edition of an important work addressing the arguments made in favour of the slave trade.**

Ramsay's *Objections* is a reply to the anonymous pro-slave trade work *Considerations on the emancipation of negroes and on the abolition of the slave-trade* that appeared earlier in 1788.

In the introduction to *Objections*, Ramsay states that his focus is clearly on the slave trade and "where this author [of the aforementioned *Considerations on the Emancipation ...*] treats of a general or partial emancipation of slaves,



he combats a shadow; because the present plan [likely Wilberforce's 1788 motion to abolish the slave trade - see item 33] aims only at the abolition of the African slave trade. It meddles not with the slaves already in the colonies" (pp. 1-2).

If Ramsay were to address the subject of emancipation in the West Indies, he surprisingly states that he would "range myself on the author's side" (2) since he believes that "our slaves are not yet generally in a state, wherein full liberty would be a blessing" (2). Ramsay's remarks illustrate that while many abolitionists fought against the slave trade they did not necessarily support a general emancipation of slaves.

After his introduction, Ramsay offers 76 commonly used objections to the abolition of the slave trade "collected from various persons and writings" [1] and then provides his own replies. **By doing so, Ramsay provides an important distillation of the arguments employed by both sides leading up to the first debate on abolition in the House of Commons in 1789.**

For his role as an outspoken critic of the slave trade, Ramsay "bore the acrimony of the planters alone until Wilberforce, whom he had met in 1783, and T[homas] Clarkson, his curate in 1787, rallied to the abolitionist cause. He was thereafter consulted by Pitt ... In the run-up to the first Commons debate on abolition (May 1789) - a response to the deluge of petitions following the controversy over Ramsay's book - Ramsay prepared briefs for Wilberforce and other politicians containing many of the moral arguments and much of the evidence which Wilberforce used in his speech" (ODNB). Only months after the first Commons debate, Ramsay died of a gastric haemorrhage.

FREE TRADE = FREEDOM FOR SLAVES:  
ADVICE TO THE ABOLITIONISTS FROM ONE  
OF ADAM SMITH'S CONVERTS

**35 ANONYMOUS.** A letter to Granville Sharp, Esq. on the proposed abolition of the slave trade.

**Only edition.** 8vo., [4], 51, [1] pp. Half-title very lightly soiled and foxed, but otherwise an excellent copy with a few deckle edges, recently bound in calf and marbled boards, antique style.

London: printed for J. Debrett, 1788. £1500

ESTC records the **London School of Economics and the John Rylands Library in Manchester only in the U.K.** and eight locations in North America.

**A rare critique of the strategy of the abolitionists written by a convert to Adam Smith's doctrine of free trade.** *A letter to Granville Sharp* embodies the hard realism of the Utilitarians and illustrates that they often supported abolition but disagreed with the abolitionists on the means to achieve it.

After reflecting on the recent parliamentary inquiry into the state of slaves in the West Indies, the anonymous author provides an analysis of "the ideas on which those measures are to stand... and [the] probable causes of the evil complained" (4).

The anonymous author supports abolition and forcefully calls on the abolitionists to "effectually relieve, and not merely play with the sufferings of the unfortunate Africans" (27). He believes the best course of action to realize this end is not the constant "collecting instances of cruelty and oppression, which, if true, only prove what no one denies, that slaves are slaves" (32). This approach, so often employed by the abolitionists, he believes, "lead[s] the man of reflection to distrust a cause undertaken by such missionaries" (33).

What the abolitionists must do, he argues, is to collect evidence that illustrates that "if the West Indies were deprived of monopolistic privileges and subjected to the forces of free competition, the artificial demand for slaves would cease" (Davis, footnote to page 75 of "The Preservation of English Liberty"). In short, it would be free trade that ends the slave trade.

Echos of the economic principles of Adam Smith resonate throughout *A letter to Granville Sharp*. For example, the anonymous author contrasts the treatment of slaves in the American colonies, where they are treated far more humanely, with those in the West Indies and argues that it results from a difference in the interests of the planters in each locale. He points out that in the American colonies there was a much greater demand for slaves than in the West Indies and consequently the slaves were treated better because it was in the interests of the owners to do so. The American owners also gave their slaves incentives to increase their productivity: "In order to increase their industry, they began first with allowing them some little indulgencies, which were afterwards extended into something like wages : by degrees it became evident, that a slave exerted himself in proportion as he was allowed to share in the fruits of his labours... It was then, and not till then, that what experience has shewn to be profitable, philanthropy discovered to be just" (15).

This is contrasted with the West Indian planters who "in general do not conceive they have such an interest in treating their negroes with care and attention as their bretheren on the continent [American colonies] do" (16) because "The enormous profits of a West-India plantation open to its owner a prospect of raising, at an early period of life, such a fortune as, in the country from which he came [i.e. England], will entitle him to a place in society far above what he could have aspired to had he remained there" (20-21). It is these visions of grandeur that lead him "to goad his fainting slaves to new exertions of industry" (22).

The work concludes with the author's analysis of a number of plans to alleviate the condition of slaves, all of which he is opposed to since he believes, quoting Adam Smith, that governmental regulation in the economic sphere has always been ineffectual and actually counterproductive in that it encourages the opposite of what it is trying to limit or remove.

AN EARLY BEOWULF SCHOLAR DISCUSSES  
THE SLAVE TRADE

36 [THORKELIN (Grimur Jonsson)]. An Essay on the slave trade.

**Only edition.** 8vo., 31, [1] pp. A small tear to the blank margin of the title-page, the name of the author of the work is written on the title-page in a contemporary hand and some very light spotting to a few of the blank margins throughout, but otherwise a very good copy recently bound in calf and marbled boards, antique style.

London: printed for G. Nicol, Bookseller to His Majesty, 1788. £950

**Only edition of work that examines the slave trade and its gradual abolition in medieval Europe and provides an alternative solution, based on medieval precedent, to the current conflict.**

Thorkelin argues that slavery and the trade in slaves is characteristic of non-Christian societies and the practice “prevail[s] among the Africans, and will continue to prevail till the blessings of our sacred religion, the knowledge of common duties, and a fixed love for agriculture, arts, and manufactures, spread themselves among those millions, who at present are sunk into ignorance” (4). He later writes, when discussing the abolition of the trade in European slaves, that this result “is the work of centuries, and of men who sacrificed their own ease to the good of mankind” (28). Without similar dedication “it is impossible for the inhabitants of the Gold Coast to live free from those evils which introduce slavery” (28).

Consequently, “abolition of the slave trade is by no means advisable, with a view to Christian duty and benevolence, as it also appears impracticable in the light of political interest. How can Europe, who divides her regards between philanthropy and commercial interest, see her plantations neglected and restored to their natural wildness for want of hands to cultivate them? Can she give up with indifference those millions whom she might save... and place in a state of servitude comparatively happy?” (29-30).

He suggests, based on his extensive studies of the practices of the pre-Christian Goths, Franks, Danes and Scandinavian tribes, a limited form of slavery with government oversight not only of the treatment of slaves in the West Indies but also of the conditions of transport from Africa. Under this plan, the term of servitude would be limited and the slaves would have certain rights such as leisure and “a small property, to be cultivated when they are not employed in their masters service” (31).

Grimur Jonsson Thorkelin (1752-1829), Icelandic scholar and the Danish National Archivist, played an important part in the discovery and publication of the Beowulf manuscript found in the Nowell codex. He rediscovered the manuscript in 1786 on a visit to the British Museum to search for Danish antiquities, and had the manuscript transcribed in the following year. He finally published a Latin translation of the poem in 1815 – its first appearance in print. Thorkelin wrote *An Essay on the slave trade* during his 1785-1791 visit to England.

A HARROWING ACCOUNT OF THE SLAVE TRADE BY AN  
“UNRECOGNISED HERO OF ABOLITION”

37 STANFIELD (James Field). Observations on a Guinea voyage in a series of letters addressed to the Rev. Thomas Clarkson.

**Only edition.** 8vo., [4], 36 pp. **With an early use of the “Am I not a man and a brother” medallion on the title-page.** Title-page slightly dusty, a couple of small pin holes to the gutter of the title-page, otherwise a very good, crisp copy bound in modern calf and marbled boards, antique style.

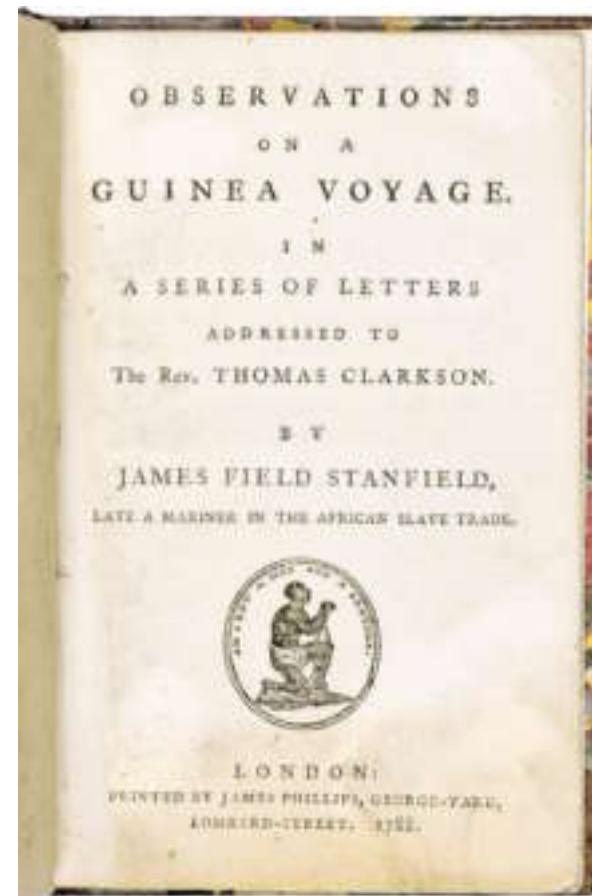
London: James Phillips, 1788.

£2500

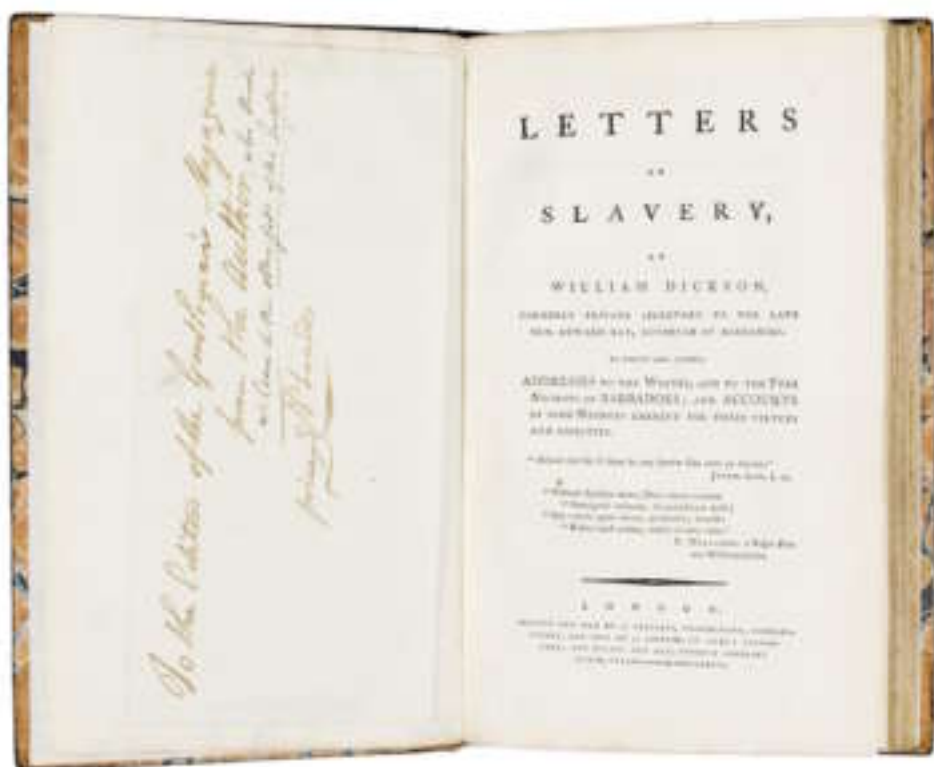
ESTC records **Canterbury Cathedral, John Rylands, Bodley, and Senate House Library only in the U.K.;** and 13 copies in 10 institutions in North America.

**Only edition of a powerful and influential anti-slave trade work by the Irish actor/abolitionist James Field Stanfield who was not only “one of the earliest to write a first-person expose of the slave trade” but also “the first to write about the slave trade from the perspective of the common sailor” (Rediker, 132-33).**

In *Observations*, Stanfield describes a slaving voyage that he made from Liverpool to Benin on the west coast of Africa and then to Jamaica during the years 1774-76. Like John Newton, he describes the brutality and dehumanizing effects of the slave trade not only on the slaves, but on the sailors. He notes that “the unabating cruelty, exercised upon seamen in the slave-trade, first prompted me to give in my mite of information to the cause” (30). In other words, it was the reality of the slave trade that needed to be conveyed to the general public. He writes later on the same page that “One real view – one MINUTE, absolutely spent in the slave rooms on the middle passage, would do more for the cause of humanity, than the pen of a Robertson, or the whole collective eloquence of the British Senate” (31).







READING PHILLIS WHEATLEY IN LONDON

**39 DICKSON** (William). Letters on slavery, by William Dickson, formerly private secretary to the late hon. Edward Hay, governor of Barbadoes. To which are added, addresses to the whites, and to the free negroes of Barbadoes; and accounts of some negroes eminent for their virtues and abilities.

**Only edition.** 8vo., [2], x, 190, [2] with the half-title and errata leaf. **With a manuscript inscription** “To the editors of the Gentleman’s Magazine from the author, price 3/6 boards” pasted to the verso of the half-title. Tear to M3 just touching the text (no loss) but otherwise a very good copy in contemporary condition with a few gatherings unopened. Recent calf and marbled boards, antique style.

London: J. Phillips, 1789. £2500

**Important historical work on the state of slavery in the West-Indies published during heat of the debate over the social and economic consequences of the abolition of slavery leading up to Wilberforce’s first motion for abolition in 1791. The work also includes an important account of the reception of the poems of the American freed slave poetess Phillis Wheatley.**

Dickson writes in his introduction that his “original design, was to lay before the public a free and impartial sketch of negro slavery as it now exists in the island

of Barbadoes; to show how it would be affected by the abolition of the slave-trade; and to prove by arguments, founded on facts, the natural equality of the natives of the immense continent of Africa to the rest of mankind... The sketch I have given of the state of slavery in Jamaica was no part of my plan, but was drawn after that plan was completed” (iii).

Dickson’s work consists of 19 letters written to Sir James Johnstone MP for Dumfries. Dickson opted for this form because he is “an obscure individual, they [the letters that make up his work] will derive weight and importance from being addressed to a British senator, who is possessed of a large property in the West-Indies” (1). Appended to the letters are an address “To the white inhabitants in general and, in particular to the legislature of the island of Barbadoes” in which, among other things, Dickson calls for a new law code for slaves that “may serve as a model to that [Jamaica] and to every other British colony in the West Indies” (169), and also an address “To the free negroes and mulattoes, and to the more enlightened and regular slaves in the Island of Barbadoes” (172) where Dickson outlines his belief that the abolition of slavery “must be the work of time, and must be brought about by slow degrees; and this for very good reasons – because privileges granted to slaves must keep pace with their improvements in Christianity, and because the property of their owners must not be injured” (173).

**Perhaps the most interesting section of the work is the last of the appendices which contains four biographies “of Negroes remarkable for their Virtues and Abilities” (180).** Dickson describes the lives and character of Joseph Rachell of Barbadoes, a freed slave who built a small fortune as a capital merchant and owned a dry goods shop who was revered “for his humanity and tenderness. He was extremely kind in lending out money to poor, industrious men, in order to enable them to begin their trade”(181); “John”, a slave “who was master of one of our fishing boats” (182) known for his honesty and fair dealing; Dr. James Derham, of New Orleans, Louisiana who learned the science of medicine by working with a number of previous masters all of whom were doctors of medicine. His last master granted him his freedom and he then practiced medicine on his own account and flourished; and Thomas Fuller of Alexandria, Virginia who possessed “a talent for arithmetical calculations” (185). The final two accounts are based on a letter written by the American abolitionist Benjamin Rush. **There is also a small description of the American poet, and freed slave, Phillis Wheatley on the bottom of page 187 including her biographical epitaph addressed to the earl of Dartmouth. The printer writes that he would have added to this work extracts of her poems but ran out of room. The note also includes a brief description of a visit by Wheatley to London – a fascinating account of the reception of Wheatley in England.** Christopher Leslie Brown writes in *Moral Capital* that “during the 1780s several British opponents of slavery – including Charles Crawford, Thomas Clarkson, George Gregory, William Dickson, and Joseph Woods – would seize on both Wheatley and Sancho as proof that Africans were capable of moral and cultural improvement. In this way, as symbols of black accomplishment, these early black writers assisted British arguments against slavery at a crucial moment in their development” (Brown, 286).

William Dickson (fl. 1789-1815), a clergyman, was employed in 1792 by the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade “to enquire into the progress of our cause” in Scotland. Dickson’s diary of his travels in Scotland “is the only written record, other than Clarkson’s, we have from an eighteenth century abolition organizer on the road” (Hochschild, 226-7). Dickson’s manuscript diary was never published and resides at the Friends’ House Library in London (Temp. mss. Box 10/14).

Dickson is a curious figure in abolition movement. He utilized the arguments of the supporters of slavery as well as the abolitionists to steer a cautious path between what he saw as two dangerous extremes that bred his greatest fear – disorder. The immediate abolition of slavery he argued would have disastrous consequences for “possessors of West Indian property who are far less to blame, in this business, than the English slave-mongers” (172). He also believed that slaves, distinguished from freed slaves and mulattoes “are not prepared to enjoy, all at once, the blessings of liberty; that liberty, instead of being a blessing, would be the greatest curse... such beings could and would make no other use of liberty than to run headlong into idleness and debauchery” (173). In Dickson’s cautious approach we have perhaps the germ of Dundas’s compromise bill of 1792 which proposed a gradual abolition of the slave trade and later recommended 1800 as the year for abolition.

#### ANOTHER EDITION TO “ASSIST IN DISABUSING THE PUBLIC”

**40 FRANCKLYN** (Gilbert). Observations occasioned by the attempts made in England to effect the abolition of the slave trade; shewing, the manner in which Negroes are treated in the British colonies in the West Indies: and also some particular remarks on a letter addressed to the Treasurer of the Society for effecting such Abolition from the Reverend Mr. Robert Boucher Nicholls, Dean of Middleham.

Third edition. 8vo., xx, 87, [1] pp. Title-page very lightly soiled, occasional very light marginal browning, verso of the final leaf with offsetting from the title page of the next item it was originally bound with, otherwise a very good copy with a number of deckle edges, recently bound in calf and marbled boards, antique style.

London: typographic press and sold by J. Walter... C. Stalker... and W. Richardson, 1789. £1250

This edition of Francklyn’s *Observations* contains an important three-page address, “The publisher to the Reader”, that describes the dissemination of the work and also reveals the possible provenance of our copy of the first edition of the work [see item 32]. In the address the publisher notes that several copies of the first edition that were printed in Jamaica “were transmitted, not only by many of the principle planters to their friends and correspondents, but by the Honourable the Committee of both Houses of Legislature of the Island, appointed to correspond with their agent Stephen Fuller, Esq. to distribute

to such gentlemen in England, to whom he might suppose the matters of information it contains might be useful” (iii-iv).

The address also testifies to the popularity of the work stating that “the many enquiries after it, has induced the author to consent to reprinting it with his name, in the hopes that it may assist in disabusing the public, which has been most shamefully imposed on by the misrepresentation of persons grossly ignorant of the British West-India properties and proprietors” (iv).

#### “... HOW DEEPLY POWER CORRUPTS THE HUMAN HEART...”

**41 FULLER** (Stephen). Notes on the two reports from the committee of the Honourable House of Assembly of Jamaica, appointed to examine into, and to report to the House, the Allegations and Charges contained in the several Petitions which have been presented to the British House of Commons, on the Subject of the Slave Trade, and the Treatment of the Negroes, &c. &c. &c. By a Jamaica Planter.

**Only edition.** 8vo., [4], 62 pp. with the half-title and final blank leaf, D8 and **two edges uncut.** Half-title and title-page lightly spotted, three small holes along gutter of half-title and title-page from original sewing. Recently bound in calf and marbled boards, antique style.

London: Printed and sold by James Phillips, 1789.

£550

**Only edition of a critique of reports issued by the assembly of Jamaica in response to “applications of the people in Britain to the House of Commons, for the abolition of the African Slave Trade” (5).** The work examines the so-called legal protection afforded to Jamaican slaves and argues that the legal restraints on slave holders are ineffectual – in short it is the system that breeds cruelty and malice.

In the “Advertisement” to the reader, the anonymous editor argues that “the habitual exercise of that arbitrary dominion which the master possesses over the slave, communicates an involuntary bias, even to well disposed minds, against the just claims of humanity, and that it is difficult, if not impossible, to interpose effectual laws restraining such dominion”

(i) and that the claims, contained in the following two reports, of the Jamaican assembly that they were producing legislation “for securing more impartial trials and better treatment to slaves” (6) were in fact a “wilful deception” (5).

ESTC attributes the commentary to Stephen Fuller (1716-1808), a merchant and the English agent for the Jamaican assembly. “With his brother [he] did much to further the Jamaica interest, being the author of several pamphlets, notably on slavery” (ODNB). The Fuller family held large estates in Jamaica.



## DOLBEN'S BILL OF 1789 – EARLY REGULATION OF THE SLAVE TRADE

**42 BEAUFOY** (Henry Hanbury). The Speech of Mr. Beaufoy, Tuesday, the 18<sup>th</sup> June, 1788, in a committee of the whole house, on a bill for regulating the conveyance of negroes from Africa to the West-Indies. To which are added observations on the evidence adduced against the bill.

**Only edition.** 8vo., [4], 37, [3] pp. With the final blank. Title-page very lightly browned, otherwise **an excellent copy uncut and unopened, with generous margins** recently bound in calf and marbled boards, antique style.

London: J. Phillips, 1789.

£350



**Only edition of Beaufoy's dramatic speech in favour of Dolben's bill for a regulation of the slave trade – a historic first step and an important preliminary move towards the abolition of the slave trade.**

The first 21 pages contains Beaufoy's speech and the second section, consisting of pages [23]-37 with a separate title-page, is "Observations on the evidence given at the bar of the House of Commons to the Committee on the Bill for a providing temporary regulations respecting the transportation of African Slaves".

Granville Sharp, who was at this point the chairman of the Committee of the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade, explains in his prefatory note that "Although the act passed last session for regulating the conveyance of negroes [the bill moved by Dolben, the M.P. for Oxford University who "was so horrified at what he saw of a slave ship which he visited in dock that he moved a bill to ameliorate the conditions on a slave ship by restricting the number of slaves that could be carried per ton and by providing for bounties for the captain and surgeon on slaves landed alive" (Anstey, 268)] did not aim at the point to which the attention of the Society has been invariably directed... the arguments offered in support of the bill and the evidence produced in opposition to it, tended greatly to promote their [the society's] design... the Committee think themselves fortunate in having been able to prevail on the members whose Speech and Remarks follow, to permit their publication" [3].

Henry Hanbury Beaufoy (1750-1795), politician, came from a strong Quaker background that "coloured his whole career" (ODNB). Beaufoy was noted by many observers of parliamentary affairs for his independence of mind and "interest in public finance, the East India Company, the fishing industry, and the civil liberties of dissenters" (ODNB). By contemporary accounts, Beaufoy possessed great speaking skills and his speeches were often widely reported and published. His speech in support of Dolben's bill found in the present work, a speech in favour of extending the boundaries of the fisheries, and his speech advocating the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts were all published in pamphlet form.

Sabin 4166.

## COMMENDED BY BOSWELL

**43 RANBY** (John). Doubts on the abolition of the slave trade; by an old member of parliament.

**Only edition.** 8vo., [8], 123, [1] pp. Title-page darkened and lightly foxed, some intermittent light foxing throughout, small hole to the blank inner gutter of II, otherwise a good copy bound in modern calf and marbled boards, antique style.

London: for John Stockdale, 1790.

£750

ESTC notes that this item is "possibly extracted from a volume containing additional material" and notes the catchword on the recto of p. 123 but the verso is blank. ESTC records only the Longleat House copy as being bound with another work (the unrelated *Dispute adjusted, about the proper time of applying...*) so it is likely that this work is, in fact, a separate publication.

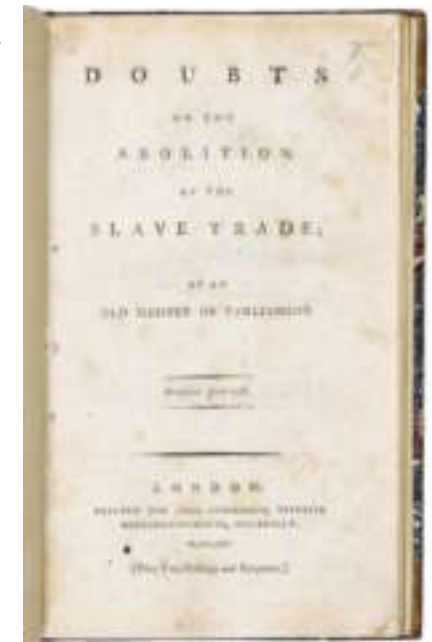
**An important analysis of the arguments in favour of abolition by the tory pamphleteer and 'ingenious' friend of James Boswell, John Ranby.**

Ranby writes as a moderate sceptic of the abolitionist stance and questions their moral and economic arguments. For example, regarding the cruel treatment of slaves in the West Indies, Ranby writes that "it would be to no purpose to enter into an examination of the several instances of real or supposed ill usage charged upon the planters... The facts are stated in so general a manner that it is impossible to meet them with evidence, and equally impossible to distinguish between the cases of wanton cruelty and justifiable severity" (27).

What is necessary for the slave trade as a whole, Ranby argues, is wise regulation. "I wish to see the Slave Trade put under humane and effectual regulations; but cannot

agree to overturn, at once, a system of commerce which has been constantly increasing for a great number of years to the apparent improvement of our revenue and marine, without having first tried many methods of remedying the exceptionable parts, and preserving the rest" (116-117).

Biographer James Boswell writes in his *Life of Johnson* that "I have read, conversed, and thought much upon the subject, and would recommend to all who are capable of conviction, an excellent tract by my learned and ingenious friend John Ranby, Esq. entitled 'Doubts on the Abolition of the Slave Trade.' To my Ranby's "Doubts," I will apply Lord Chancellor Hardwicke's expression... 'His doubts, (said his Lordship), are better than most people's Certainties'" (Boswell, James. *Life of Johnson*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1904. p. 884).



THE SLAVE TRADE AS A NECESSITY  
FOR THE GOOD OF THE STATE?

**44 ANONYMOUS** Remarks on the advertisement of the Committee for the Abolition of the Slave-Trade, inserted into the public papers.

**First edition.** 8vo., [2], ii, 112 pp. Some light soiling to the blank margins of the title-page, impression to the title-page and the first few leaves from the preceding item previously bound in the volume, but **overall an excellent, large margined copy with deckle edges throughout** recently bound in half calf and marbled boards, antique style.

London: Printed by T. Spilsbury and son, for T. and J. Egerton, 1790. £3000

**This work is unrecorded by ESTC, COPAC and ECCO. OCLC locates a single copy in the Benson Collection at the University of Texas at Austin.**

Joseph Sabin evidently encountered *Remarks* as he records it in his monumental *Bibliotheca Americana: A Dictionary of Books Relating to America from its Discovery to the Present Time* (no. 69434) and the more recent *West Indian Bibliography* (<http://www.books.ai/index.html>) compiled by Don Mitchell describes it as well. The latter describes a second edition of 1791 which is otherwise unrecorded and probably a ghost.

**An excellent copy of an exceedingly rare pro-slave trade work that attempts to vindicate West Indian planters.**

The anonymous author dedicates the work to two West Indian plantation owners, Chaloner Arcedeckne and John Brathwaite, “under whose protecting benevolence, people of every denomination, description, and colour are sure to find redress and kindness” (i-ii). Born in Jamaica, Arcedeckne left the island to further his education at Eton and largely remained in Great Britain as an absentee landlord and served as an MP for Wallingford and Westbury.

*Remarks* reprints and replies to a work that summarizes the resolutions and proceedings of a meeting of the Committee for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade. The work outlines, among other things, “proofs” of “the oppression and iniquity of this traffic” (3) and alleges improper treatment of slaves on the plantations in the West Indies. *Remarks* largely focuses on responding to the latter claim.

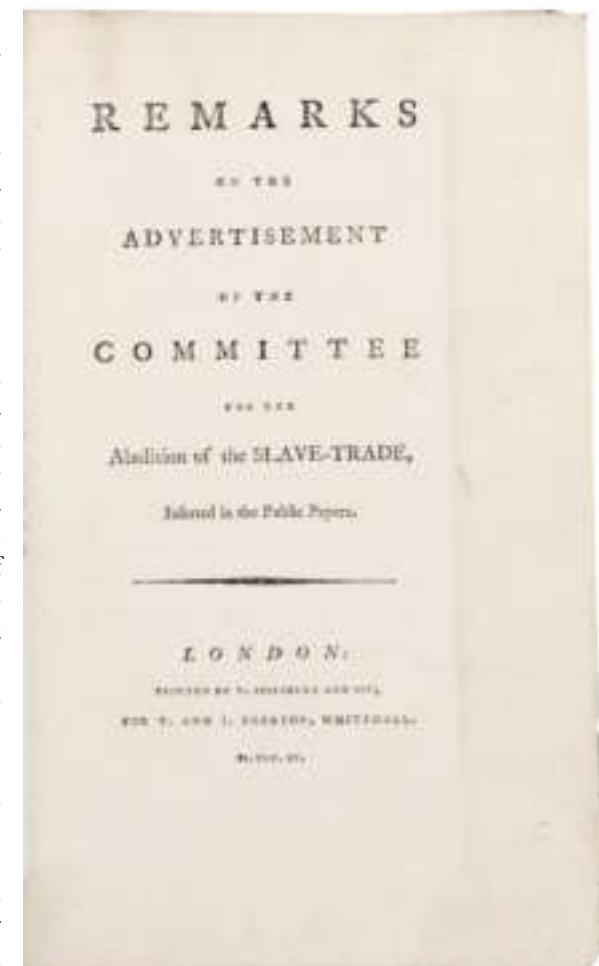
One of the arguments put forth in defense of the planters is that the allegedly false accusations made by those in Britain are largely motivated by jealousy: “false accusations are often made for the sake of gratifying rancour, envy, and resentment. The generous hospitality of the planter, which is generally too great to enable him to live long in England, has frequently been known to excite the jealousy of his more thrifty neighbours” (20).

A more powerful and prescient argument is offered later in the work, namely that “charity starts at home” or that the abolitionists divert their attention from the evils and injustices around them in Britain and focus on the few and much exaggerated instances of cruelty towards slaves in the West Indies. The anonymous author writes: “The streams of blood which daily issue from British veins,

should be as much cherished as those from African. The contrast of the crimson hue is still stronger on white than black; yet they pass unobserved at home ... The most unhappy objects, crippled from ill-usage, and emaciated by famine, such as are never seen nor heard of in the West-Indies daily come before magistrates, to obtain redress, which the Law at present does not allow them ... let us meliorate the condition” (43-44). The argument powerfully suggests, with implicit racism, “the contrast of the crimson hue is still stronger on white than black”, that the shadow of oppression looms large in Britain and must be addressed.

After the eventual abolition of the British slave trade in 1807 and of slavery in the British West Indies in 1837, many abolitionists turned their attention to the working classes whom they regarded as *de facto* slaves. Chartists and abolitionists both sought to end what they believed was the oppression of man and many members of both groups expressed sympathy with the aims of the other - Frederick Douglass referred to himself as a Chartist.

The anonymous author states that once the condition of the working classes has been addressed, that the abolitionists should “turn their eyes to the code of Military Law; at the execution of which, slaves in the islands stand appalled” (44-45). What follows is a very sophisticated argument which asserts that military law, the execution of which is at times brutal and “abhorrent ... to every good officer” (45), is a necessity for the good of a state. The author continues: “to abridge the one [necessity] endangers the other [the state]” (45). The inference is clear - that slavery, much like torture in Guantanamo Bay, is a necessity for the good of a state.



## THE ANGLO-FRANCO-AMERICAN ANTI-SLAVERY CONNECTION: ABOLITIONISM IN AMERICA'S INFANCY

**45 ANONYMOUS.** Essays on the subject of the slave-trade, in which the sentiments of several eminent British Writers are attended to. – And also containing extracts from an address of the Abolition Society in Paris, to the National Assembly, and to their Countrymen in general, dated March 28, 1791. Particularly honorable to that Nation, and friendly to the Rights of Mankind.

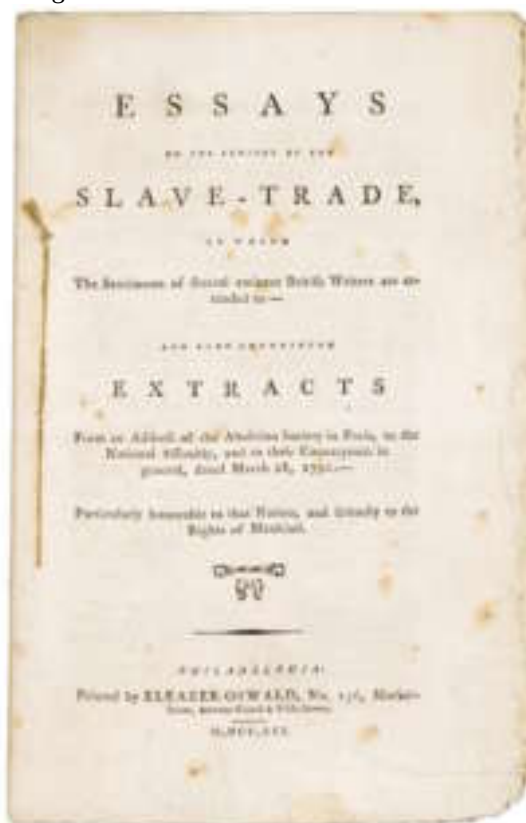
**Only edition.** 8vo., 22, [2] pp. Some light soiling and spotting throughout, a small stain to the lower blank margins of the first two gatherings, but otherwise **an excellent copy and a remarkable survival with the blank leaf C4, uncut with many deckle edges and sewn as issued.**

Philadelphia: Eleazer Oswald, 1791.

£850

**Rare. Not in Evans.** ESTC records **Cambridge University only in the U.K** and American Antiquarian Society, Brown, Haverford, Library Company of Philadelphia, Michigan [William L. Clements Library] and Whittier College in North America.

**An excellent copy of a fascinating American abolitionist work reflecting the zeitgeist of the French Revolution.**



The work consists of two essays, a postscript, an “additional essay” and an anonymous elegy. The first essay previously appeared in the *Independent Gazetteer*, a Philadelphia based daily founded in 1782 by the publisher of this work, Eleazer Oswald (1755-1795) who may also be the author of all the items found in this work. The second essay is “another now [sic] offering from the same writer” [3] and the final three items were added just before the work went to press.

Oswald writes in the introduction that he hopes that these essays will “coincide with the views of the Abolition Society in London, who express themselves in their circular letter addressed to other societies” [3] and “earnestly exhort all her [i.e. humanity’s] friends to co-operate with this virtuous resolution [i.e. efforts to abolish the slave trade]” (ibid). The work

serves two ends – to support the aims of the London Society to Effect the Abolition of the Slave Trade as well as to “appeal to the consciences of our countrymen, until the reproach of the Slave-Trade be completely removed” [3].

In the first essay the anonymous author describes the spirit of the times as he perceives them. He observes that “Genius has been called forth to display its powers, -- Light is spreading in Europe with uncommon lustre, -- Philosophy is properly appreciated, and liberality of sentiment attends the noble train” [5] and a practical effect of this is that “a great part of the human species, who have long groaned under oppression, seem to be on the point of being relieved in a considerable degree, by a revolution of sentiment, such as has never been paralleled” [5]. The author then reviews a number of recently published works relating to slaves and slavery before concluding that if another motion to abolish the slave trade is brought before the British parliament then “more than eighty and eight thousand of the most respectable voices in that nation only, will be readily united to do away with that most reproachful stigma THE SLAVE-TRADE” (10).

The second essay focuses on current French efforts to abolish the slave trade. The author summarises and translates French accounts for the benefit of an American audience.

The postscript is a fascinating reaction to and description of the imprisonment of the French royal family during the Revolution. With a firm belief in the principles expressed by the National Assembly, the author hopes that the revolution presents an opportunity for an end to the slave trade.

The work concludes with an “Additional essay” which includes further reflections on the French Revolution and the slave trade and an anonymous Elegy “suitable to the present occasion”.

Eleazer Oswald “was born in England, and came to America in the early 1770s and apprenticed with the New York printer John Holt (1721-1784). Oswald served in the colonial army during the Revolution; after the war he returned to printing, first in Baltimore, then in Philadelphia (where he published *The Independent Gazetteer, or The Chronicle of Freedom*) and New York” (From the Library Company of Philadelphia’s description of the papers of Oswald Family papers found at [www.librarycompany.org/mcallister/pdf/oswald.pdf](http://www.librarycompany.org/mcallister/pdf/oswald.pdf)).

## THE MODERATE POSITION

**46 ANONYMOUS** A few words on the nature of the Slave Trade; and the measures which ought to be adopted.

**Only edition.** 8vo., [2], 60 pp. Half-title soiled and stained at foot, paper flaw to A4 affecting three or four letters, verso of final leaf soiled, and some occasional soiling and staining throughout but overall a good copy recently bound in half calf and marbled boards.

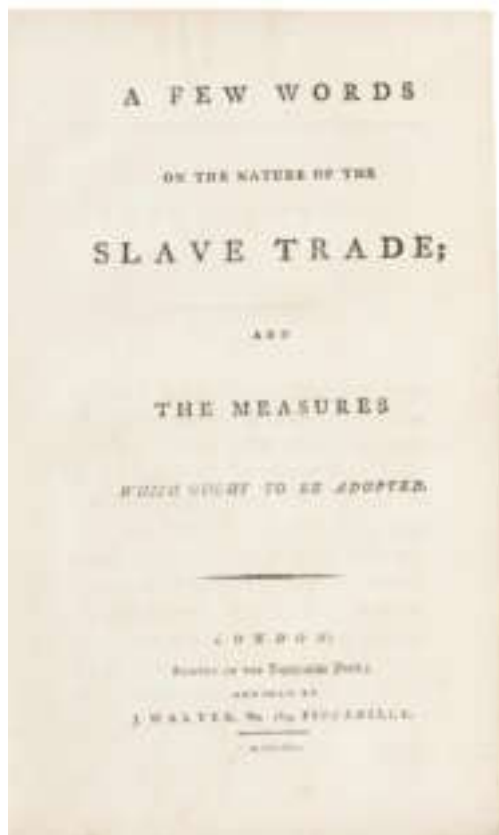
London: printed at the Logographic Press; and sold by J. Walter ..., 1791.

£1500

Very rare. ESTC records only **Cornell in North America** and **Pretoria State Library in South Africa**. No copies in the United Kingdom.

**A very rare work that presents a moderate plan to end the slave trade.**

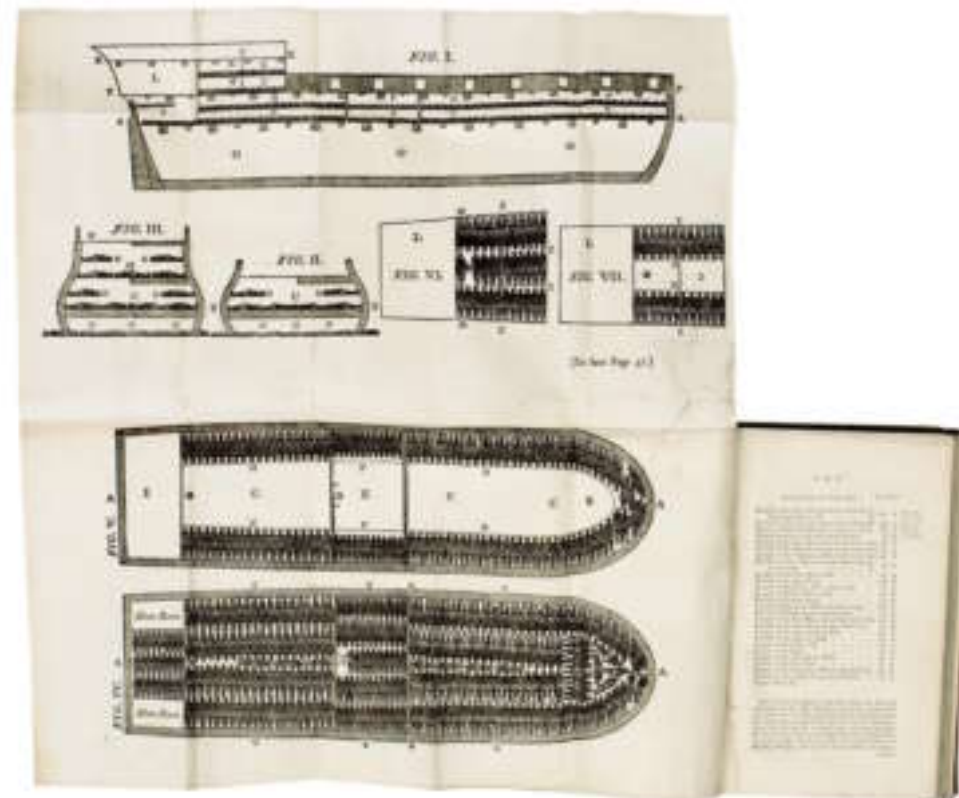
While the anonymous author acknowledges the inherent injustice of the slave trade, he admits that “unfortunately the evil has gained too deep a root, and cannot now be torn up at once without convulsing ground that must be gently trod upon” (11). The moral and political considerations, i.e. the well-being of the African slaves and the “welfare and prosperity of the West-India Islands” (33), must be balanced and necessitate a moderate approach.



more humane treatment” (60) which will “certainly supercede the necessity of the Trade in slaves” (60).

The author provides a detailed account of the Middle Passage (pp. 14-19) including an allegation of the rape of African women by the crews of slaving ships; a description of the treatment of slaves in the West Indies (pp. 20-22) describing, among other things, the utilitarian philosophy of the planters: “we know, for instance, that it has been a matter of calculation on some plantations, whether it were more advantageous to work the slave to death in a few years, or, by moderate labour, protract his life to many; and that it has been decidedly determined on the inhuman side” (21); and the effects of the slave trade on sailors (pp. 22-25) who fare little better than the slaves.

What is needed, according to the author, are “improvements in agriculture, -- a correction of manners, -- an attention to population, -- a reduction in domestic establishments, -- and a



#### THE HORRORS OF A SLAVE SHIP ILLUSTRATED

**47 [HOUSE OF COMMONS]** An Abstract of the Evidence delivered before a Select Committee of the House of Commons, in the Years 1790, and 1791; on the Part of the Petitioners for the Abolition of the Slave-Trade.

**First edition.** 8vo., xxvi, 156, [1]. **With a large folding plate depicting the now iconic of the slave ship Brookes with a closely packed cargo of 482 slaves (repaired tear to the middle crease). A second plate depicting the west coast of Africa is found at the rear of the volume** (lightly foxed with some light off-setting). Some occasional light soiling and staining to page 37, but otherwise a good copy bound in contemporary quarter calf and marbled boards (recently rebacked, corners and edges bumped and chipped, head of spine repaired).

London, James Phillips, 1791.

£3000

**Important abstract of the evidence presented to the select committee of the House of Commons published leading up to Wilberforce's abortive abolition bill of 1791.**

“The parliamentary hearings, which had dragged on intermittently for nearly two years, ended in early 1791. The abolitionists then faced a curious problem. There were nearly 1,700 pages of House of Commons testimony, on top of the hefty 850-page volume from the Privy Council hearings of several years earlier, filled with eyewitness accounts, tables, and excerpts from slave laws of different

colonies, some of them in French. No one could expect even the most sympathetic MP to master this mountain of material. And so, in the weeks before the next debate on the slave trade began, a group of abolitionists embarked on a feverish collective editing marathon - Wilberforce even working on Sundays, so urgent did he feel the task - to distill some three years of testimony into an account short enough to be given to each MP to read. The committee then sent it to all of them” (Hochschild, 189).

The preface to the *Abstract* outlines the purpose of the work and its context: “In consequence of the numerous petitions which were sent to parliament ... in the year 1788, for the ABOLITION of the SLAVE-TRADE, it was determined by the House of Commons to hear Evidence upon that subject. The Slave-Merchants and Planters accordingly brought forward several persons as witnesses ... Several persons were afterwards called on the side of the petitioners of Great Britain, to substantiate the foundation of their several petitions, and to invalidate several points on the evidence which the others had offered. These were examined in the years 1790, and 1791. This abstract then is made up from the evidence of the latter, in which little other alteration has been made than that of bringing things on the same point into one chapter, which before lay scattered in different parts of the evidence; and this has been done to enable the reader to see every branch of the subject in a clear and distinct shape” (iii-iv).

Following the preface is a valuable alphabetical list, with biographical sketches, of the chief witnesses. The anonymous compiler of this abstract has also indicated where the testimony of each witness appears in the voluminous proceedings of the House of Commons and by doing so, has provided a useful reference tool.

While ostensibly an objective record of evidence, in point of fact, *Abstract* offers a developed argument against the slave trade. It attacks the claim made by supporters of the slave trade that “with this traffick are ... deeply blended the interests of this country, and those of numerous individuals”. Of all the arguments that the slavery interest offered, economics was the hardest to combat - it was perceived to be impossible to convince parliament that it was in Britain’s economic interests to abolish the slave trade. The situation required the development of a new line of thinking and in chapters six and seven (pp. 94-99) of the *Abstract* the abolitionists described their concept of “legitimate trade”. They argued that Africa produced a variety of other commodities that could be “offer[ed] [in] a trade to the Europeans in the place of the trade in slaves” (94) and that these goods would more than make up for any aggregate loss occasioned by abolition. This concept of “legitimate” or “socially responsible” trade “became a cornerstone of British African policy in the nineteenth century, an article of faith espoused well after 1850 by such figures as Livingstone and Kirk” (Austin, 69-83).

The now iconic image of the the slave ship Brookes, of which a version appears as a folding plate before page 37 of this work, was first designed as a crude engraving entitled *Plan of an African Ship’s Lower Deck with Negroes in the proportion of only One to a Ton* produced by the Plymouth Committee of the Society in December 1788 and first published in January 1789. The *Plan* was then taken up by the London Committee of the Society For Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade and developed into a broadside which was its most widely distributed form. In understanding how the *Description* was made it is vital to remember that the

work represents not an abstract idea but a real ship, the *Brookes*, trading out of Liverpool. This ship was selected by the Society Committee in Plymouth as the fitting subject for an illustrated broadside, and then using more detailed facts and measurements, by the London Committee. The *Description* was originally published by James Philips, the Quaker bookseller and close friend of the great anti-slavery campaigner Thomas Clarkson, in London in the spring of 1789 and caused an immediate and international sensation. In the same year that it was published in England a large edition was also adapted for the French market and distributed in Paris by Thomas Clarkson, and an American adaptation was mass-marketed in Philadelphia and led to similar productions in the Northern free states. In 1791, the image of the Brookes was adapted and included in the *Abstract* to powerfully convey visually the dimensions that the text provides. It was hoped that when confronted with the stark realities of the slave trade, MPs could only vote against it.

## THE ABOLITION BILLS OF 1791 AND 1792

**48 PARLIAMENT** (House of Commons). The Debate on a motion for the abolition of the slave trade, in the House of Commons, on Monday and Tuesday, April 18 and 19, 1791, reported in detail.

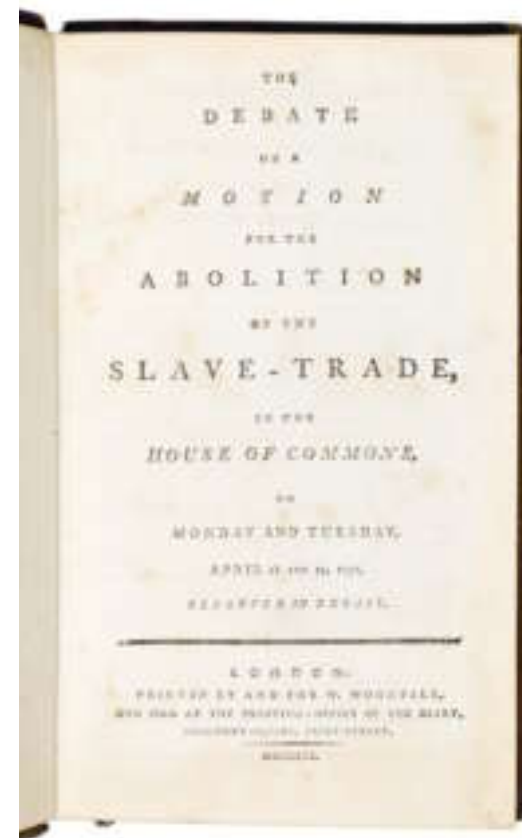
One of five editions printed in 1791. 8vo., [2], 123, [1] pp. Lacking the half-title. With a manuscript slip “Debate on the slave trade” bound after the title-page. Title-page lightly foxed, and last leaf lightly stained. A very good copy bound in full contemporary calf, red morocco label to spine, corners and edges chipped, joints cracked and loose.

London: W. Woodfall, 1791.

£1500

**Important report of the parliamentary debates on William Wilberforce’s abortive Abolition Bill of 1791 including an account of Wilberforce’s legendary speech in favour of abolition.**

“On April 18, in a four-hour speech that showed his mastery of the evidence and arguments, he [Wilberforce] moved for leave to bring in an Abolition Bill. Subsequent debate was lively and extended over



two evenings, but when the house divided at 3:30 on the morning of 20 April Wilberforce was defeated by 163 to 88. The outbreak both of revolution in France and, early in 1791, of a slave rebellion in the French colony of San Domingo (Haiti) had heightened insecurities and led the majority of MPs to oppose a measure that they perceived as potentially destabilizing” (ODNB).

[Bound with]

**PARLIAMENT** (House of Commons). The Debate on a motion for the abolition of the slave-trade, in the House of Commons, on Monday the second of April, 1792, reported in detail.

One of two editions printed in 1792. 8vo., 178 [i.e. 186] pp.

London: W. Woodfall, 1792.

[Bound with]

**GISBORNE** (Thomas). Remarks on the late decision of the House of Commons respecting the abolition of the slave trade.

Second edition. 8vo., 49, [1] pp. Lacking the half-title. Marginal waterstaining to the first and last few leaves, and some minor spotting but otherwise a good copy.

London: B. White and Sons, 1792.

**A review and analysis of the landmark vote and arguments for the Abolition Bill of 1792 by a close friend of William Wilberforce and “a central figure in the influential group of evangelical Anglicans known as the Clapham Sect” (ODNB).**

After a summary and brief analysis of the vote on William Wilberforce’s Abolition Bill of 1792, Gisborne writes that he will “briefly enumerate the principal facts respecting the nature and consequences of the Slave Trade... I shall afterwards proceed to the chief object of these pages, an examination of the leading arguments on which those who preferred gradual to immediate abolition rested the propriety of their opinion (10-11).

Thomas Gisborne (1758-1846) was a central figure in the movement for abolition but he chose to act behind the scenes. “His friendship with Wilberforce, begun when they were fellow students at Cambridge, was renewed when both became involved in the campaign to abolish the slave trade” (ODNB). *Remarks* was the only work on the slave trade that he published.

## MOLDING PUBLIC OPINION THROUGH TARGETED MARKETING

**49 ANONYMOUS** TO THE CLERGY. Brethern, As the Slave Trade, with its consequences, is one of the greatest enormities existing, striking at the very root of Christianity, at perpetual variance with its grand principles, Justice and Mercy; it is much to be wished, that ye would exert your utmost endeavours to prevent the continuance of it. Would each of ye allot one

discourse to the subject, it is to be hoped, although some seed may fall amongst thorns, and the thorns spring up and choak them, yet that much may fall into good ground, and bring forth fruit an hundred fold

**Only edition.** Single sheet, 8vo., [1] p. Printed on recto with blank verso. Some slight discoloration, otherwise in excellent condition.

[London?, n.p.]: 1792. £350

**ESTC records the Library Company of Philadelphia copy only.**

**An exceedingly rare piece of abolitionist ephemera produced to encourage the clergy to preach in support of the abolitionist position.**

The anonymous author states that the slave trade strikes “at the very root of Christianity” and that the clergy ought to act “to prevent the continuance of it” [1] by devoting “one discourse to the subject” - i.e. the weekly sermon.

This handbill typifies the “grass-roots” approach adopted by the Committee for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade. It was produced and distributed *en masse*

to clergymen with the assumption that the pulpit was a very efficient conduit for abolitionist rhetoric. In doing so, these eighteenth century abolitionists recognized and harnessed the same forces employed by modern social influence marketers.

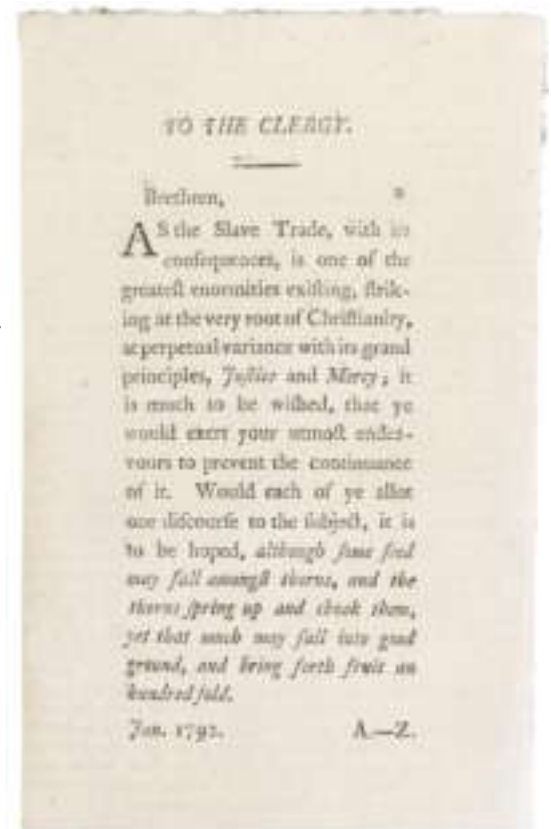
“A USEFUL SOURCE BOOK FOR ABOLITIONISTS” (ODNB)

**50 MUNCASTER** (John Pennington, first baron). Historical sketches of the slave trade, and of its effects in Africa. Addressed to the people of Great-Britain. By the Right Hon. Lord Muncaster.

**Only edition.** 8vo., [2], 100 pp. Lacking the half-title as six of the twenty known copies. Tear to the blank upper margin of B2 and L2, gatherings E and F misbound, and some light spotting to the title-page, otherwise a very good copy, recently bound in calf and marbled boards, antique style.

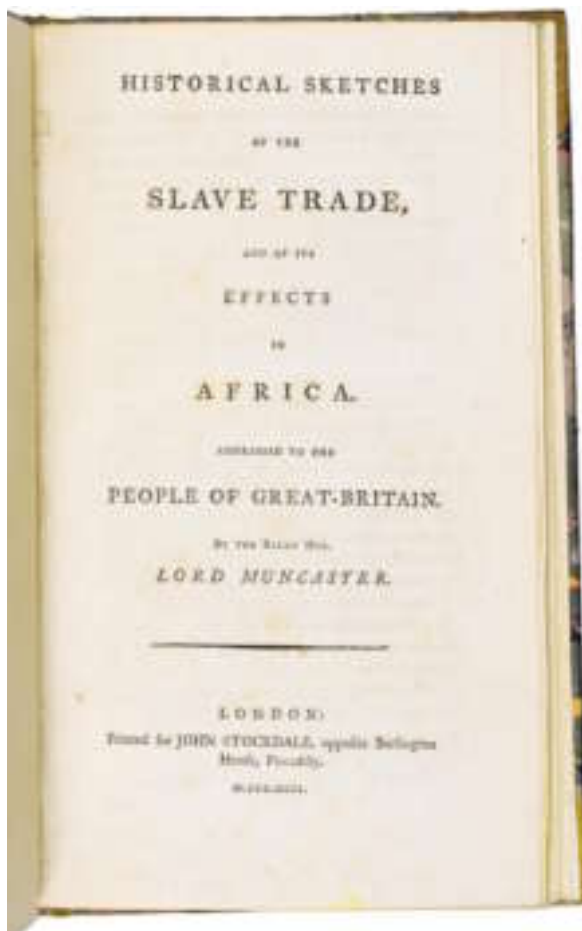
London: Printed for John Stockdale, 1792.

£1350



ESTC notes that the copy at the National Library of Scotland contains an “additional [14]p. of advertisements at the end. However they are unable to supply extra info”. No other copies are known to have advertisements.

ESTC records a total of twenty copies evenly distributed between the United Kingdom and America.



In *Historical sketches*, Muncaster provides a valuable narrative of the development of the slave trade and also draws attention to “the very important but most melancholy changes which it has effected through the whole coast of Africa” (1).

In addressing the latter, Muncaster counters the claim often made by supporters of the slave trade that “the Europeans only followed the example of other nations” i.e. Muslim and other African traders. Muncaster unequivocally states that “there is no trace, whatever, of any such commerce so pursued, or of any foreign nation, or white people, ever coming into their country, or upon their coast, till the Portuguese first attacked them by piratical incursions, and afterwards settled amongst them” (4).

Muncaster further argues that the introduction of the commerce in human beings destroyed the relatively peaceful existence of the Africans so that now “trade has so infected them with covetousness and fraud, that the chiefs will put snares both for the one and the other, driving at the profit, and not the punishment of a crime” (74).

From page 26 until near the end of the work, Muncaster examines the sources of the supply of slaves and in doing so analyzes evidence given before the Privy Council and the House of Commons.

John Pennington, first baron Muncaster (bap. 1741, d.1813) spent his early life in the army and dabbled in politics with few successes before “he found a new cause in William Wilberforce’s campaign to abolish the slave trade: they had met

in the Lake District in 1784. His *Historical sketches of the Slave Trade and its Effects in Africa* (1792) proved a useful source book for abolitionists, and Wilberforce assured him that they were ‘tuned in the same key’. Muncaster was a teller for abolition in divisions of 1791, 1794, and 1796” (ODNB).

## THE SLAVE TRADE LIKENED TO THE TRANSPORTATION OF CONVICTS

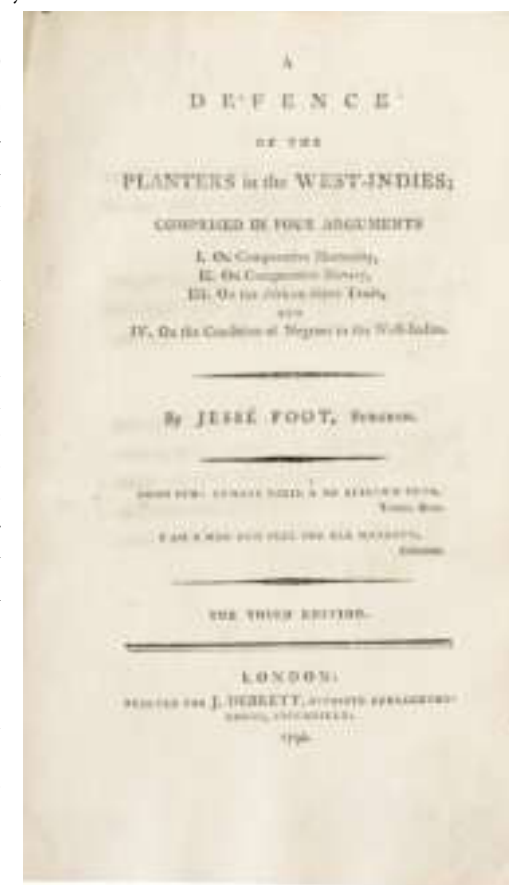
**51 FOOT** (Jesse). A Defence of the planters in the West-Indies; comprised in four arguments I. On comparative humanity, II. On comparative slavery, III. On the African slave trade, and IV. On the condition of negroes in the West-Indies

Third edition. 8vo., iv, 101, [1] pp. With the blank, O4, and an eight page catalogue of “New Publications Printed for J Derett [sic], Opposite Burlington House, Piccadilly” the latter is not recorded by ESTC and is likely a separate publication. Light ink staining to the recto of I1, title-page very lightly soiled, small spot to I4-K2, otherwise a very good copy recently bound in modern half calf and marbled boards, antique style.

London: Printed for J. Debrett ..., 1792. £1250

**This edition is very rare.** ESTC records only **Duke University and the University of Miami in North America.** No copies in the United Kingdom.

The earlier editions, also printed in 1792 for Debrett, are also rare. For the first edition, ESTC records the British Library, Bodley, and the John Rylands Library only in the U.K.; Niedersächsische Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek in Germany; and the Boston Athenaeum, Essex Institute, John Carter Brown Library, Library Company of Philadelphia and New York Historical Society only in North America. The second edition is rarer than the first - ESTC records the National Library of Scotland only in the U.K.; Pretoria State Library in South Africa; and Boston Public Library only in North America.



**Rare work that advances a novel argument in support of slavery and the slave trade that was published as a part of the 1792/93 propaganda campaign undertaken by the West Indian slave holding interest.**

“The slave trade had become politically and morally contentious in the late 1780s, at the very moment that the convict colony in New South Wales was founded” (Christopher, 112) and Foot’s work provided, beginning on page 63, an original argument in support of the slave trade based on the practice and general support for the resettlement of convicts via transportation. Other supporters of the slave trade recognized that “[a] pretty close parallel may be observed between the African condemned for some offence against the laws of his country, to be sold to a white man, and the English felon transported to a wild uncultivated country” (ibid, 112) but it was Foot who “took the argument to its logical endpoint: as Africans did not have the power to take possession of faraway lands for the purpose of dumping their criminals, the slave trade was their next best option” (ibid, 113).

Most of the other arguments provided by Foot are merely restatements of the pro-slave trade position i.e. that West Indian slaves have better lives than European peasants (pp. 31), but in the section “On the Condition of Slaves in the West-India Islands” beginning on page 67, Foot provides “some passages from the most competent evidences on the conditions of negroes in the West-India Islands ... which Mr. Wilberforce has chosen to reject” (76). Foot quotes from depositions given by Gilbert Franklyn [see items 32 and 40], Sir Ashton Warner Byam the Attorney General for Grenada, Alexander Campbell, and James Tobin [see item 21] among others.

In 1792 the Society of West India Planters and Merchants created its own publications committee to counter the effective propaganda efforts of the Committee for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade. *Defence of the planters in the West-Indies* is an early work sponsored by the newly formed entity.

Jesse Foot (1744-1826), a trained surgeon, is known more for his “unremittingly hostile” (ODNB) biography of the surgeon John Hunter than his work in support of the slave trade. Foot’s work has some credibility in that for three years (1766-9) he practiced medicine on Nevis in the West Indies where he was responsible for the “care of 2,000 negroes annually” (31).

## ONE OF THE STRONGEST LEGAL AND ECONOMIC ARGUMENTS FOR THE SLAVE TRADE

**52 ASSEMBLY OF JAMAICA.** Proceedings of the Hon. House of Assembly of Jamaica, on the Sugar and Slave-trade, in a session which began the 23d of October, 1792. Published by order of the house.

**Only edition.** 4to., [2], 23, [35] pp. **An excellent, fresh copy** bound in contemporary calf and marbled boards, spine with contrasting black and red morocco spine labels, edges stained yellow (joints cracked, spine lightly chipped and head and foot, boards rubbed, edges bumped and worn).

St. Jago de la Vega [Jamaica]: Alexander Aikman, 1792. £10,000

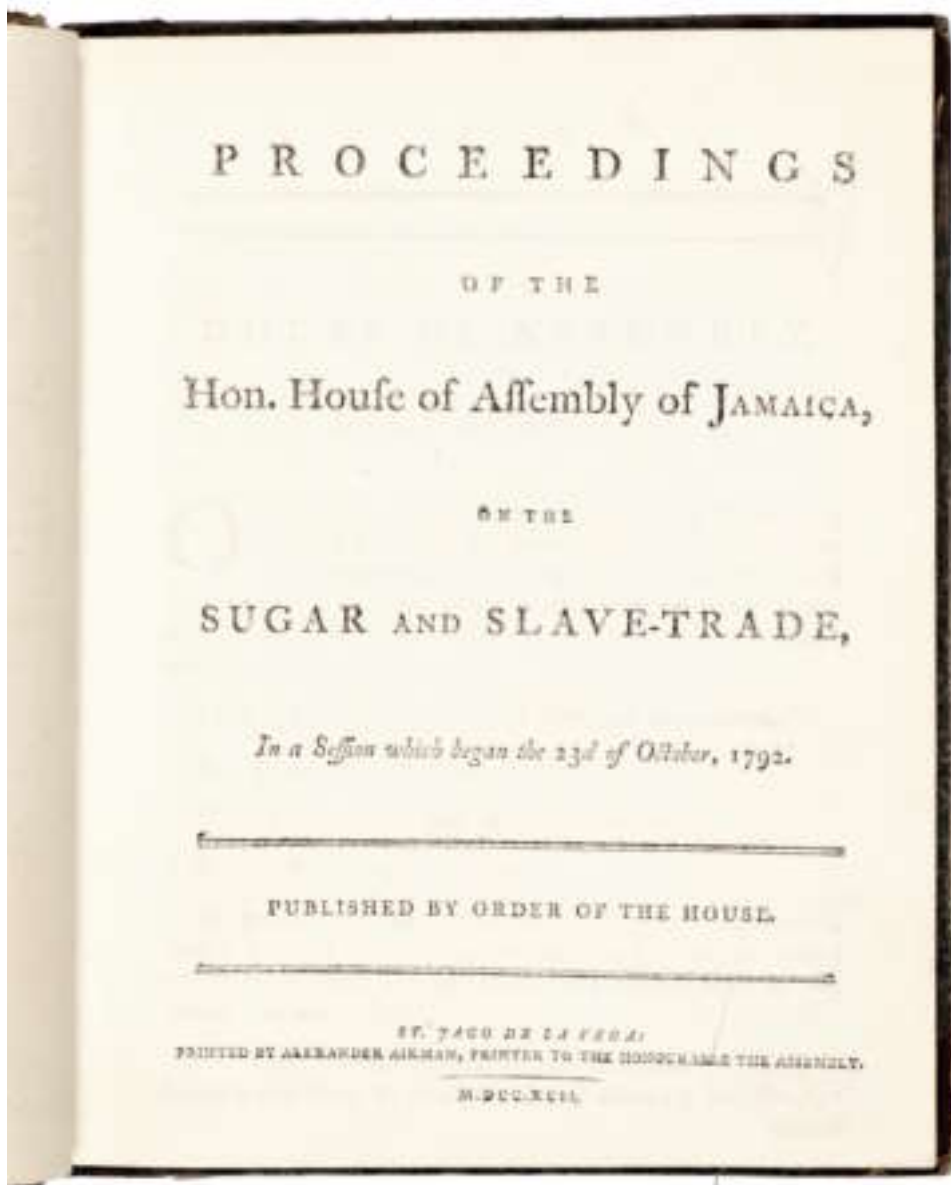
ESTC records the **British Library, Senate House Library, and the National Archives only in the U.K. and Boston Athenaeum, Brown University, New York Historical Society, and New York Public Library only in North America.** No copies in America outside the northeast.

**Rare Jamaican imprint of the proceedings of the Jamaican Assembly that outlines the findings of a committee formed to study, among other things, the effects of an abolition of the slave trade on the life and economy of Jamaica. The committee’s findings, supported by thirty-four pages of evidence, is perhaps the strongest legal and economic argument in favour of the slave trade.**

The committee, consisting of fifteen white Jamaicans, not only examined the slave trade but also considered the state of the sugar trade, “the strength of the army in Jamaica,... the number of inhabitants of every description... the strength of its militia, and the measures that may be proper to adopt, in order to render it efficient to the protection of Jamaica; and to report their opinion thereon to the house” (3).

The committee concludes that abolition “would not only put a stop to all further improvements in the culture of sugars and coffee, but that it would in time considerably reduce the quantity: that it would gradually diminish the number of white inhabitants in the island, and thereby lessen its security: And that it would cause bankruptcies, create discontents, and ultimately interrupt the peace and tranquillity, and affect the internal safety, of Jamaica; the consequences of which would be highly injurious to Great-Britain, and fatal to this valuable island” (13).

Supporting the findings of the committee are thirty-four pages of tables and charts containing a wealth of social and economic information including, among other things, the amount of sugar imported and exported over the previous twenty years, “an account of the Sugar Estates, in Jamaica in 1772 and 1791”, and most importantly appendices III, IV and V contain figures from four slave trading firms – Winde & Allardyce, Watt & Allardyce, Barrett & Parkinson, and William Ross – including the names of the slave ships, number of slaves contained in each and the average price per slave. The records for Barret & Parkinson are more detailed – they also include the name of the master of each ship and prices realized for each cargo in native currency as well as pounds sterling.



“As the most valuable colony of all, Jamaica came close to legislative autonomy even though the solidarity of interest among all Jamaican whites meant that there was a greater degree of ‘democracy’ there than almost anywhere within the imperial system” (Craton, 167).

The constant fear of rebellion in Jamaica where slaves outnumbered their white masters by a ratio of 10:1 led to the creation of a legal system, based on English law “wonderfully altered’ to suit the socioeconomic needs of the colonists” (Craton, 167), that punished with great severity any act that threatened the stability and order of the colony.

[Bound with]

**ASSEMBLY OF JAMAICA.** Proceedings of the Honourable House of Assembly relative to the Maroons; including correspondence between the Right Honourable Earl Balcarres and the Honourable Major-General Walpole, during the Maroon rebellion, with the Report of the Joint Special Secret Committee, to whom those papers were referred.

St. Jago de la Vega (Jamaica): Alexander Aikman, 1796.

**Only edition.** 4to., [4], 57, [1] pp. ESTC does not refer to the errata leaf which should be leaf G6 which is found here mounted on the verso of G5. Some occasional spotting and browning, but otherwise a very good copy.

**Very rare.** ESTC records **Leicester Central Library and the National Archives (two copies) only in the U.K. and Brown, Library Company of Philadelphia, New York Public Library, and the Library of Congress only in North America.**

**Rare work, printed in Jamaica, containing the resolutions of the Jamaican assembly as well as informative correspondence between the governor of Jamaica Alexander Lindsay, sixth earl of Balcarres (1752-1825) and the commander of the British military forces Major-General George Walpole (1758-1835) regarding the progress of the second Maroon war of 1795-96.**

Maroons were descendants of fugitive slaves whose freedom was recognized by the Jamaican authorities. At the time of the second Maroon war, they numbered less than 700, but during the conflict they were joined by many runaway slaves fuelling fears that the insurrection would spread.

The second Maroon war, which began in 1795 and lasted for five months, was “provoked more by the whites’ paranoid fear of a spread of the Haitian Revolution than by maroon provocation” (Craton, 179). The maroons were defeated and resettled.

Fascinatingly maroon communities still exist in rural areas of Jamaica and function as a *de facto* independent nation with their own government.

[Bound with]

**MELVILLE, (Henry Dundas, Viscount).** Facts relative to the conduct of the war in the West Indies; collected from the speech of the Right Hon. Henry Dundas, in the House Of Commons, on the 28<sup>th</sup> of April, 1796, and from the documents laid before the House upon that subject.

London: Printed for J. Owen, 1796.

**Only edition.** 4to., 205, [1] pp. Lacking the final leaf (blank). Title-page, signature G, leaf Z1 and a few other leaves lightly browned due to poor paper quality but otherwise a good copy.

ESTC records the **British Library, Birmingham Central Libraries, and Longleat House only in the U.K.** and ten locations in North America.

The first 59 pages of the work consists of Dundas’s account of the conflict in the West Indies largely the result of an expedition that he championed first in 1793 and later in 1796. “Despite extreme pressure on resources, the second

expedition was the biggest ever to leave these shores. In the spring of 1796 about 30,000 troops set out, but half were to die of tropical sickness... The capture of Trinidad marked the close of the main conflict in this theatre, with little to show for it other than an extended string of outposts requiring protection at a cost Britain could no longer afford" (ODNB).

The final 146 pages of the work consists of charts and tables "respecting the Expeditions to the West Indies, since the Commencement of the present War".

Provenance: 1. Matthew Lewis, eighteenth century bookplate to the front pastedown. This is likely Matthew Gregory Lewis (1775-1818), novelist and playwright, who wrote *The Monk* (1795) "perhaps the most celebrated of all English Gothic novels" (ODNB). The Lewis family fortune was based on its ownership of a number of plantations in Jamaica with over 400 slaves. When his father died in 1812, Matthew inherited the estates and immediately improved the living conditions of the slaves. He also met with William Wilberforce "to discuss ways of 'securing the happiness of his slaves after his death'" (ODNB). 2. earls of Cowper of Panshanger in Hertfordshire, nineteenth century bookplate to the front pastedown.

#### THE SLAVE TRADE IS A NECESSITY FOR THE COLONIES

**53 YORKE** (Henry Redhead). A letter to Bache Heathcote, Esq. on the fatal consequences of abolishing the slave trade, both to England, and her American colonies. By Henry Redhead, Esq.

**Only edition.** 8vo., [4], 80, [4] pp. **With a half-title and four pages of advertisements not called for by ESTC.** Half-title and title-page very lightly soiled, some minor ink staining and light browning throughout but overall a very good copy recently bound in half calf and marbled boards.

London: printed for John Stockdale, 1792.

£1500

**Very rare.** ESTC records the **British Library, National Library of Scotland and Worcester College - Oxford University only in the U.K.** No copies in North America.

**Only edition of a very rare apology for the slave trade and slavery in the West Indies by the radical Henry Redhead Yorke.**

Yorke adopts an interesting position. He agrees that the abuses of the slave trade ought to be corrected and that if an abolition of the slave trade occurs, then it ought to be gradual. He attempts to demonstrate that "under our present circumstances, the immediate abolition would cause the ruin of our colonies" (2).

In order to further his case, Yorke addresses the main arguments of the abolitionists namely that "the population of the West India islands is perfectly adequate" (2) without the importation of additional slaves; that planters ought to treat their slaves with "less rigour and with more humanity" (3); an immediate abolition of the slave trade would "preserve from untimely deaths, numbers of her [British] seamen" (3); that "Africa would be civilized in process of time" (3) and that

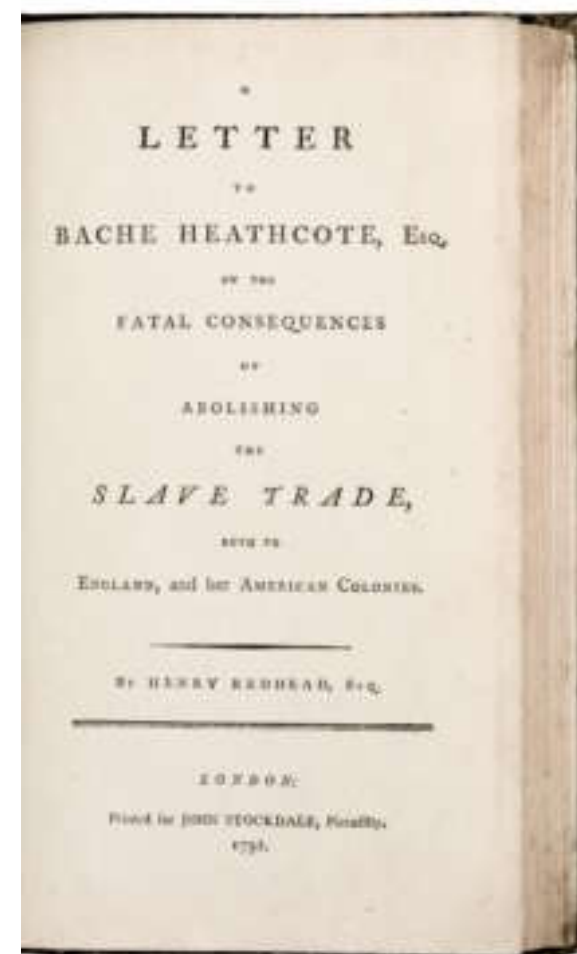
"this nation would be able to carry on a commerce in every respect equally profitable with that of her colonies" (3).

Significantly, in attempting to refute the first of the above arguments by demonstrating that deaths due to tropical illness necessitate further importation of slaves, Yorke describes at length the various diseases of the West Indies - their symptoms and effects - and how governments have managed those slaves infected with them. In the case of the latter, he describes an island used to house and care for sick slaves: "unfortunately for the English colonies, they have no spare islands to lodge the sickly slaves: the late French King Louis the Sixteenth, gave annually a sum of money for the support of hospitals in a retired island, which was set apart for these miserable sufferers" (6).

In responding to abolitionist allegations that slaves in the West Indies are treated

cruelly and live lives that are only marginally better than cattle, Yorke describes of benefits of being a slave in the West Indies: "the native character of the colonists is a benevolent one ... he is a slave but he is a happier than the poor freeman of Europe; he is not in danger of imprisonment for debt, because he can accrue none; he does not fear want and misery, because he is provided with every necessary of life; he has not a wife and family to support, they are maintained by his master ..." (17-23).

Henry Redhead Yorke (1772-1813), contributor to periodicals and author of numerous squibs, changed his political and philosophical beliefs a number of times during his life - including those relating to slavery and the slave trade. Said to be a native of the West Indies, "he published a pamphlet against the emancipation of slaves, but speedily changed his views on that subject, and while on a visit to Paris at the end of the same year wrote, but did not publish, a refutation of his pamphlet" (ODNB). While in France, Yorke was denounced as a spy by the revolutionaries and fled to Britain. Soon after his return, he



was arrested for conspiracy, sedition and libel for exclaiming at a large outdoor meeting that he had been “concerned in three revolutions already ... and will continue to cause revolutions all over the world” (ODNB). He emerged from a three year prison term a staunch supporter of the crown and from this point his writings celebrate the virtues of the British constitution.

“EVERY MAN ALMOST WHO CAN HAVE A HORSE HERE,  
MIGHT BE POSSESSED OF A SLAVE THERE”

**54 PARLIAMENT** (House of Commons). The Debate on a motion for the abolition of the slave-trade, in the House of Commons, on Monday the second of April, 1792, reported in detail.

One of two editions printed in 1792. 8vo., 178 [i.e. 186] pp. Title-page and verso of last leaf lightly browned, otherwise **an excellent copy with two edges uncut.**

London: W. Woodfall, 1792. £750

Two editions of the parliamentary proceedings from 02 April, 1792 were printed in the same year. One numbering 176 total pages and this one with 186 pages.

**Important record of the debate on William Wilberforce’s 1792 bill to abolish the slave trade – the first to pass in the House of Commons, albeit the efficacy of which was reduced by a compromise for “gradual” abolition. Printed in full are the speeches of William Wilberforce (pp. 2-42) Charles James Fox (pp. 106-126) and William Pitt, the younger (pp. 138-168), among others.**

“On 2 April 1792 Wilberforce again moved in the Commons for abolition. The ensuing all-night debate was one of the memorable occasions of the unreformed parliament, drawing great eloquence from Pitt, Fox and Wilberforce himself. The decisive intervention came from Henry Dundas, the home secretary, who proposed the compromise of gradual abolition, which passed 230 votes to 85. Yet it proved a pyrrhic victory, partly because the word “gradual” could be used as cover for infinite delay, partly because in the ensuing years further progress was obstructed in the Lords” (ODNB).

A few days after the sizeable defeat of Wilberforce’s earlier abolition bill in February of 1791, the Committee for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade began a large scale petition and propaganda campaign. The Committee intended that accounts of debates in the House of Commons on the slave trade and abstracts of evidence in favour of abolition would be generally distributed as a part of the abolitionist propaganda campaign.

The sustained campaign produced results – “in all, 519 petitions [for abolition of the slave trade] were presented to the Commons, “the largest number ever submitted to the House on a single subject or in a single session” (Oldfield, 61). Accordingly, the Commons could not ignore the campaign and “it undoubtedly exerted considerable leverage in the ensuing debate, which saw the House resolve by 230 votes to 85 that the trade ought to be gradually abolished” (Oldfield, 61).

“THE GLOBE IS THE NATIVE COUNTRY, AND THE WHOLE  
HUMAN RACE, THE FELLOW CITIZENS OF A CHRISTIAN”

**55 RUSH** (Benjamin). Extract of a letter from Dr. Benjamin Rush, of Philadelphia, to Granville Sharp.

**Only edition.** 8vo., 8 pp. Verso of A4 lightly soiled, small ink stains to the lower blank margins of A2 and A3, but otherwise a very good copy recently bound in half calf and marbled boards, antique style.

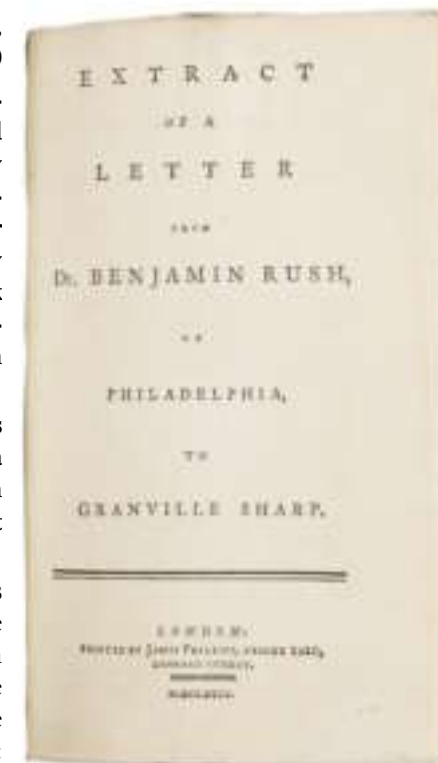
London: printed by James Phillips, 1792. £500

**Rare.** ESTC records **Durham Cathedral Library, Gloucestershire Record Office, Library of the Religious Society of Friends, Senate House Library (University of London), and York Minster only in the U.K.; and Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Huntington, New York Academy of Medicine, New York Historical Society, and Newberry only in North America.**

**A good copy of a rare work that provides an important early description of a African-American church community in America and solicits financial support for it.**

After describing some of the recent progress made in Pennsylvania, “our laws have exterminated domestick slavery, and in Philadelphia the free blacks now compose near 3000 souls” [3], Rush outlines some of the challenges faced by former slaves: “they are still in a state of depression, arising chiefly from their being deprived of the means of regular education, and religious instruction” [3]. He continues that a number of Philadelphians have organized them into a body called the African Church of Philadelphia as a solution. He relates that the church is founded on “Articles and a Plan of Church Government so general as to embrace all, and yet so orthodox in cardinal points as to offend none” (4) and that “they have already began to worship God in a borrowed school-house, where they assemble on Sundays” (4).

Rush continues that the financial support that he seeks “is more substantial than even freedom itself. It will place them in a condition to make their freedom a blessing to them here, and prepare them for happiness beyond the grave” (5). For Rush, it is one thing to have freedom and another thing entirely to be in a position to make use of it.



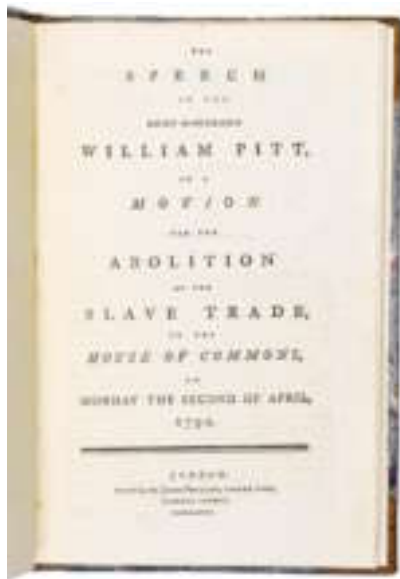
“... AN ATONEMENT FOR OUR LONG AND CRUEL  
INJUSTICES...”

**56 PITT** (William). The speech of the Right Honourable William Pitt, on a motion for the abolition of the slave trade, in the House of Commons, on Monday the second of April, 1792.

**Only edition.** 8vo., 32 pp. Title-page with some minor browning otherwise an excellent copy recently bound in calf and marbled boards, antique style.

London: James Phillips, 1792.

£450



**Excellent copy of William Pitt’s speech supporting William Wilberforce’s Abolition Bill of April 1792 – “one of his finest and most celebrated orations” (ODNB).**

Pitt’s speech recreates an atmosphere in which abolition was believed to be imminent and it was only a question of whether it ought to be immediate or gradual. He states: “the point now in dispute between us, is, a difference merely as to the period of time, at which the Abolition of the slave trade ought to take place” (3).

William Pitt the younger (1759-1806) has been placed “in the pantheon of exceptionally renowned prime ministers, those few outstanding figures whose names have endured” (ODNB) and it is he who proposed that William Wilberforce devote himself to

the abolition of the slave trade in 1787. “Over the next five years [Pitt] gave him strenuous support; he used ministerial facilities to assist the abolitionists – supplying information from the customs, ordering a report by the committee of trade, and seeking co-operation from foreign powers such as France” (ibid).

Cornell University Library recently produced an edition of this work.

THE WEST INDIAN SUGAR BOYCOTT

**57 FOX** (William). An Address to the people of Great Britain, on the propriety of abstaining from West Indian sugar and rum.

“The Twenty-second edition” 12mo., [8] pp. Disbound, with two edges uncut.

London: for John Maw... sold by M. Gurney, no. 128 Holborn-Hill, [1792?].

£300

ESTC records approximately 35 editions of this work and most are known in one or two copies. **This edition is unrecorded by ESTC.** For the “twenty-first edition” also printed by M. Gurney [1792?], ESTC records the Anti-Slavery Society and the Library of the Society of Friends in London.

**Unrecorded edition of an influential pamphlet advocating a boycott of West Indian sugar and rum because it is produced by slave labour and encourages the slave trade.**

Fox writes that “the slave-dealer, the slave-holder, and the slave-driver, are virtually the agents of the consumer, and may be considered as employed and hired by him to procure the commodity... The consumption of sugar in tea, wines, pastry, and punch in this country, is so considerable, that by abstaining, we shall have an important effect on the Slave Trade...” (2).

“This short address, published at a time of soaring sugar prices, proved an immediate and startling success. Estimates vary but 70,000 copies were said to have been printed in only four months, running through some fourteen or fifteen impressions. Fox’s pamphlet, and a host of pirated versions, inspired a nationwide boycott of West Indian sugar which at its peak involved some 300,000 families... Even the King and Queen Charlotte were said to have joined the boycott, a scene visualised by James Gillray in his political satire, *Anti-Saccharrites*, --  
-Or --- *John Bull and his Family leaving off the Use of Sugar*” (Oldfield, 57).

Ultimately, the non-consumption campaign failed to force planters to end the slave trade but the boycott “hinted at a depth of popular feeling that, once harnessed, might yet prove decisive” (Oldfield, 58).



“THE CONSUMPTION OF SUGAR IS NOT IN ITSELF  
CRIMINAL”

**58 ANONYMOUS** A Vindication of the use of sugar, the produce of the West-India Islands. In answer to a pamphlet entitled *Remarkable Extracts, &c.*

Second edition. 8vo., [2], 22, pp. With the final blank. Some light browning but otherwise an excellent copy with generous margins recently bound in half calf and marbled boards, antique style.

London: printed for T. Boosey ... 1792.

£750

**Rare.** ESTC records **Bodley and Trinity College - Oxford University only in the U.K.** ; Bibliotheque Nationale in France and **Cornell, Harvard, John Carter Brown, Library of Congress and the University of Southern California only in North America.**

The first edition, also printed in 1792, is even rarer. ESTC records only the Library of the Religious Society of Friends.



Peter Hogg's *The African Slave Trade and its Suppression* mentions Henry Clutterbuck (1767-1856), the physician and medical writer, as a possible author. *A Vindication ...* responds to the anonymous *Remarkable extracts and observations on the slave trade; with some considerations on the consumption of West India produce* (London, [1791]).

**An excellent copy of a rare defence of the use of sugar published during the boycott of 1791/92.**

In the late eighteenth century, slave grown produce constituted an important part of the British economy and sugar was Britain's largest single import. "The sugar boycott burst into life in response to parliament's 1791 rejection of the abolition bill. [William] Wilberforce, wary of anything that smacked of stirring up popular feeling, thought the time was

not right for a boycott. Careful to avoid offending him, for several years the abolition committee took no stand. But [Thomas] Clarkson spurred on the boycotters" (Hochschild, 193).

After the failure of the 1791 bill in parliament, Clarkson undertook another tour of England to observe and gather further evidence in support of abolition. His account of his journey illustrates that the sugar boycott garnered support from all social classes and could truly be described as a popular movement. He writes: "there was no town, through which I passed, in which there was not some one individual who had left off the use of sugar. In the smaller towns there were from ten to fifty ... and in the larger from two to five hundred ... They were of all ranks and parties. Rich and poor, churchmen and dissenters ... Even grocers had left off trading in the article ... By the best computation I was able to make from notes taken down in my journey, no fewer than three hundred thousand persons had abandoned the use of sugar" (ibid, 193).

The anonymous author of *A Vindication ...* argues that the author of the equally anonymous *Remarkable extracts* emotionally manipulates his readers by "shock[ing] their feelings by his horrid relations; and, in the moments of pity and compassion, cheats them into acquiescence with his sentiments" i.e. that the British appetite for sugar produces the horrors of the slave trade. He also provides a defence of sugar on humanitarian grounds namely that if the boycott succeeds, and sugar is no longer bought from the West Indies, then "the necessary consequence must be, that the greatest part of the negroes, at present in the West-Indies, would be destroyed by famine; for, they are not fed by the productions of the islands" (13).

## THOMAS PAINE ON THE SLAVE TRADE?

**59 (VINDEX) [PAINE (Thomas)?]** Old truths and established facts being an answer to a very new pamphlet indeed!

**Likely the first of two editions printed cir. 1792.** 8vo., 13, [3] pp. **With the final blank.** Disbound with original holes from stab stitching. Some occasional marginal browning but nevertheless, **a very large, clean and uncut copy.**

[London: cir. 1792].

£1500

ESTC records six locations in the U.K. and eleven in North America.

**Rare first edition of a pamphlet attributed to Thomas Paine, in support of the abolition of slavery.**

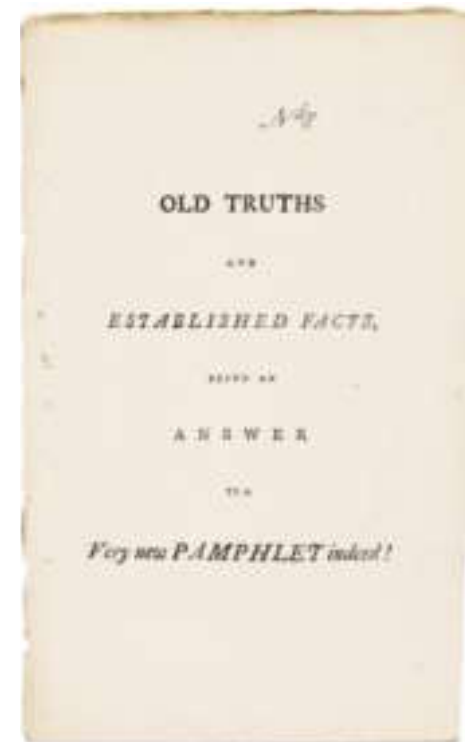
The pseudonymous author, writing as "Vindex", addresses a recently published anonymous pamphlet entitled: *A very new pamphlet indeed!* (1792).

Much like Paine, "Vindex" appeals to 'common sense' and natural law in his opposition to the slave trade. He writes that "it is contrary to all common sense to suppose it [parliament] could give away the lives and liberties of the natives of a foreign country, and, contrary to every notion of moral obligation, that it should grant to any one a privilege to commit robbery and murder" (6).

Beginning on page seven, he responds to the other arguments of *A very new pamphlet indeed!* Including the claim that "the Middle Passage has no horrors, and that the Slaves are contented and cheerful on board" (10).

The attribution of Paine as the author of *Old Truths and Establish Facts* is an old one. Gregory Claeys, in a footnote to the first chapter of his *Thomas Paine: Social and Political Thought*, argues that "internal evidence suggests that the early nineteenth-century attribution to Paine of *Old Truths and Established Facts* (1792) was probably accurate, though it has not been discussed in any subsequent study of Paine. The 13-page pamphlet repeats Paine's earlier view that Parliament acted contrary to 'all natural rights' (p. 5) in permitting the slave trade and refers to natural law arguments about legitimate and illegitimate enslavement (p.9)" (Claeys, footnote to p. 37).

Additionally, Peter C. Hogg in his *African Slave Trade and its Suppression: a Classified and Annotated Bibliography* (New York: Routledge, 2006) attributes this work to Thomas Paine as does Halkett and Laing (*Dictionary of Anonymous and Pseudonymous Publications in the English Language*), and Kress (*Kress Library of Business and Economics: 1777-1817*).



## THE EXPANDED SECOND EDITION

**60 (VINDEX) [PAINE (Thomas)?]** Old truths and established facts being an answer to a very new pamphlet indeed!

Likely the second of two editions. 8vo., 15, [1] pp. Some discoloration to the outer portion of the blank verso of the last leaf, otherwise **a clean and crisp copy with generous margins**. Recently bound in calf and marbled boards and calf, antique style.

[London: 1792?].

£850

**Very rare.** ESTC records only four copies of this edition: **Cambridge University Library, National Library of Scotland, Founders' Library at the University of Wales only in the U.K.**, and the **Library Company of Philadelphia only in North America**.

**This edition, numbering 15 pages, contains additional text not found in the first edition.** For example, the first edition does not include the “list of supporters of abolition... in the House of Commons” found on p. 4, a longer quotation in the first paragraph on p. 13 which is more critical of the West Indian planters, as well as three additional paragraphs of quotations from debates on the slave trade in the House of Commons.

Provenance: contemporary inscription of “Mrs. Tilly” to the head of the title-page.

## “THE FATHER OF AMERICAN SCHOLARSHIP AND EDUCATION” ON SLAVERY

**61 WEBSTER (Noah).** Effects of slavery, on morals and industry.

**First edition.** 8vo., 56 pp. Light foxing and browning throughout, especially to the first few leaves, edges of title-page darkened, small holes to the blank inner margin of the title-page, small tear to the blank inner corner of A2, otherwise a good copy recently bound in calf and marbled boards, antique style.

Hartford (Connecticut): Hudson and Goodwin, 1793.

£1500

In the opening pages, Webster states that his purpose in writing is to prove that “slavery, in all its forms and varieties, is repugnant to private interest and public happiness of man” (5). He then provides a geographical and historical look at the practice which exists “in very different degrees in different countries” but nevertheless produces similar effects.

According to Webster, one effect of slavery is to divide slaves into two classes: the “indolent” and the “villanous”. He writes: “In America the laziness of slaves has become proverbial: indeed the blacks are so remarkable for their inaction, their want of fore-sight and their disinclination to improvement...” and that “comparing the blacks of this country, with the slaves of other countries, who are confessedly of the same race with the most improved European nation... All the peculiar features in the character of the African race in America, may justly be ascribed

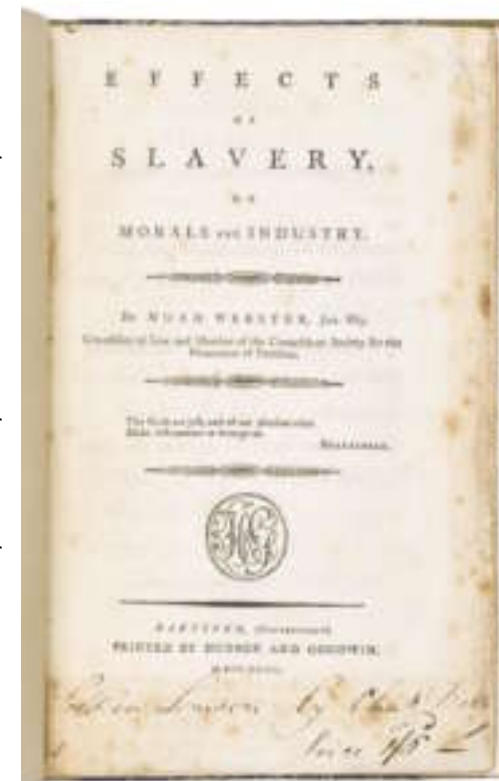
to their depressed condition” (6). This lack of industry infects not only the slaves but the slave owners and nations who allow the practice of slaveholding. Towards the end of the work (pp. 43-49), Webster argues that “the actual produce of a country is nearly in an exact proportion to the degree of freedom enjoyed by its inhabitants” (43).

One of the more interesting sections of the work is part V of appendix I which is a “Comparative view of the productiveness of Ireland and Connecticut” in which Webster attempts to demonstrate that Ireland’s per capita exports exceed those of America which illustrates “the superior productiveness of the labor of freemen who work for their own benefit” (55).

Noah Webster (1758-1843) was best known as a lexicographer whose *American Dictionary of the English Language* “was a scholarly achievement of the first order, richly deserving of its great reputation at home and abroad”.

He was also incredibly versatile – he wrote schoolbooks, essays, in addition to medical and scientific and political works.

Provenance: with a contemporary inscription to the title-page reading “sold in London by Charles Delly price 1/6”. Charles Delly was a printer and bookseller who was active in London in the 1780’s. This inscription indicates that he imported American titles to sell in his shop. Evans 26448.



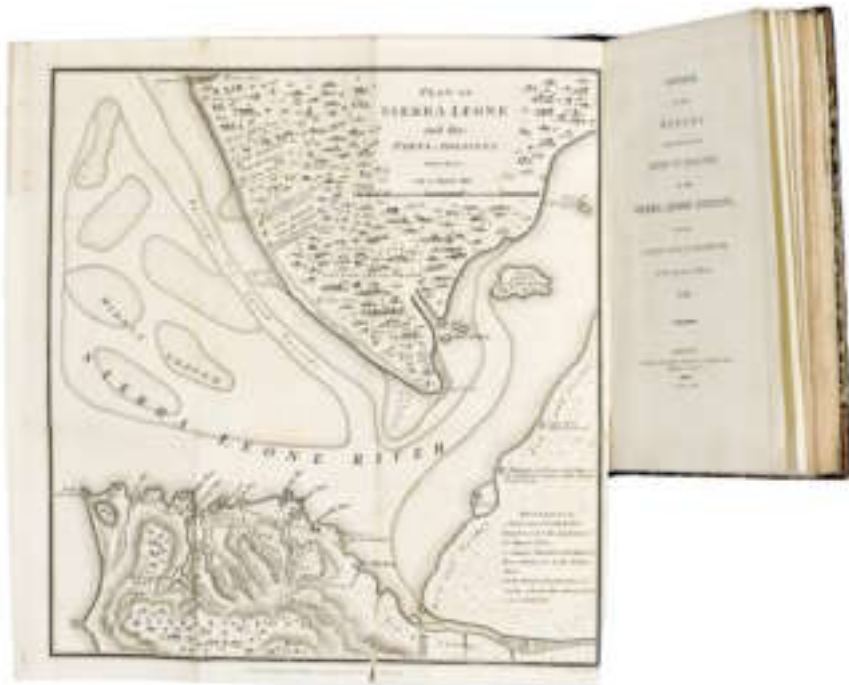
## A HISTORY OF THE SIERRA LEONE COLONY WITH AN ENGRAVED MAP

**62 (SIERRA LEONE COMPANY).** Substance of the report delivered by the court of directors of the Sierra Leone Company, to the general court of proprietors, on Thursday the 27<sup>th</sup> March, 1794.

**First edition.** 8vo., 175, [1] pp. **With a large folding map (260 x 280 mm) “of Sierra Leone and parts adjacent”** engraved by B. Baker and “published by J.[ames] Phillips... 8 November 1794 bound as the frontispiece. A few small spots to the upper left corner of the plate, a small tear along the fold at the lower margin of the plate, and foxing to F1, G4, N1, and P1, but otherwise a very good copy recently bound in calf and marbled boards, antique style.

London: James Phillips, 1794.

£750



The folding “Plan of Sierra Leone” was meant to accompany the text as a footnote on A2 indicates.

**A very good copy of a yearly report given by the directors of the Sierra Leone Company including what is likely to be the first history of the colony.**

The work is very wide in scope – it not only outlines the history of the colony (including “some circumstances antecedent even to the formation of the present colony” [footnote on p. 3]) and its finances, but also offers “a more particular description of the present situation of the settlement, arranging their information under the four following heads; health, trade, cultivation, and civilization” (3).

The work is also filled with an abundance of information about the slave trade gleaned from the experiences of the colony. The directors write that “those general enormities of the Slave Trade, which have been brought to light through the establishment of the present colony” (99) clearly illustrate the degree of its pernicious influence. There is also an interesting discussion of the causes of slavery on pp. 110-116 as observed in the colony.

There is also a chapter entitled “Health” that discusses the illnesses and mortality of the colonists (pp. 36-40), as well a description, in the appendix on pp. 163-175, based on reports from the botanist of the colony of the animals, vegetables, spices and medicinal plants found in the area.

The work is important because it contains much more information than just the report delivered by the directors of the Sierra Leone Company of 27 March, 1794. As the footnote on p. 3 states: “considerable additions have been made to the Report read to the General Court, chiefly in consequence of information obtained from the Governor of Sierra Leone, who arrived in England soon after the General Court was held” (3).

## A SWEDENBORGIAN ABOLITIONIST AND WILLIAM BLAKE

**63 WADSTROM** (Carl Bernhard). Prospectus and advertisement for *An essay on colonization*.

Single folio sheet, printed on both sides (310 x 185 mm). Disbound. Piece cut from lower inner blank margin (no loss of text).

[London, n.p., 1794].

£500

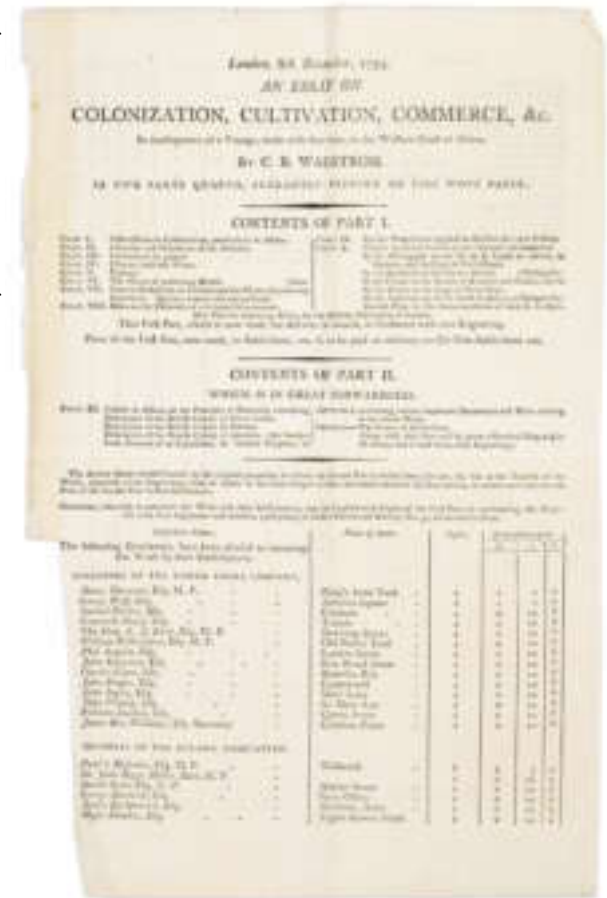
**Extremely rare. ESTC records only the copy at the Royal Society of Arts Library that is bound with part one of *An essay on colonization* (London, 1794).**

This very rare circular is “an advertisement for Part 1 of *An essay on colonization*, with a prospectus for Part 2, ‘which is in great forwardness’ (and was published in 1795)” (ESTC).

The circular lists the contents for both parts of the work and provides a list of subscribers including the “Directors of the Sierra Leona Company” which included Granville Sharp and William Wilberforce among others. The list also provides ample blank space for additional subscribers to write their names and indicate the number of copies desired (here unused).

Wadstrom’s *Essay on colonization* became an abolitionist classic that exposed not only the cruelties of slavery but also its economic disadvantages – that Africans were far more profitable as trading partners and wage labourers than slaves. The work was translated into German and French before the end of the century.

Carl Bernhard Wadstrom (1746-1799), although born in Sweden, became a central figure in the British abolition movement. In Sweden he established a society which sought to create a colony in Africa that was based on agricultural trade instead of slavery. Wadstrom adhered to the principles of the Swedish mystic Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772) which held that native Africans were in



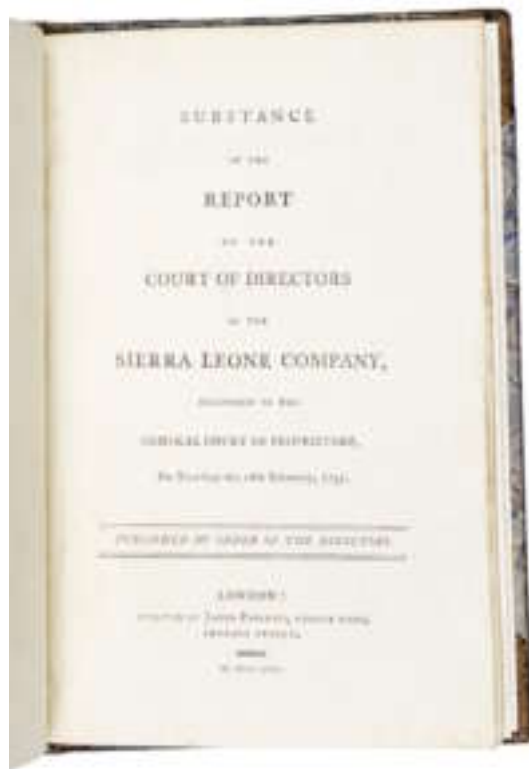
a greater state of enlightenment since they “think more interiorly, and so receive truths and acknowledge them” (Swedenborg, Emanuel. *A treatise concerning the Last Judgment*, p. 118).

When he relocated to London in 1788 after heading an expedition to Guinea, Wadstrom joined forces with prominent English abolitionists Thomas Clarkson and William Wilberforce and provided the latter with the information he gathered during his time in Guinea.

In 1789 Wadstrom, along with Augustus Nordenskjold, was expelled from the Swedenborgian New Jerusalem Church. The two “had been planning with other abolitionists to ‘set up a free community of whites and blacks on the west coast of Africa’ on the principles of the New Church, including those governing marriage and concubinage as they interpreted them. [William] Blake was almost certainly aware of and interested in the plan” (Pfau, 180). In the same year, Blake signed his name in support of the New Jerusalem Church and also published his now iconic poem “Little Black Boy” which appeared in his *Songs of Innocence* in 1789.

#### A RAID ON THE SIERRA LEONE COLONY BY THE FRENCH

**64 (SIERRA LEONE COMPANY).** Substance of the report of the court of directors of the Sierra Leone Company, delivered to the court of proprietors, on Thursday the 26<sup>th</sup> February, 1795.



**First edition.** 8vo., 23, [1] pp. Title-page very lightly dusted but otherwise a very good copy recently bound in calf and marbled boards, antique style.

London: James Phillips, 1795. £350

ESTC records six copies in the U.K. but only **Brown, Field Museum of Natural History, Harvard, Lilly Library, and University of California at Los Angeles in North America.**

**Rare yearly report given by the directors of the Sierra Leone Company describing an attack on the colony by the French navy.**

The narrative covers the period 27 September, 1794 through the end of October of the same year.

The report outlines the surrender of the colony and the depredations of the French forces that culmi-

nated in the burning of all the buildings and the seizing of the colony’s provisions before the forces departed the colony on 13 October.

After outlining the specifics of the disaster, the directors conclude their report by insisting that they will persevere “in such a manner as neither to relinquish the commercial advantages of which they have got possession, nor so as to suspend in any degree the measures which are necessary to promote the regular and uninterrupted progress of civilization” (23).

The plan to establish a colony of former slaves in Sierra Leone, originally conceived by the adventurer Henry Smeathman in the early 1780s, was later adopted by Granville Sharp who came to believe that the plan was “the most effectual means of destroying the slave trade” (Brown, 321). Sharp’s involvement transformed the project from “a primarily commercial enterprise into a philanthropic venture that aimed to advance the antislavery agenda” (Brown, 317). The abolitionists could now “present a moral cause in the language of commercial and national interest” (Brown, 322).

In 1791, the St. George’s Bay Association obtained a Charter as the Sierra Leone Company to carry on trade between Great Britain and Africa and to enable the new colony at Sierra Leone to become a commercial centre and stabilize its existence.

“The nascent campaign against the British slave trade, in fact, shared much with the proposals to plant a British empire in Africa. They both assumed Africa possessed substantial natural wealth that could find a profitable market in Europe. They both aimed at the same ultimate goal: the overthrow of slavery in British America. And the chain of effects they predicted derived from similar judgements about the power of economic incentive. Outlawing the Atlantic slave trade, abolitionists argued, necessarily would clear the way for legitimate commerce with Africa and encourage manumission in the British West Indies, predictions that proved nearly as naive as the faith colonizationists placed in the far-reaching effects would follow from a tiny settlement in Sierra Leone” (Brown, 321).

Although the colony failed to achieve the lofty goals that its founders laid out for it, Sierra Leone remains of vital historical interest. The colony is important not only for its connection to the slave trade but also as the first British colony in Africa. It provides the opportunity to observe the infancy of beliefs and ideas relating to empire that would later find full maturation in the colonialism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

## SLAVES ARE SPIRITUAL EQUALS

**65 ANONYMOUS.** An Authentic account of the conversion and experience of a negro.

First edition printed in the U.K. 8vo., 4 pp. Disbound.

London: printed by T. Wilkins, [1795?].

£750

**Very rare.** ESTC records the **British Library and Library of the Society of Friends only in the U.K.** and **Huntington, McMaster, Princeton and Kansas only in North America.**

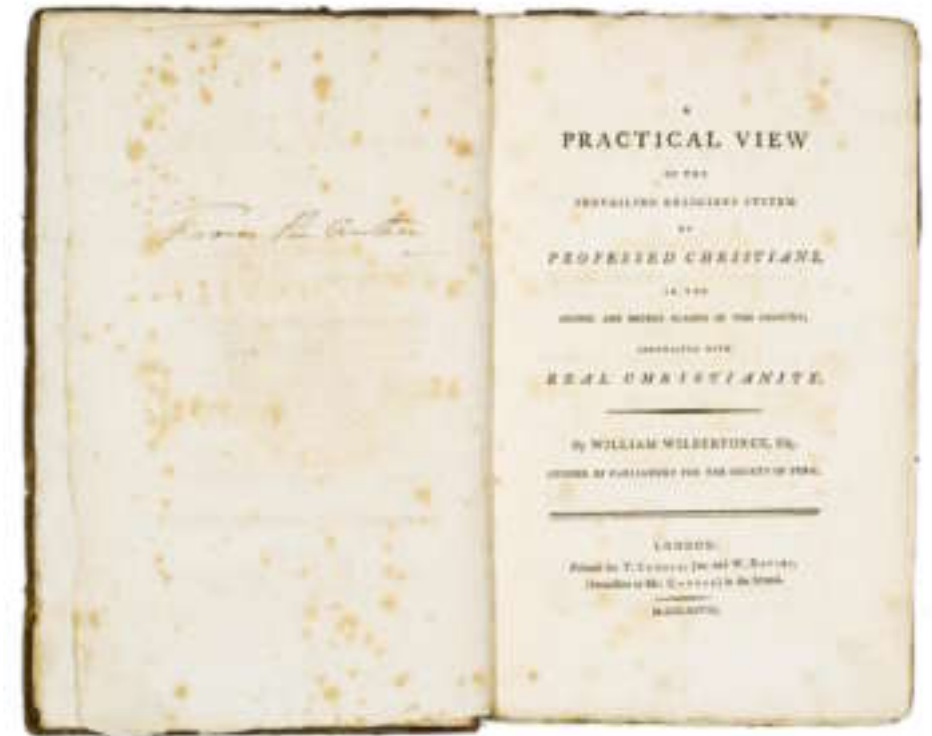
This edition was preceded by at least two American editions. The first surviving edition, known only by the copy residing at the American Antiquarian Society, dates to 1793 and was printed in Windsor (Vermont). It numbers 12 pages and includes “a faithful narrative of the wonderful dealings of God, towards Polly Davis” that is not found in either the London edition or the Portland (Maine) edition. The Portland edition, known only by the two copies at the New York Public Library, includes a poem “Christian experience” that is also not found in either of the two other known editions.

**Rare account of the conversion of an American plantation slave in New York witnessed by an English traveller. The work concludes by stating that all men are spiritual equals in the eyes of God.**

The emphasis of this work on the power of God’s saving grace is clear from the beginning. The anonymous author states in the second paragraph what is perhaps the theme for the entire work: “Every day’s observation convinces me that the children of God are made so by his own especial grace and power, and that all means, whether more or less, are equally effectual with him, whenever he is pleased to employ them for conversion” (1).

Most striking is the message of spiritual equality, espoused by many Christian abolitionists, that the author express near the end of the work. He writes that “neither the colour of his body, nor the condition of his present life, could prevent him from being my dear brother in our dear saviour” (3).

Until the closing decades of the eighteenth century, the majority of Evangelicals who had an interest in slavery devoted their efforts to improving the spiritual well-being of the enslaved and did not question the institution itself. In this respect, *An authentic account* is typical of the Evangelical outlook. Many evangelicals such as Selina Hastings, countess of Huntingdon, “considered slavery in a Christian establishment preferable to freedom without religion” (Brown, 337).



A PRESENTATION COPY FROM  
THE WILBERFORCE LIBRARY AT LAVINGTON

**66 WILBERFORCE (William).** A Practical View of the Prevailing Religious System of Professed Christians, in the Higher and Middle Classes in this Country, Contrasted with Real Christianity.

**First edition.** 8vo., [4], 491, [35] pp. With the often lacking errata leaf and 16 page catalogue of “The following valuable books are printed for T. Cadell, Jun. and W. Davies (successors to Mr. Cadell) in the Strand, 1796.” Title-page and front free endpaper lightly foxed, some additional occasional light foxing throughout, spine restored with some minor loss at the head and foot, corners and edges of boards lightly worn, but otherwise **a very good, fresh copy uncut in quarter cloth over the original boards.**

London: for T. Cadell, Jun. and W. Davies, 1797.

£5000

This is the first of five London editions that appeared in 1797. An additional edition appeared in Dublin in the same year. The work appeared in 18 English editions before 1830 and was translated into French and Spanish in the same period which testifies to the enduring popularity of the work.

**A remarkable presentation copy of the first edition of “Wilberforce’s own personal testimony” (ODNB) from the family library at Lavington, Sussex. The immediately successful work is an important exposition of the principles driving evangelical Christians many of whom, like Wilberforce, worked tirelessly for abolition.**

In the *Practical view*, “Wilberforce expounded his interpretation of New Testament teachings as a basis for a critique of the lukewarm and inadequate practice of Christianity he observed around him. He called for religious revival as an essential means of reversing national moral decline. Despite its unfashionable theme and diffuse and discursive style, the book was extensively read and very influential... It was both ‘the manifesto of the evangelical party of the time’ and Wilberforce’s own personal testimony, which provided a powerful rationalization of his philanthropic and political exertions over the preceding decade... One of the key reasons for the success of the *Practical view* was that its call for national spiritual and moral renewal could be read in broad Anglican as well as specific evangelical terms” (ODNB).

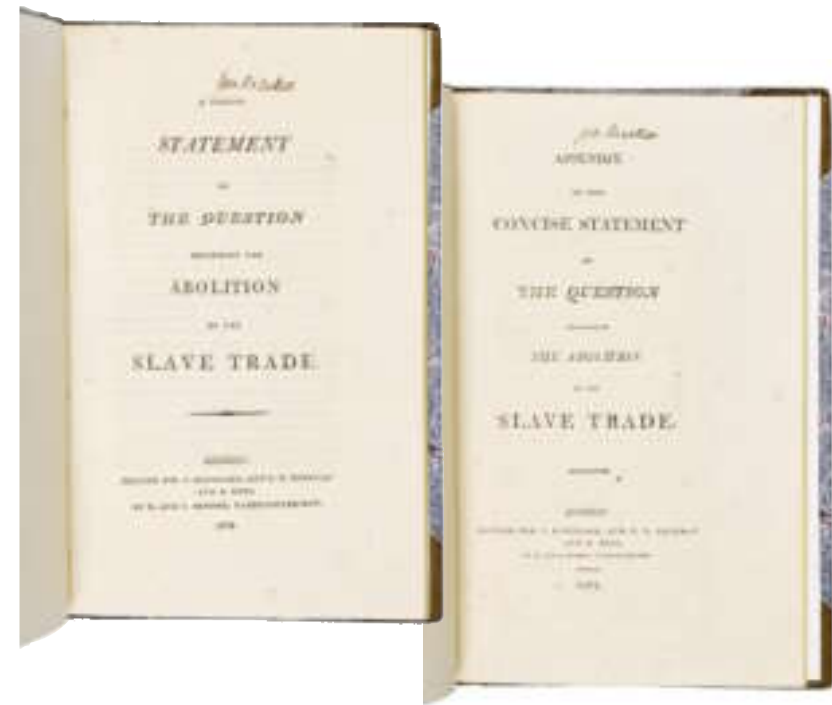
Provenance: 1. Presentation inscription to the front free endpaper “From the author” that is definitely not in Wilberforce’s hand and more likely written by a publisher’s clerk. 2. Lavington House, Sussex, bookplate to front pastedown. Samuel Wilberforce (1805-1873), bishop of Oxford and Winchester, and son of William Wilberforce (1759-1833), inherited the Lavington estate from the family of his wife Emily (Sargent).

A presentation copy of the first edition of Wilberforce’s *Letter on the abolition of the slave trade* (1807), not from the Wilberforce family library but inscribed by Wilberforce, recently sold at Christie’s in New York (17 June, 2008, lot 341). It realized \$15,000 including the buyer’s premium.

### THE THIRD EDITION



**67 WILBERFORCE**  
(William). A Practical View of the Prevailing Religious System of Professed Christians in the Higher and Middle Classes in This Country Contrasted with Real Christianity.  
Third Edition. 8vo., [4], 491, [1], [16] pp. Title-page and a couple preliminary leaves with a few light spots, and the advertisement leaf with some light marginal offsetting from the binding, but otherwise a **very good, clean copy nicely bound in contemporary tree calf**, spine gilt with black morocco label (corners and joints lightly rubbed).  
London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1797. £850



“FROM THE AUTHOR” ON THE EVE OF WILBERFORCE’S ABOLITION BILL

**68 BROUGHAM** (Henry Peter, first Baron Brougham and Vaux). A Concise statement of the question regarding the abolition of the slave trade. [Bound with]

**BROUGHAM** (Henry Peter, first Baron Brougham and Vaux). Appendix to the Concise statement of the question regarding the abolition of the slave trade.

First edition. Two parts in one volume. 8vo., 80, [4], 28 pp. **With presentation inscriptions by Brougham to the title-pages of both works.** More than likely he presented the book to an MP on the eve of the vote on William Wilberforce’s Slave Trade Abolition Bill of 1804 [see below]. Some very light browning, otherwise a very good copy recently bound in calf and marbled boards, antique style.

London: M. and S. Brooke, 1804. £750

First of three editions printed in 1804. OCLC records eight locations for this edition. **Not in the British Library.**

**First edition of a work written in support of William Wilberforce’s Slave Trade Abolition Bill of 1804 by one of the great reformers of the nineteenth century.**

Brougham writes that “The object of this tract is to exhibit, as clearly and concisely as the extent of the question will permit, the grounds upon which the friends of the Abolition now urge the adoption of that great measure” (A1, verso).

He then examines the slave trade in general “as it relates to the Negroes, in Africa – in the Middle Passage – and in the West Indies... Their [proponents of the slave trade] arguments in its favor are then examined length, as they refer to the interests of the Africans, the interests of those directly engaged in the Slave Trade, and the interests of the West Indian colonies” (ibid).

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of *A concise statement of the question regarding the abolition of the slave trade* is Brougham’s discussion of St. Domingue and the argument, advanced on p. 76-77, that the slave trade ought to be abolished at least in Jamaica on account of St. Domingue, whose successful slave revolt served as an inspiration to the nearby Jamaican slaves who were still under English control. Brougham writes that “the present state of the French West Indies renders the idea of continuing its [slave trade] existence for another hour worse than insanity” (77).

*A concise statement...* was one of Brougham’s earliest printed works. His early interest in abolitionism foreshadowed his later social activism where the reforms he instituted in education and law were perhaps his greatest legacy.

Brougham arrived in London in 1804 and made his first political allies in the abolitionists of the Clapham Sect. “He won their attention in particular as a result of his *An inquiry into the colonial policy of the European Powers* (1803), a rambling and somewhat confused work, in which he defended the colonial system and attacked the slave trade. He followed it with a pamphlet, *A Concise statement of the question regarding the abolition of the Slave Trade*, which was distributed to MPs before the vote on William Wilberforce’s Slave Trade Abolition Bill of 1804” (ODNB).

### THE DANGERS OF “BLACK POWER” ADDRESSED

**69 SHARP** (Granville). “The System of colonial law” compared with the eternal laws of God; and with the indispensable principles of the English Constitution.

**Only edition.** 8vo., 20pp. **An excellent copy** recently bound in calf and marbled boards, antique style.

London: Richard Edwards, 1807. £350

Published on the eve of the vote on the motion of 2 February 1807 made in the House of Commons for the abolition of the slave trade, this work responds to a petition presented to the House of Commons by West Indian planters and merchants that outlined, in thirteen paragraphs, “numerous solemn assertions of very alarming circumstances to be apprehended by the passing of the intended bill” (3).

Sharp believed that if he could successfully attack one particular foundational premise of the petition then the entire edifice would collapse “which will save, to their lordships, much valuable time” (4). Sharp focused on the eighth paragraph where the petition states “that the operation of the Bill, if it shall pass into a Law, will be to violate the system of colonial law relative to property, &c” (4).

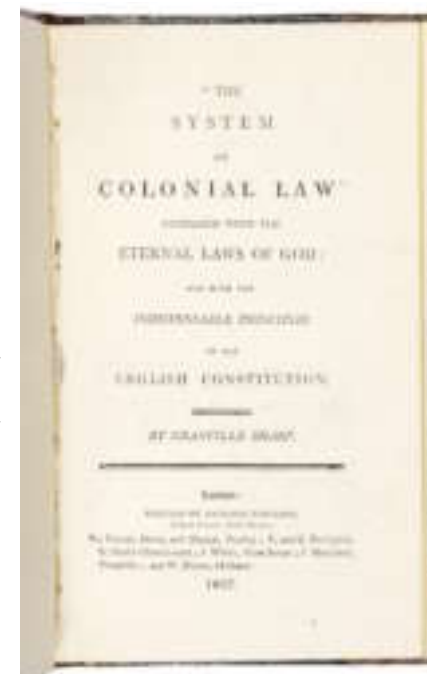
Before he examines the claim of the West Indian planters and merchants that

the bill violates colonial law Sharp asks a very wise question – does colonial law violate English law or natural law? Sharp concludes that “all must agree... that ‘the system of Colonial “Law”’ which tolerates slavery and oppression, is absolutely contrary to the laws of God, national [corrected in manuscript to read “natural”] and revealed, and, of course, is contrary to the English Constitution” (5).

Sharp continues that promoters of the bill believed that after the slave trade ended slavery itself would wither and eventually die since the most effective means of its sustenance would cut-off and they hope that “some prudent regulations would of course be soon adopted to supersede the other” (7). Sharp points out that he himself does not hold this belief and that the recent petition by the West Indian merchants and planters has necessitated the declaration that “the whole system of colonial law is totally illegal, and inconsistent with every just principle of English law” (7). Here Sharp is not only addressing the planters but also his fellow members of the Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade who disagreed with him in the early days regarding the approach that they ought to take. Sharp believed that slavery itself ought to be the focus of their attack from the very beginning but his more moderate colleagues, fearing that in aiming for too much they might lose all, opposed him. It was at this early date that Sharp declared: “with respect to myself, individually, when acting with them, professing that my own opposition is aimed not merely against the slave trade, but also the toleration of slavery itself” (cited in Anstey p. 256).

One of the key objections by the West Indian planters and merchants is that the abolition of the slave trade will encourage a slave revolt similar to the one that occurred on the island of Haiti, the “BLACK POWER” (8), whose very existence is a bad example to the neighboring islands. According to the planters and merchants, Haiti affords “a memorable and dreadful lesson, recorded in characters of blood, of the issue of doctrines intimately, constantly, and inseparably connected with ‘the abolition of the Slave-Trade’ (8). Sharp argues that “gentle and merciful measures are certainly the best means of preventing insurrection, and bloodshed” and that the only “BLACK POWER” to fear in the world is the devil and that “even the petitioners themselves seem entangled in the toils of this Kidnapper” (12).

The final section of the work is an “Extract of a letter... on the Extreme Wickedness, and total Illegality of Tolerating Slavery in any Part of the British Dominions” (pp. 13-20).



## WILBERFORCE PLEADING THE CASE OF ABOLITION ON THE EVE OF SUCCESS

**70 WILBERFORCE** (William). A Letter on the abolition of the slave trade; addressed to the freeholders and other inhabitants of Yorkshire.

**First edition.** 8vo., [4], 396 pp. With the half-title but lacking the advertisement leaves found in some copies. Half-title, title, and last two leaves lightly spotted and slightly dusty, but otherwise **a very fresh copy with two edges untrimmed.** Recently bound in calf and marbled calf, antique style.

London: Luke Hansard & Sons, for T. Cadell and W. Davies... J. Hatchard, 1807. £1000

**First edition of Wilberforce's great statement of the abolitionist position. Published while the Wilberforce's soon-to-be triumphant bill to abolish the slave trade was in the Lords, the work "consolidated and restated the formidable array of evidence and argumentation against the trade that Wilberforce has developed over the previous two decades" and "served to inform the final phase of the struggle" (ODNB).**

Like the *Practical View*, [see items 66 and 67] his other substantial literary work, this [*Letter on the abolition of the slave trade*] was a pamphlet that grew into a book.

Wilberforce begins by noting that 14 years have passed since the issue of the slave trade was argued fully in parliament and that "during the intervening period, also, such strange and interesting spectacles have been exhibited at our very doors, as to banish from the minds of most men all recollection of distant wrongs and sufferings". As a consequence, Wilberforce writes that "it may not be useless thus publically to record the facts and principles on which the Abolitionists rest their cause, and for which, in the face of my country, I am willing to stand responsible" (4).

Wilberforce then illustrates his arguments with examples from works as diverse as Hume's *Essays* and Edward's *History of the West Indies* among others.

Pages 353 to 396 contains an appendix of "extracts from the older authors" which mainly describes "depredatory acts occasioned by the slave trade".

## THE END OF THE SLAVE TRADE AND THE BEGINNINGS OF COLONIALISM

**71 WILBERFORCE** (William). A Letter on the abolition of the slave trade; addressed to the freeholders and other inhabitants of Yorkshire.

Third edition. 8vo., [2], 8, iii-[viii] i.e. 6 pp., 196, 4 pp. With the often lacking four page catalogue of "New Works in the Press", dated January 1807, by the printers Cadell and Davies. Half-title and title-page bound after the "advertisement" to the reader. Some light spotting to the first couple of gatherings, but otherwise **an excellent copy, untrimmed and uncut**, and recently bound in calf and marbled boards, antique style.

London: Luke Hansard & Sons, for T. Cadell and W. Davies..., 1807. £500

While this edition has been reduced (196 pages verses 396 for the first edition) it does include an important "advertisement" to the reader, not found in the first edition, which is, in fact, a short prospectus for the African Institution, an organization whose creation illustrates colonial attitudes in action.

The African Institution was founded in 1807. "One of its chief interests from 1807 to 1811 was the enforcement of the Slave Trade Bill [the bill passed in 1807 outlawing the British slave trade]. It was called into existence, however, for the more worthy purpose of civilizing Africa." (Wesley, 161).

The African Institution was founded with eight aims as described in the "Advertisement" found in this edition: "To collect, and diffuse throughout this country, accurate information respecting the agricultural and commercial capacities of the African Continent, and the intellectual, moral, and political condition of its inhabitants. 2. To promote the instruction of the Africans in letters and in useful knowledge, and to cultivate a friendly connection with the natives... 3. To endeavour to enlighten the minds of the Africans with respect to their true interests ; and to diffuse information amongst them, respecting the means whereby they may improve the present opportunity of substituting a beneficial commerce in place of the Slave Trade. 4. To introduce amongst them such of the improvements and useful arts of Europe as are suited to their condition. 5. To promote the cultivation of the African soil, not only by exciting and directing the industry of the natives, but by furnishing, where it may appear advantageous to do so, useful seeds and plants, and implements of husbandry. 6. To introduce amongst the inhabitants beneficial medical discoveries. 7. To obtain a knowledge of the principle languages of Africa... with a view to facilitate the diffusion of information among the natives of that country. 8. To employ suitable agents, and establish correspondences as shall appear advisable..." (6-7).

## THE ENGLISH-FRENCH ANTI-SLAVE TRADE CONNECTION

**72 SIMONDE DE SISMONDI** (Jean-Charles-Leonard). De l'interet de la France a l'egard de la traite des negres.

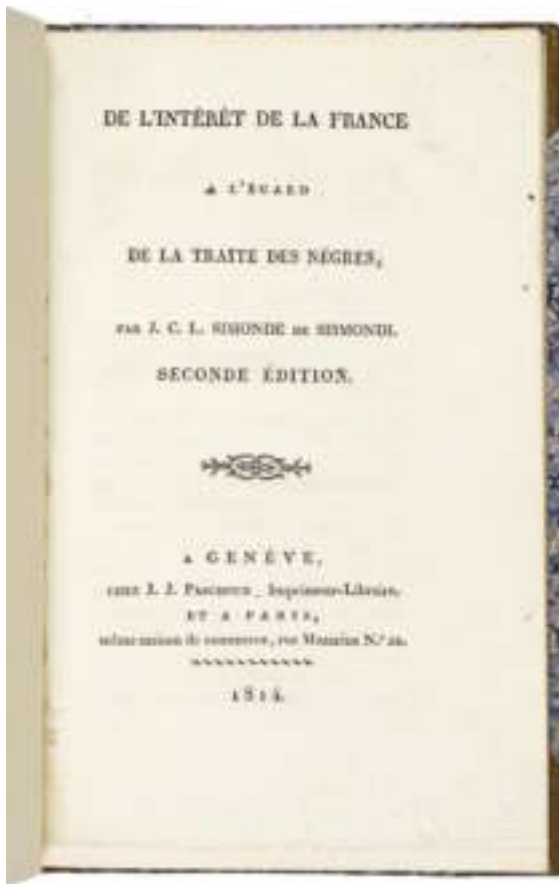
Second edition. 8vo., 59, [1] pp. **An excellent copy with many deckle edges**, recently bound in calf and marbled boards, antique style.

Geneva: J.J. Paschoud, 1814. £575

Second of three editions with the date of 1814. Another edition followed in 1815.

**Important work by one of the leading continental economists of the nineteenth century attacking the slave trade and one of the few French anti-slave trade works before 1815.**

"French anti-slave trade sentiment prior to 1815 was limited to a few publications, such as the book by the liberal economist Simonde de Sismondi issued in Geneva in 1814, *De l'interet de la France a l'egard de la traite des negres*, arguing that the slave traffic was not only inhuman but economically unsound" (Jennings, 6).



Simonde de Sismondi argues that “the end of the slave trade would make it possible for Africans, free from wars, to make rapid progress toward civilization... He denounced the trade as a violation of all the precepts of Christianity and of international law” (Cohen, 184-185). In line with the thinking of eighteenth-century philosophes, Sismondi believed that Africans, untouched by the horrors of the slave trade, were “the paragon of the liberal bourgeois state” (Cohen, 185) because in their cities the arts, industry, and agriculture flourished.

“In addition to its inhumanity, slavery was uneconomical, Sismondi wrote. He pointed out that, in order to develop the sugar industry, based on slavery in the Antilles, France would have to invest capital that would otherwise be available for its textile industry; thus it

would be involved in an unprofitable rate of exchange” (Cohen, 185).

In a revealing footnote on page 11, Simonde de Sismondi describes the impact that image of the slave ship *Brookes* (first published as a broadside in 1789, and in reduced form later, as he notes, in 1814) had on a contemporary French audience. Testifying to its emotional impact, even 25 years after its initial publication, and international circulation he states it “fait une impression plus profonde que tous les discours des amis des noirs.”

### EARLY ABOLITIONIST HISTORIOGRAPHY – THE FIRST BIOGRAPHY OF BENEZET

**73 VAUX** (Roberts). *Memoirs of the life of Anthony Benezet.*

Second, expanded edition. 8vo., [4], 156 pp. **With an engraved frontispiece depicting the “Indian medal” depicting “William Penn... offering the calumet of Peace to an Indian chief”** and four pages of publisher’s advertisements, often excised, following page 152. Light dampstaining to the inner margin of the frontispiece and title-page, rear free endpaper loose, some occasional stain-

ing and foxing but otherwise a good copy bound in original blue boards with paper label to spine, corners bumped, joints cracked, loose and sewing exposed.

York: [C. Peacock] for W. Alexander, 1817. £125

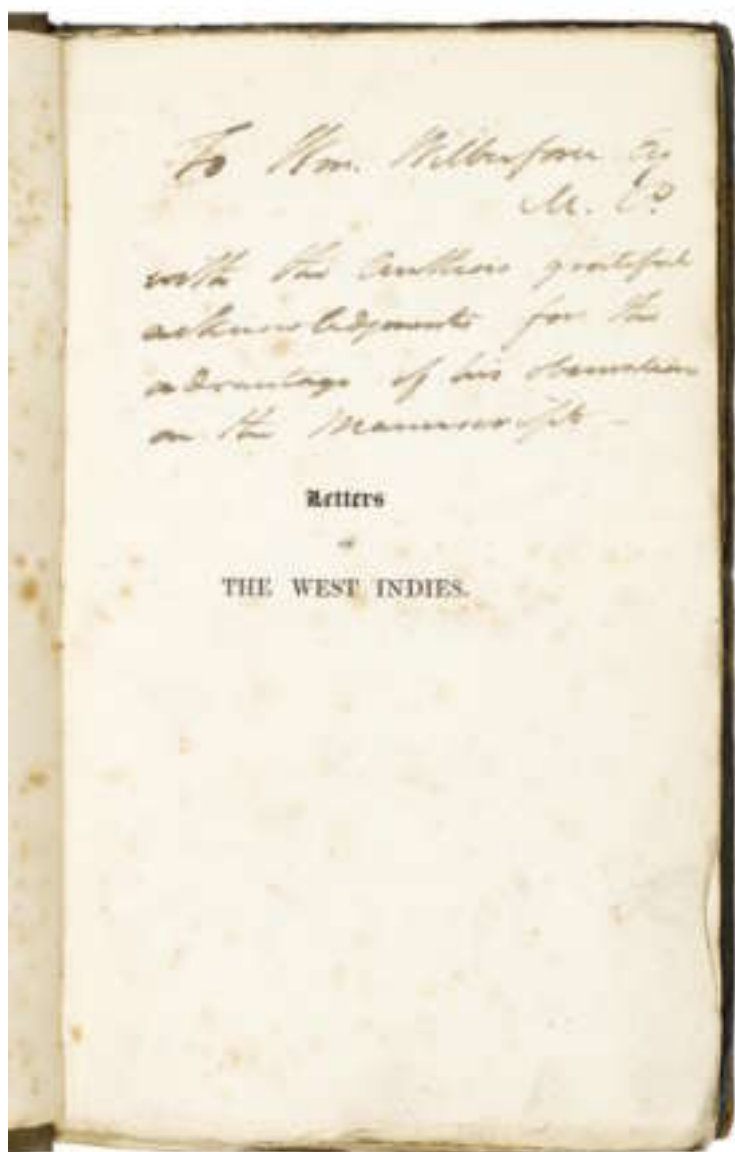
First printed in Philadelphia in 1817, this expanded edition is the first to be printed outside of North America. In his preface, the editor discusses exactly how he altered the text. He notes that he has “incorporated with the text some very long notes, which he found in the original; and has made many small corrections” [1]. He also added “extracts from a letter written by Anthony Benezet to John Pemberton, of which he possessed a manuscript copy” [1]. Testifying to the international popularity of *Memoirs*, the work was translated into French in 1821.

### Expanded edition of the first biography of the influential abolitionist Anthony Benezet.

In writing his biography, Vaux utilizes not only Benezet’s printed works, but also his autograph letters and other manuscript material – sometimes transcribed in full – many of which have subsequently disappeared making this work the only extant source for certain items.

Roberts Vaux (1786-1836), an American jurist, abolitionist, and philanthropist, had much in common with Anthony Benezet. He had Philadelphia Quaker roots and in addition to the cause of abolition, he had an abiding interest in improving education not only for the underprivileged, but also for the public at large. In addition to championing various social causes, Vaux was also an accomplished scholar – he was a member of many European scientific societies and of the Philosophical Society of Pennsylvania.





INSCRIBED TO WILLIAM WILBERFORCE FOR HIS  
"OBSERVATIONS ON THE MANUSCRIPT"

74 WALKER (James). Letters on the West Indies.

**First edition.** Large 8vo., xvi, 268 pp. **Inscribed by the author on the half-title to William Wilberforce** [see below]. Front free endpaper, half-title, and title lightly foxed, but otherwise a very good copy in contemporary condition with two edges untrimmed in the original blue boards and paper spine (rebacked in card, corners and edges worn).

London: printed for Rest Fenner by (S. Curtis), 1818.

£8000

**An evocative presentation copy inscribed by the author to fellow Berbice Committee member William Wilberforce for "his observations on the manuscript".**

Walker and Wilberforce worked closely together on the Berbice Committee which governed the Crown estates in the Caribbean colony of Berbice. He inscribed this copy on the half-title: "To Wm. Wilberforce Esq. M.P. with the author's grateful acknowledgement for the advantage of his observations on the manuscript". Walker's inscription shows the close collaboration between the two men in producing *Letters on the West Indies*.

**This copy also has Wilberforce's underlinings, marginal reading marks and the occasional annotation in pencil in 52 places in the text.** On the rear endpapers he has also written a brief index to the work. One of the more interesting marginal reading marks occurs on page 220 where Walker writes that "I have heard of a planter who named one of his drivers Wilberforce. It might no doubt be a vast gratification to the elegant mind of this gentleman to unite the sound of this name with the sound of the lash". Not surprisingly this passage attracted Wilberforce's attention and he marked the passage in the margin.

Initially a separate Dutch colony, Berbice came under British control in 1803. "Sugar estates in Berbice which were the property of the Dutch government became the property of the British crown – along with the slaves attached to them. Managed at first by the new colonial administration, the estates and the condition of the slaves appear to have 'sustained a progressive deterioration in all respects'" (166). After failing to find a private individual to manage the estates who would abide by certain conditions affecting the welfare of the slaves, a commission was formed, headed by William Wilberforce and five others, to manage the estates.

"Wilberforce must have seen the 'Berbice Commission' as a heaven sent opportunity to demonstrate the practicality of the humanitarian approach – to refute the constant argument that the ideas of the Abolitionists spelt ruin for the estates, their owners and the trade in their produce. Certainly he welcomed the commission and, with kindred spirits as fellow commissioners, was well set to carry the campaign to the plantations, and to some of the worst plantations anywhere" (167).

In *Letters on the West Indies*, Walker puts forth, in a series of nine letters, his observations on his time as an administrator for the estates owned by the British crown in Berbice. Perhaps the most interesting letter is letter VIII (pp. 206-224) "On the African Character" where Walker suggests, among other things, that self-restraint and prudence in governing slaves would prevent stirrings: "A general habit, among colonists, of controuling their own spirits, would be worth nine-tenths of the militia force" (219).

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