

## THE MATHEMATICAL PRACTITIONERS OF TUDOR AND STUART ENGLAND

by E.G.R. TAYLOR

Foreword by Sir Harold Spencer JONES, F.R.S., Astronomer Royal

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The International Hydrographic Bureau has received from the London Institute of Navigation a copy of this important publication which appeared on the 26th November, 1954.

This book is a chronicle of those lesser men — teachers, text-book writers, technicians, instrument makers, etc. — who lived between the years 1485 and 1714 during the Tudor and Stuart periods when English science made its first significant and swift advances. These mathematical practitioners, as they called themselves, taught and trained navigators and hydrographers, topographers and engineers who thereupon, and for the first time, used geometry and trigonometry as the basis for their work. Their history, consequently, occupies an important part of the history of navigation.

In the Foreword to this distinguished book, the Astronomer Royal writes : « It was only gradually that a demand for instruction in geometry and astronomy arose to meet the need for improved techniques in navigation, surveying, gunnery and horology. This need was supplied in some measure, though inadequately, by the mathematical practitioners of London long before it began to be provided by the universities. Many of these teachers were men with practical experience but of no great education who worked in close association with the instrument-makers ; the text-books they used were mostly derived from earlier books and showed no originality of treatment. But there were exceptions ; from time to time new ideas were conceived and improvements in instruments were made.

« Professor Taylor has given a fascinating account of these mathematical practitioners and of the development of ideas, methods and instruments from Tudor times to early in the eighteenth century, which forms a valuable contribution to a little-known epoch in the history of navigation and surveying ».

This account is the substance of Part I which is told in a style that will give pleasure to all who enjoy fine historical writing.

Part II consists of a remarkable catalogue of more than four hundred names of practitioners, in chronological order, with biographical notes and details on each of them and on their works.

Part III supplies, again in chronological order, a list of the most important works on the mathematical arts both by the practitioners previously listed and by various anonymous English authors.

This publication embodies throughout a vast amount of historical research and it is therefore fitting that it has been sponsored by the Institute of Navigation whose objects are, in particular, the encouragement of research and the promotion of the science of navigation and of its associated techniques.

It should be mentioned here, for the reader's information, that a report of this work by Dr. Derek J. Price, of the Whipple Museum of the History of Science at Cambridge, appears on pages 11 to 16 of the January 1955 edition of « The Journal of the Institute of Navigation », Vol. VIII, No. 1, London.

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