

# Basic Detail Report

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**00015561**

**Title**

The Mariner's Chronicle, Volume I

**Date**

1804

**Primary Maker**

Archibald Duncan

**Medium**

Paper, boards, leather, gilt

**Dimensions**

Overall: 178 x 110 x 30 mm, 0.35 kg

**Name**

Book

**History**

Shipwreck narratives had been a very popular form of writing since the C17th. Both dramatic and exotic, they served to entice and educate their readers with tales of heroic survival or tragedy. Through these tales of 'maritime suffering' the extremes of human suffering and endurance were expressed in wild settings. A sense of escapism and terror was experienced in the safety of their home which readers always found appealing. Accounts of foreign lands and people in this age of exploration was a popular theme. For lives still lived and dependent on the ocean, the threat of 'calamities' was very real. Surviving a shipwreck and being washed up on a distant shore was a story worth telling. And selling. Often embellished, the drama of the tale and accompanying engravings could not be underestimated. Duncan's "Mariners Chronicle" was the first compilation of 'interesting narratives' to be published in English and became hugely popular. Feeding into the public's delight in the macabre, Duncan acknowledged that the tales of 'sufferings of the crew' would also include the often 'cruel necessity' of cannibalism. Through talking about this taboo, Duncan was able to touch upon the real appeal of these stories in general. That "readers of his anthology would recognize in the image of the famine stricken sailors a diminished image of themselves and respond not with outright horror but with mingled horror and compassion".