



Engraved print.

## A PRE-FIRE VIEW OF LONDON

**London**

**Author**

[MERIAN, Matthäus]

**Publication date**

c.1638].

**Publisher**

Matthäus Merian,

**Publication place**

[Frankfurt,

**Physical description**

Engraved print.

**Dimensions**

225 by 770mm. (8.75 by 30.25 inches).

**Notes**

A pre-Fire view of London and the Thames. Matthäus Merian (1593-1650) was a Swiss engraver and published active in Germany. He moved to Frankfurt and worked for the de Bry publishing house, at that time run by Johann Theodor de Bry. Merian married Johann's daughter Maria, and took over the publishing house in 1523 after his father-in-law's death, before setting up as an independent publisher in 1526.

The plate was first used in 'Neuwe Archontologia Cosmica' by Johann Ludwig Gottfried, published by Merian in Frankfurt in 1638. It was also issued separately, but the folds in the print suggest that it was originally from the book. It is based on earlier views by Visscher and John Norden.

Merian's view provides some insight into life on the river. The "gally fuste" (41) is the galley foist, the official barge of the city of London, used for ceremonial occasions by the Mayor. The "eell schipes" (40) nearby were Dutch merchant vessels, transporting live eels from Scandinavia in hold tanks full of muddy water. They would then anchor in the Thames and customers would row out to buy fresh eels. "Lion Kay" (27) was a busy water station, and ten years after this print was made James II, then Duke of York, would escape from there during the Civil War.

**Bibliography**

BM 1948,0315.1.3; RCIN 702202 (but ascribed to Merian the Younger); Scouloudi pp.42-44; V&A S.1113-1982.

**Provenance****Price:**

**Inventory reference:** 12476