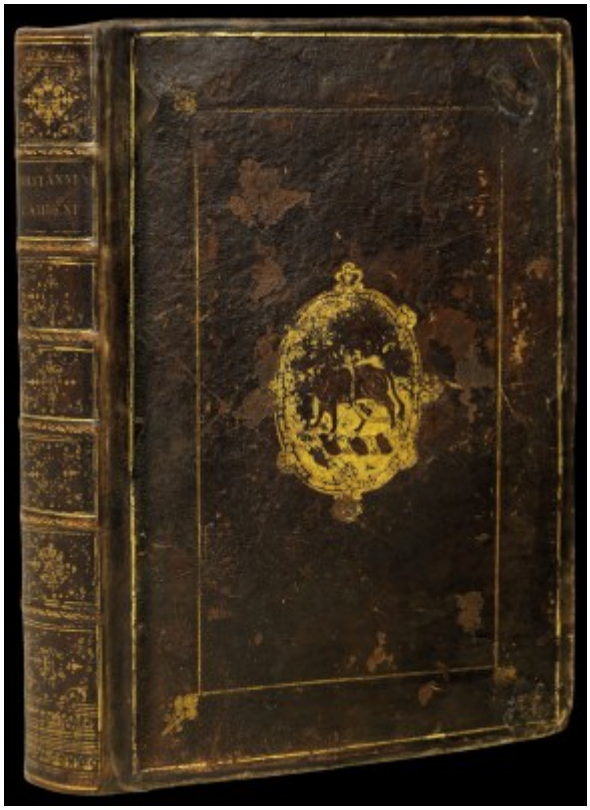


Quarto (345 by 223mm), engraved frontispiece, 57 engraved maps by William Kip and William Hole after John Norden, Christopher Saxton and George Owen, most double-page, all (including the frontispiece) with fine original hand-colour, 8 full-page woodcut illustrations of coins, other woodcut illustrations, ornaments and initials, all hand-coloured, some minor waterstaining to a few leaves, frontispiece soiled at margins, a few maps, browned at edges, map of Derby with repaired marginal tears, Anglesey with blank piece torn from margin, Hibernia slightly soiled in margin, contemporary calf gilt, covers with double panel enclosing gilt armorial, gilt spine and board edges, covers rubbed and chipped with losses.

CAMDEN’S BRITANNIA IN FULL ORIGINAL COLOUR

Britannia, sive florentissimorum regnorum Angliae, Scotiae, Hiberniae, et insularum adiacentium ex intima antiquitate chorographica descriptio.

Author
CAMDEN, William

Publication date
1607

Publisher
George Bishop,

Publication place
London,

Physical description
Quarto (345 by 223mm), engraved frontispiece, 57 engraved maps by William Kip and William Hole after John Norden, Christopher Saxton and George Owen, most double-page, all (including the frontispiece) with fine original hand-colour, 8 full-page woodcut illustrations of coins, other woodcut

illustrations, ornaments and initials, all hand-coloured, some minor waterstaining to a few leaves, frontispiece soiled at margins, a few maps, browned at edges, map of Derby with repaired marginal tears, Anglesey with blank piece torn from margin, Hibernia slightly soiled in margin, contemporary calf gilt, covers with double panel enclosing gilt armorial, gilt spine and board edges, covers rubbed and chipped with losses.

Dimensions

Notes
A fine example of the first edition of William Camden's 'Britannia' to be published with a set of county maps.

William Camden (1551-1623) was an English antiquarian, topographer, and historian. He began work on his 'Britannia' in 1577, after receiving a great deal of encouragement from many of the leading cartographers of the day, most notably Abraham Ortelius. The book would take him nine years, with the first edition appearing in 1586. The work, published originally in Latin, is a county-by-county description of the British Isles, detailing the country's landscape, geography, antiquarianism, and history. It was to prove hugely popular, with six editions being published in the first 20 years. During his lifetime Camden continued to revise and expand the text with each new edition. He drew upon unpublished text by the likes of William Lambarde, and travelled extensively throughout Britain collecting first hand information, even taking the time to learn Welsh and Old English.

In 1607, this, the sixth edition of the Britannia was published, which included a set of 57 engraved maps. The maps, which bear no roads, were based upon surveys by the leading Elizabethan cartographers John Norden, Christopher Saxton, and George Owen; and were engraved by William Kip and William Hole – who was also responsible for the striking frontispiece. The general maps of England, Scotland and Ireland were derived from the Mercator atlas of 1595. The maps would be reprinted in the English editions of the Britannia, 1610 and 1637.

The maps in the present example all bear fine original full wash colour. The colouring was presumably done for the book's first owner, Sir John Rivers, whose crest of a bull decorates the binding. He was the son of Sir George Rivers, and grandson of Sir John Rivers, Lord Mayor of London (see Davenport p. 324). Sir John Bankes, who presumably received the book from Rivers, was wealthy enough to purchase Corfe Castle in 1635, having been made attorney general a year earlier. His wife, the former Mary Hawtrey, famously defended the castle during the English Civil War.

Bibliography
Brunet I, 1510; Chubb XVIII; Lowndes p. 356; Skelton 5; STC 4508.

Provenance
Provenance:

Sir John Rivers' (c.1579 – c.1651) crest to binding; Sir John Bankes (1589-1644) signature on title; Henry Bankes of Lincoln's Inn, inscription on front free endpaper, thence by descent through the Bankes family; Richard Henry Wingfield Digby of Sherborne, Dorset, his ownership inscription dated 2 January 1857 and subsequently 1864, with note recording: "This book was bought by me from Mr. Shipp Bookseller Blandford who took it in exchange for new books from the late L.G. Bankes of Kingston Lacey… has on the title page the autograph of Sir John Bankes… Justice temp. Charles I & husband of Lady Bankes who so nobly defended Corfe Castle for that unfortunate prince".

Price:

Inventory reference: 1618

© Daniel Crouch Rare Books Ltd | 2025