

Engraved plan on eight sheets.

ELIZABETHAN LONDON DEPICTED

Civitas Londinum Ano Dni Circiter MDLX. Londinum Antiqua. This Plan shews the ancient extent of the famous Cities of London and Westminster as it was near the begining of the Reign of Queen Elisabeth these Plates for their great scarcity are re-ingraved to Oblidge the Curious...

Author
VERTUE, George; [after] Ralph AGAS

Publication date
1737.

Publisher
George Vertue,

Publication place
[London],

Physical description
Engraved plan on eight sheets.

Dimensions
2040 by 760mm (80.25 by 30 inches).

Notes
A large, highly detailed re-creation of Elizabethan London. As is explained here, although this work was actually published in the eighteenth century, it is still one of only three known printed depictions of London from the sixteenth century. It captures the City as it was developing beyond its original walls, but with farms and pastures still much in evidence nearby. Deer can still be seen in St. James Park. The major roads of entry to the city are shown and named, many of which are now-well known thoroughfares within the city. Many streets shown in the plan also bear names familiar to us. Much of the City of London’s wall is still intact, and the Tower complex is well detailed. At the very lower left is Westminster Abbey, and just to the north is Scotland Yard, which contains a curious, smoking, dome structure, perhaps for the heating of tar for caulking ships. St. Paul’s

Cathedral is shown without a steeple, which fell in 1561, offering some corroboration to Vertue's 1560 date as the time depicted by the plan. Bear and bull baiting rings can be seen in the plan on the south bank of the Thames across from the City.

Although produced in the eighteenth century, this work was based on an extremely rare, sixteenth century plan, known now, according to Howgego, in just three examples. In fact, the original, attributed to Ralph Agas by Vertue on this plan, is referred to as being of "great Scarcity" in the title of this map. There is some doubt as to whether Agas was the maker of the original plan, as Vertue is the sole source for that attribution. Howgego states that the eight sheets that make up this plan were engraved in pewter, a metal very rarely used in the production of maps. George Vertue, who identified himself as an antiquarian on this work, first exhibited this plan at the Society of Antiquaries in London on March 21, 1737.

Scale: 28 inches to 1 statute mile.

Bibliography
Howgego 8, pp. 10-12.

Provenance

Price:

Inventory reference: 15319

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