

Double-page engraved plan, fine original hand-colour.

THE EARLIEST EXTANT PLAN OF LONDON

Londinium Feracissmi Angliae Regni Metropolis.

Author
BRAUN, Georg and Franz HOGENBERG

Publication date
[1574].

Publisher

Publication place
Cologne,

Physical description
Double-page engraved plan, fine original hand-colour.

Dimensions
420 by 540mm (16.5 by 21.25 inches).

Notes
This magnificent plan was first published in Braun and Hogenberg's seminal town book 'Civitates Orbis Terrarum', 1572. London is depicted in birds-eye view from the south looking north. Above the plan is the title in Latin flanked by the royal and the City of London's arms. In the foreground are four figures in traditional Tudor dress, together with two cartouches with text. The text on the left hand side is a paean to London, which is said to be "famed amongst many peoples for its commerce, adorned with houses and churches, distinguished by fortifications, famed for men of all arts and

sciences, and lastly for its wealth in all things”; the text to the right deals with the Hanseatic League, which is praised for its global trade and its “tranquility and peace in public affairs”, and names their trading hall in London, known as the Stillard.

Although published in 1572, the plan is clearly based upon information gathered some years earlier. St Paul’s is shown with its spire, which was destroyed in 1561; the cross in St Botolph’s Churchyard is shown, although it was destroyed in 1559; and York Place, so named in 1557, is given its old name ‘Suffolke Place’. Upon the Thames, the royal barge can be seen, together with numerous ferrymen and sailing vessels. On the south bank of the river is the new district of Southwark, with its theatres, and bull and bear baiting pits. To the left is Westminster – connected to the City by a single road – with Westminster Abbey clearly visible. To the north of Westminster, cows are depicted grazing in open fields.

The view was most definitely derived from a 15-sheet city plan, of which only three plates have survived. The original plan was probably commissioned by the Hanseatic League, at sometime around 1550, hence the praise heaped upon the League in the text on the plan.

Scale: 6 1/2 inches to 1 statute mile.

Bibliography
Howgego 2 (2); Koeman 2433 state 4; in this state “Westmester” has been changed to “Westmunster” and the Royal Exchange has been inserted.

Provenance

Price:

Inventory reference: 1605

© Daniel Crouch Rare Books Ltd | 2025