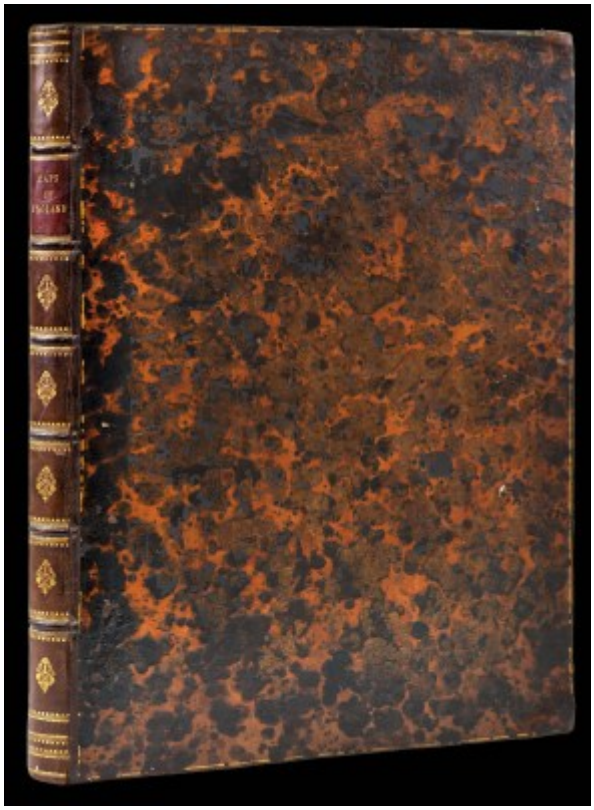


First edition, folio (415 by 300mm), engraved title-page showing Queen Elizabeth as patroness of Astronomy and Geography, attributed to Remy Hogenberg, double-page engraved plate showing coats-of-arms and table of counties, 45 engraved maps (all double-page, except the map of Yorkshire on two sheets and folding), after Saxton by Hogenberg, Lanaert Terwoot, Cornelius de Hooghe, Augustine Ryther, Francis Scatter, and Nicolas Reynolds, all maps and plates with fine original full-wash colour, with title heightened in gold, map of Wiltshire trimmed to the neatline along the top edge, map of Essex trimmed to upper and lower neatline, with slight loss skilfully backed with japan paper, several other marginal repairs, some with loss, at foot, some light marginal soiling, original mottled calf, fillet border, rebacked.

THE FIRST NATIONAL ATLAS

[An Atlas of England and Wales].

Author
[SAXTON, Christopher]

Publication date
1579].

Publisher
Christopher Saxton,

Publication place
[London,

Physical description
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on two sheets and folding), after Saxton by Hogenberg, Lanaert Terwoot, Cornelius de Hooghe, Augustine Ryther, Francis Scatter, and Nicolas Reynolds, all maps and plates with fine original full-wash colour, with title heightened in gold, map of Wiltshire trimmed to the neatline along the top edge, map of Essex trimmed to upper and lower neatline, with slight loss skilfully backed with japan paper, several other marginal repairs, some with loss, at foot, some light marginal soiling, original mottled calf, fillet border, rebacked.

Dimensions

Notes

One of the earliest national surveys of any kind and the first uniformly conceived cartographic survey of England and Wales.

Dubbed “the father of English cartography” (Skelton), little is known about Saxton’s personal life. Born in Yorkshire between 1542 and 1544, his yeoman family were probably clothiers and farmers. It is likely that Saxton was apprenticed in cartographic draughtsmanship and surveying to John Rudd, Vicar of Dewsbury (1554-1570) and Rector of Thornhill (1558-1570/78). Rudd had a passion for maps, and was engaged at some time in the 1550s in making a ‘platt’ of England; in 1561 he was granted leave from his duties to travel further to map the country. It is suggested that Saxton accompanied him on these travels, at which time he would have been about 17 years old. Records show that Saxton was employed by Rudd by 1570.

The idea of making a survey of the kingdom and its parts in a consistent format developed in the mid sixteenth century. Although the first English map of Britain by Matthew Paris had appeared in about 1250, it was not until the mid fifteenth century that the principles of mapping were fully understood. Estate surveys also became increasingly popular as the replacement of open fields with enclosures meant that land boundaries had to be defined. Thus, a large number of treatises on surveying appeared, while military textbooks were published explaining the use of the cross-staff for surveying lengths and distances as well as heights. Such interest led to the construction of increasingly sophisticated surveying instruments resulting in a new accuracy in mapping.

Saxton came to London at an unknown date and was chosen by Thomas Seckford to survey and map the counties of England and Wales. A court official, Seckford worked closely with William Cecil, Lord Burghley, who was possibly behind both Rudd’s and Saxton’s mapping projects. He certainly had a keen appreciation of the political value of maps, making his own sketches of politically sensitive areas such as the Anglo-Scottish borders. Cecil took a keen interest in Saxton’s work as it progressed: the maps were sent to him as each plate was engraved, and once the survey was complete he bound up these early proofs with other relevant maps and plans. This volume still exists and is in the keeping of the British Library.

It is Seckford, however, who is generally thought to have financed the undertaking. His involvement is reflected in the appearance of his mottos and coats-of-arms on every map in Saxton’s atlas. The project was further authorized by Queen Elizabeth I, to whom both the atlas and the wall map was dedicated. As a result of this backing, Saxton received a considerable amount of administrative assistance and financial reward: on 11 March 1574, he was granted a lease of land at Grigston Manor in Suffolk in consideration of his expenses “in the survey of divers parts of England”. Moreover, on 20 July 1577, Elizabeth granted Saxton a licence for the exclusive publication of the maps for a ten year period.

The maps that would constitute the atlas were available singly or, after the last one was completed in 1578, bound up as here. Accordingly, the maps and other leaves are found in various states, depending on when they were printed. In the present example, 12 maps bear Seckford’s pre-1576

motto (“Pestis patriae prigricies”), and 23 his later motto (“Industria naturam ornate”). The index is in the fourth setting with a four-line heading and three columns, 83 coats-of-arms and one blank; the title-page bears shield and fleur-de-lys watermark, and all the maps bear the ‘grapes’ watermark.

Bibliography

Chubb I; Ifor M. Evans and Heather Lawrence, Christopher Saxton, Elizabethan map maker (London: Holland Press, 1979), 9-43; Skelton 1; Shirley BL T.SAX-1b.

Provenance

Provenance:
1. Book plate of Charles, 1st Viscount Maynard (1690-1775).
2. William Adlington Cadbury (1867-1957), second son of Richard Cadbury, one of the two brothers who started the manufacture of chocolate under the Cadbury name.

Price:

Inventory reference: 11864

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