

Engraved map, original hand-colour in outline, backed on japan paper, a few small areas of loss to lower margin.

TUDOR ENGLAND

Anglia the Kingdom of England and the Principality of Wales exactly Described by Chr. Saxton.

Author
SAXTON, Christopher

Publication date
[c1732].

Publisher
Sold by Geo. Willdey at ye Great Toy, Spectacle, China ware, and Print Shop, the Corner of Ludgate Street near St Paul’s,

Publication place
London,

Physical description
Engraved map, original hand-colour in outline, backed on japan paper, a few small areas of loss to lower margin.

Dimensions
420 by 530mm (16.5 by 20.75 inches).

Notes
A fine example of the Willdey state of Christopher Saxton’s seminal map of England and Wales,

published in the first atlas of England and Wales: one of the first national surveys of any country.

After Christopher Saxton's death (1542–1610), the plates for his atlas of England and Wales were used to publish editions in 1645 (William Web), 1665 (unknown publisher), c1689, and c1693 (Philip Lea). On Philip Lea's death in 1700, his widow, Anne, continued the business. The date of Anne Lea's death is unknown, but on 5 August 1730 the Daily Journal carried an advertisement:

"To be sold by Auction, On Friday the 14th Instant… All the Copper Plates belonging to the Estate of Mrs Anne Lea, deceased, late of Cheapside… with the County Maps of Great Britain and Ireland, many of them done from an actual Survey thereof…".

"For many years George Willdey advertised his stock regularly in the newspapers, and almost from the start he sold maps… Evidently Willdey decided to enlarge his range of maps by bidding at the Lea sale of 1730, and among his purchases were the old Saxton plates. The first Willdey advertisement to be discovered mentions his new acquisition appeared in the Daily Post 3 February 1731/2:

The 70 maps of one Sheet each are as good as ever were done of the Size, most of them are actual Surveys, they contain… all of the Counties of England and Wales.

The one-sheet maps were sold singly at 4d. each. There is no mention of the county maps bound as an atlas with a title-page in this or any of the numerous advertisements for the maps which appeared in the following five years until Willdey's death in 1737… [However] it is unlikely that this enterprising retailer, the 'most noted Toyman in Europe' would have long overlooked the possibility of offering a county atlas and it seems reasonable to suppose that the atlas was made available at around the same time as the loose maps, in 1732″ (Hodson).

By the time Willdey began advertising Saxton's maps in 1732, there had been numerous revisions to the plates; the majority of which had been carried out by Philip Lea. These together with later states are listed below.

First State (1579): Dated 1579, with the name of Augustus Ryrther as engraver, and title in Latin.

Second State (1642): published by William Webb, title now in English; coat-of-arms and initials 'C.R.' of Charles I substituted for those of Elizabeth; now bears date of 1642.

Third state (c1689): published by Philip Lea, date in title deleted; Philip Lea's imprint added; royal initials amended to 'W.R.'; the 'Index omnium comitatum' (upper left) is now headed 'A Catalogue containing all ye Shires' and ten columns of figures of cities etc. are added to the right of the county names; the small cartouche (below the list of counties), the panel with the engraver's name and the date (suspended from the scale),
and the arms of Seckford are erased.

Fourth State (c1732): published by George Willdey, addition of Willdey's imprint list of counties upper left.

Fifth State (c 1749): published by Thomas Jefferys, Willdey's imprint poorly erased.

Cluer Dicey would acquire the plates in around 1772 following Jefferys death, and reissue the map with no change to the plate.

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. The craft of cartography was boosted by the Italian invention of printing maps from copper plates in 1473, while advances in scientific learning helped the Dutch and Flemish to become the masters of map making by the late 1500s: in 1564, Gerard Mercator, the Dutch cartographer, published a detailed map of the British Isles on eight sheets; his friend Abraham Ortelius published a map of the world in 1570. These pioneering maps were made possible thanks to developments in draughtsmanship and surveying. Such techniques emerged in part as a result of the practical needs of military engineers: military surveyors were well able to draft plans and topographical maps to scale by the 1540s. 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 great 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.

Bibliography

Provenance

Price: £4000

Inventory reference: 20589

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