

Engraved map.

AN EXCEPTIONALLY RARE RE-ISSUE OF THE 1556 PRINTING OF LILY'S MAP OF THE BRITISH ISLES

[Britannia Insula quae duo regna continet Angliam et Scotiam cum Hibernia adiacente].

Author
[LILY, George, after]

Publication date
1602.

Publisher
Joannes Orlandi formis,

Publication place
Romae,

Physical description
Engraved map.

Dimensions

Notes
An elegant map of the British Isles, and a partial French coastline, originally created and first issued by George Lily as 'Britanniae insulae quae nunc Angliae et Scotia regna continent cum Hibernia adiacente nova descriptio' (1546), when it was the first separate printed map of the British Isles. The map was immediately extremely popular, and reprinted many times, by several different publishers.

The 1546 map was oriented on the sheet with west to the top, but for this example, Giovanni Orlandi has reused the original copper-plate from ‘Britannia Insula quae duo regna continet Angliam et Scotiam cum Hibernia adiacente’, the first Rome edition of 1556, and the first to adopt the top-bottom / north-south orientation.

The lengthy legends that appeared in cartouches in the seas off the coastline, and other embellishments, on the 1556 issue (publisher unknown, but probably Lafreri school), have been clumsily erased. However, the map retains the monogram of the engraver “IHS” lower right, first found in the 1556 issue; the so called “Master in the name of Jesus”, who was active in Rome during the middle of the sixteenth century, and produced several religious works for Lafreri and Salamanca.

Giovanni Orlandi (fl.1590–1640) established himself, as an engraver, printer, publisher, in Rome in about 1590. He is well known for acquiring and reusing plates by eminent predecessors, mostly those of Renaissance masters, but including plates for maps previously owned by Claudio Duchetti, and Duchetti’s uncle, Antonio Lafreri, re-issued by Orlandi in 1602. Indeed, the British Library example of ‘Britanniæ Insulæ quæ nunc Angliæ et Scotiæ regna continet cum Hibernia adiacente nova descriptio’ (oriented with west to the top), bears three earlier imprints: ‘Romæ Anglorum studio et diligentia, 1558’, ‘Claudii Duchetti formis’, and ‘Sebastianus a Regibus Clodiensis in æs incidebat’, as well as Joannes Orlandi’s own 1602 imprint, as here, strongly suggesting a similar Forlani / Duchetti pedigree for the current map.

From about 1611, Orlandi moved to Naples.

George Lily (c.1510-1559), originally from London, was the son of grammarian William Lily. George may have met his patron, the notorious Reginald Pole at Magdalen College, Oxford, as early as 1528, but he had definitely entered his service by 1535. Between 1538 and 1539 he lived in the English Hospice in Rome, and accompanied Pole to Viterbo. “Before 1543 he was outlawed for treason, presumably for his association with Pole, and his property was transferred to his brother Peter. In the 1540s George Lily collaborated with Paolo Giovio on the ‘Descriptio Britanniae, Scotiae, Hyberniae et Orchadum’ (printed in Venice by Michele Tramezzino in 1548) which also contained four works by Lily,… At the same time as his co-operation with Giovio, Lily drew the first map of the British Isles to be printed (1546); the copperplate-engraving was descended from the Gough map of c.1360… In February 1556, Lily was ordained subdeacon on the title of Santa in Cosmedin, Pole’s titular church in Rome” (Mayer).

Rarity

Only the second example of this state known (the other appeared at auction in 2011).

Bifolco records 4 states, all of which are rare:

1st state: dated 1566, and bearing ‘MARE HISRANICUM.
2nd state: sea name corrected to ‘MARE HISPANICUM’
3rd state: posulated edition by Claudio Duchetti, no known examples extant
4th state: with text blocks removed and bearing the imprint of Orlandi and dated 1602.

Bibliography
Mayer, for ODNB online; Bifolco TAV. 260; Shirley British Isles 60; Tooley 269.

Provenance

Price: £20000

Inventory reference: 24510

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