

Engraved plan, on two sheets joined, remnants of old creases, laid on later linen, some minor areas of loss, and a few tears, skilfully repaired, trimmed to right and upper image.

TAYLOR’S PLAN OF HEREFORD

[City of Hereford] To the right Hon[oura]ble ye Earl of Oxford High Steward of the City of Hereford... To the Worshipful the Mayor and Alderman and Citizens of Hereford, this plan of the aforesaid City is most humbly Dedicated by their oblig’d & most Humble Servant, I. Taylor.

Author
TAYLOR, Isaac

Publication date
March 21, 1757.

Publisher
Publish’d According to Act of Parliament,

Publication place

Physical description
Engraved plan, on two sheets joined, remnants of old creases, laid on later linen, some minor areas of loss, and a few tears, skilfully repaired, trimmed to right and upper image.

Dimensions
700 by 890mm. (27.5 by 35 inches).

Notes
Beautifully engraved plan of Hereford.

The central city-plan is surrounded by views of notable places in Hereford, framed by elaborate rococo strapwork, among them: “General View from Broomy Hill”, “Crofs of the White Fryers”, “The Palace Church & part of the Town”, the “Town Hall”, and “St Ethelbert’s Cathedral”. Bottom-right, the title is housed in an elaborate cartouche, accompanied by, apparently, a self-portrait of Taylor himself at work. To the left are listed the number of houses and of inhabitants of different streets, from “Broad Cabbage lane” to “Cooker row”.

Isaac Taylor of Ross (fl.1750-1778) was born in Hereford. He earned a reputation as a surveyor of both county maps and city plans. His style was easily recognizable, with his county maps (Herefordshire, 1754, Hampshire, 1759, Dorset, 1765, Worcestershire, 1772, and Gloucestershire, 1777) giving particular emphasis to the hills. It is surprising that Taylor, like Rocque and Jefferys, was not successful in gaining the approval of the Society of Arts, who appeared to favour the amateur surveyors rather than the professional map-makers. Nearly all the awards went to applicants who produced just one or two maps rather than men like Taylor or Jefferys who between them published 15 fine large-scale maps, accurately surveyed and well engraved and in some instances more competent than most of those that were recognized by the Society.

It is unlikely that Taylor’s plan of Hereford was hugely successful at its time of publication, given the lack of wealth and of population in the county. Indeed, for his map of Herefordshire, published three years earlier, Taylor had only managed to raise 77 subscribers, and print less than 100 copies, of which few examples survive today.

The plan is engraved by Richard Benning (fl.1743-1781). Little is known about Benning, beyond his work. Born, perhaps, in St Martin in the Fields, in 1720, he was possibly related to William Benning (fl.1746-1756), a copperplate printer. He engraved several plans and maps for John Rocque (of Paris, London, Berkshire), and also engraved the plan of Brest and Recouvrance for Isaac Ross Taylor.

Rare: we have only been able to trace two institutional examples of this plan, one in the British Library and one in the Biblioteca Nacional de Espana. We are unable to trace an example coming up at auction since the war.

Bibliography

Provenance

Price:

Inventory reference: 21794

© Daniel Crouch Rare Books Ltd | 2025