



The first printed map of Norfolk

SAXTON, Christopher.

Norfolciae comitatus continens in sc. oppida mercatoria 26, Pagos et Villas 625, una cum singulis Hundredis, & fluminibus ein eodem, Vera descriptio.

London, 1579. Original colour. 335 x 495mm, sheet with grapes watermark.

£7,000

The first published state of Saxton's map of Norfolk, engraved by Cornelis de Hooghe in 1574, and so believed to be the first map engraved for Christopher Saxton's county atlas completed in 1579. The map has a large strapwork title cartouche top right, Elizabeth I's royal arms squeezed in the sea at the top, a scale cartouche with Saxton's name bottom right, and the arms of Thomas Seckford, Elizabeth's Master of Requests. This is the only one of Saxton's maps to have a key of hundreds, top right. It was William Cecil, Lord Burghley, Elizabeth I's Secretary of State, who determined that England and Wales should be mapped properly, and Seckford who financed Saxton's work. The resulting surveys were the basis of county mapping until the middle of the 18th century, copied for Camden's 'Britannia' and the atlases of Speed, Blome and Morden. The printing plates also had a long lifespan: after being eclipsed by John Speed's atlas of 1611, the plates were re-engraved and re-issued in 1642 by William Web; most of the other plates were still being printed as late as 1770.



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