



The first printed map of County Durham

SAXTON, Christopher.

Dunelmensis Episcopatus (Qui comitatus est palatinus) vera et accurata descriptio. An^o Dni 1576.

London, 1579. Original colour. 375 x 485mm, sheet with grapes watermark.

£3,000

The first published state of Saxton's map of Durham, the first time the county had been represented on a printed map. It was engraved by Augustus Ryther in 1576 and issued in Christopher Saxton's county atlas three years later. The map has a large title cartouche top left, Elizabeth I's royal arms and the arms of Thomas Seckford, Elizabeth's Master of Requests, in the North Sea, and a scale cartouche with the names of Saxton and Ryther bottom right. The towns represented by multiple buildings are Durham ('Duresme'), Bishops Auckland, Hartlepool, Darlington, Barnard Castle and Staindrop ('Stayndrop'). 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. Saxton was also issued with a Royal Warrant obliging Welsh officials to provide him with Welsh-speaking guides. 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 plates were still being printed as late as 1770.



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Stock ID :22583