



The earliest available printed map of London

BRAUN, Georg & HOGENBERG, Frans.
 Londinium Feracissimi Angliae Regni Metropolis.

Cologne: c.1574, Latin text edition. Original colour. 330 x 490mm.

£7,500

The earliest town plan of London to survive, a 'map-view' with the major buildings shown in profile, and no consideration for perspective. It was published in the 'Civitates Orbis Terrarum', the first series of printed town plans, inspired by the success of the 'Theatrum', the atlas compiled by Abraham Ortelius. This example is from the fourth state of the plate, with the spelling 'West Muster' and the addition of the Royal Exchange. The plan was engraved by Frans Hogenberg, copied from a 15-or-20-sheet printed map, probably commissioned by the merchants of the Hanseatic League, who had significant commercial interests in England. For over two centuries they had enjoyed tax and customs concessions in the trade of wool and finished cloth, allowing them to control that trade in Colchester and other cloth-making centres. Their base in the City was the Steelyard (derived from 'Stalhof'), named 'Stiliyards' by the side of the Thames on this map and described in the text panel lower right. 1475. Part of the trade deal was their obligation to maintain Bishopsgate, the gate through the city walls that led to their interests in East Anglia. The rump cities of the Hanseatic League sold the building in 1853 and it is now the site of Cannon Street Station. The map must have been drawn fifteen years or so before publication: in the centre is the Norman St. Paul's Cathedral, with the spire that was hit by lightning



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and destroyed in 1561 and not replaced before the Great Fire of London destroyed the building in 1666.

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