

Early printed maps of Kent

The following file is an expanded version of a section of my latest book (Flight 2010, pp. 269-70).

Both as works of art and as historical documents, early printed maps have attracted a good deal of attention, reflected in numerous books and articles of which I have to confess to being very largely ignorant (my excuse being that I am interested only in maps of Kent, and only incidentally in them). Most of the people named below are the subject of articles in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography,* and the references cited there will point any reader who wants to know more in the right direction.

* Alternatively they can be searched for on the web. Anyone who googles "charles whitwell" or "peter stent" will know as much as I do about these men.

Saxton 1575. The earliest printed map which represents Kent with tolerable accuracy and with a respectable amount of detail is a map of the four south-eastern counties (Kent, Sussex, Surrey, Middlesex) drawn by Christopher Saxton (occ. 1573-98). It was one of a series of maps covering the whole of England and Wales, completed and formally published in 1579. This particular plate was engraved (by Remigius Hogenbergius) in 1575; some finishing touches were added in 1577-8.

The portion covering Kent was reproduced by Livett (1938), for purposes of comparison with the maps which follow.

Anonymous. The earliest separate map of Kent is also the first to show the ancient 'lathes': it makes a point of mentioning their existence in its title, 'The Shyre of Kent, Diuided into the five Lathes therof' (Box 1926, Livett 1938). It was copied from Saxton's map,* probably without permission; the engraver made a



Anonymous - state 1 (1576-7?)

Kent (including a visit to Margate), but I have not been able to identify the hypothetical book.

Simonson 1596. Far more accurate than either of the previous maps is the half-inch map surveyed and drawn by Philip Simonson (d. 1598) of Rochester. It was engraved (in London) by Charles Whitwell (occ. 1582-1611), as two sheets to be joined down the middle, and first published in 1596 - that is, at around the same time as the second edition of Lambard's book. The title refers back to that of the anonymous map: Simonson's map is called 'A NEW DESCRIPTION OF KENT Divided into the fyue Lathes therof' (Hannen 1914, Livett 1938). Lambard recommends it to his readers in glowing terms (1596, pp. 220-1); though he does not exactly say so, I think we may be sure that he had helped to get this map published. (Lambard and Simonson were both connected with Rochester Bridge - Lambard had been a member of the governing body since 1585, Simonson was appointed paymaster in 1593 (Hannen 1915) - and presumably that was how they became acquainted.)



Copies of this map in its original form are very rare; almost all the surviving specimens - including the one reproduced by Hannen (1914) - carry the added imprint of the London printseller Peter Stent (occ. 1642-65), who had evidently somehow got possession of the plates.

At Stent's instigation, the map was next embellished with inset views of Dover ("W. Hollar fecit") and Rye ("Sr Anthony Van Dyck delineavit").* A fourth state adds Stent's address, 'at ye white Horse in giltspure street', and the date '1659'.

* I do not see that Livett (1938, p. 274) had any warrant for assuming that Van Dyck (who died in 1641) was still alive at the time.

Mostly these copies survive through having been bound into copies of Thomas Philipott's *Villare Cantianum* (1659, reprinted 1664).

Norden 1605. The next map, dated 1605, was drawn by John Norden (d. 1625) and engraved by William Kip (occ. 1597-1618). It is a

very pretty piece of work. Mostly it was copied from Simonson's map, but some of the detail is different. It was specifically designed as an illustration for William Camden's *Britannia* - it was included in the folio edition of the Latin text (1607) and in the English translation (1610, reprinted 1637) - and many of the new labels (such as DVROLENVM and PORTVS LEMANVS) were obviously added in compliance with instructions from Camden. This map of Norden's does not appear to have ever been published separately in any form.* Perhaps for that reason, it had no progeny.

* A description of Kent written by Norden, of the kind which accompanied his published maps, was, by Nicolson (1696, pp. 39-40), reported to exist in manuscript. I have not tried to track it down.

Speed 1611. The map which set the pattern was the one published by John Speed (1551/2-1629) in his atlas called *The theatre of the empire of Great Britaine* (1611). Like the other plates, this one was engraved for Speed in Amsterdam, in the workshop of Joost de Hondt, alias Jodocus Hondius (1563-1612). Not counting the insets around the edges (coats of arms of the earls of Kent, bird's-eye views of Canterbury and Rochester), this map, in its original form, was hardly anything more than a somewhat inaccurate, somewhat simplified copy of Simonson's map. Within a few years, it had picked up some additions from Norden's map (REGULBIUM is one which can be seen at a glance), but after that it seems to have stayed the same. The only variation that I can see affects the imprint, added for the 1627 edition (at the bottom centre, to the right of the stylized representation of the battle of Hastings), altered for subsequent editions in 1650 and 1676.

With the rest of Speed's atlas, this map of Kent was frequently reprinted; and it was very frequently copied by later generations of cartographers - who, whether they knew it or not, were copying a rather poor copy of Simonson's map, enhanced with some antiquarian details copied from Norden's map.

References

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Postscript

Since writing this piece, I have become aware of the existence of an online catalogue of early maps of Kent compiled by Tony Burgess (www.oldkentmaps.co.uk). This is a very thorough piece of work (I only wish that I had discovered it sooner), and these remarks of mine are, in comparison, derivative and superficial. But they seem to be correct as far as they go; so I have left them unchanged.

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