



Double-page engraved map with hand-colour.

SPEED'S MAP OF ITALY

Italia Newly augmented by I: Speede.

Author

SPEED, John

Publication date

[1676].

Publisher

Are to bee sold by Tho. Baskett in sleet-street and Richard Chiswell in St Pauls Church-yard,

Publication place

[London],

Physical description

Double-page engraved map with hand-colour.

Dimensions

415 by 535mm. (16.25 by 21 inches).

Notes

A map of Italy, Sardinia, and Corsica from the first atlas compiled and published by an Englishman, Speed's 'Prospect'. The decorative border along the top of the map shows views of major cities, including Venice, Rome, and Florence. Along each side are depicted figures in regional dress (among them, the Pope and the Venetian Doge). Unlike the other maps in the 'Prospect', the figures are presented in pairs, interspersed with the arms of the Pope, Venice, Sardinia, and Corsica.

Accompanying text in English, 'The Description of Italy', is printed on the reverse.

John Speed (1552-1629) was the outstanding cartographer of his age. By trade a merchant tailor, but by proclivity a historian, it was the patronage of Sir Fulke Greville, poet and statesman, that allowed him to pursue this interest in earnest.

His 'Theatre of Great Britain', first published in 1611 or 1612, was the first large-scale printed atlas of the British Isles. The maps in the 'Theatre' became the basis for subsequent folio atlases until the mid-eighteenth century. The 'Prospect of the Most Famous Parts of the World', from which the present work is drawn, appeared in 1627, and is the first world atlas compiled by an Englishman to be published in England. Engraved in Amsterdam, many of the maps are anglicized versions of works by Dutch makers in distinctive *carte-à-figure* style, featuring borders with figures in local costume and city views.

Much like the 'History' and 'Theatre', the 'Prospect' is as much a work of history as it is of cartography. Accompanying the maps is extensive text describing at length the geography, geology, history, culture, government, people, customs, and resources of the lands shown. The first atlas to be published by an Englishman, the work set a high standard to which future generations of British mapmakers could aspire, and remains an invaluable source of information about the seventeenth-century European understanding of the world.

Bibliography

Skelton 92; Shirley [Atlases] T.SPE-1j.

Provenance

Price: £2500

Inventory reference: 22155