

Double-page engraved map with hand-colour.

SPEED’S MAP OF RUSSIA

A Map of Russia

Author
SPEED, John

Publication date
[1676].

Publisher
Sold by Tho: Basset in Fleet Street and Richard Chiswell in St. Pauls Church yard,

Publication place
[London],

Physical description
Double-page engraved map with hand-colour.

Dimensions
405 by 515mm. (16 by 20.25 inches).

Notes
A map of Russia, one of the nine new maps added to the 1676 edition of Speed’s ‘Prospect’, the first atlas compiled and published by an Englishman. Unusually, this map is not in the carte-à-figure style that characterizes the ‘Prospect’. Instead, set in the top left-hand corner of the map is a detailed plan of Moscow, with points of particular interest (such as ‘The Emperours Palace’ and ‘The Horse market’) labelled. On the right-hand side is an elaborate cartouche containing views, including

‘Archangel’ (Arkhangelsk) and ‘A Hott House’.

Accompanying text in English, ‘The Description of Russia’, 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 ‘Prospect of the Most Famous Parts of the World’, from which the present work is drawn, appeared in 1627, bound with the ‘Theatre’, 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.

This map is from the 1676 edition of the ‘Prospect’, published by Thomas Bassett and Richard Chiswell. While not as rare as the earlier publications, this edition is perhaps the most important, given that it is the first to include the nine new maps: among them, Virginia and Maryland, Barbados, and – the present example – Russia. It is also the last time that the ‘Prospect’ was printed as an atlas.

Bibliography
Shirley [Atlases], T.SPE-2f.

Provenance

Price: £2000

Inventory reference: 21930

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