

Double-page engraved map, with hand-colour.

THE FIRST ENGLISH MAP OF AFRICA

Africae described, the manners of their Habits, and buildinge: newly done into English by I.S.

Author
SPEED, John

Publication date
1626, [but 1627-1632].

Publisher
published at the charges of G. Humble,

Publication place
[London],

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

Dimensions
390 by 500mm. (15.25 by 19.75 inches).

Notes
The first English map of Africa, from the first atlas compiled and published by an Englishman, Speed's 'Prospect'.

The map was engraved by Abraham Goos for Speed's 'Prospect of the Most Famous Parts of the

World’. Along the top border are eight inset views of cities, mainly in North Africa (for example, Alexandria, Tangier, and Tunis); along the side margins are inset engravings of people from different regions. The map is dense with place names, rivers, mountains, and lakes – many fictitious. While ships and sea-monsters populate the sea, inland are depicted animals, including zebras, elephants, lions, and monkeys. The source of the Nile is given to the Lakes Zaire and Zaflan, as according to Ptolemy.

Accompanying text in English, ‘The Description of Africa’, 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.

Bibliography
Norwich, 30; Shirley [Atlases], T.SPE-2a.

Provenance

Price:

Inventory reference: 21913

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