

Double-page engraved map.

THE FIRST WORLD MAP IN A WORLD ATLAS COMPILED AND PUBLISHED BY AN ENGLISHMAN

A New And Accurat Map Of The World Drawne according to ye truest Descriptions latest Discoveries & best Observations yt have beene made by English or Strangers.

Author
SPEED, John

Publication date
1626 [but 1627-1632].

Publisher
Are to be sold in pops-head Alle by Geor. Humble,

Publication place
[London],

Physical description
Double-page engraved map.

Dimensions
410 by 530mm. (16.25 by 20.75 inches).

Notes
Superb impression of Speed’s iconic map, the world map from the first atlas compiled and published by an Englishman, the ‘Prospect’.

The map is on a double hemispheric projection in a simple strapwork border, with two smaller celestial maps between. It is influenced, both geographically and decoratively, by William Grent's world map of 1625: California is depicted as an island; there are portraits of the same four circumnavigators; the English legends are the same; and there are similar astronomical drawings. Traces of Jodocus Hondius' world map of 1617 are also visible, in the representation of the four allegorical figures (Water, Earth, Fire, and Air) and in the depiction of the celestial hemispheres.

While the engraver is unknown, "the style is not inconsistent with that of Abraham Goos who worked on several other maps in the Prospect and he may have been primarily responsible" (Shirley).

Accompanying text in English, 'The generall Description of the World', 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
Chubb, XXV; Shirley [Atlases], T.SPE-2a; Shirley [World], 317.

Provenance

Price: £8400

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