

Double-page engraved map with hand-colour.

SPEED’S MAP OF CHINA

The Kingdome of China newly augmented by I.S. 1626.

Author
SPEED, John

Publication date
1626, [but 1627-1632].

Publisher
Are to be sold in pops-head Alley by G. Humble,

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 China (also encompassing Korea and some of the islands of Japan), from the first atlas compiled and published by an Englishman, Speed’s ‘Prospect’.

Along the top of the map is a decorative border, with bird’s-eye views of the islands of Macao, after de Bry, and Quinzay (modern-day Hangzhou), as well as – dubiously accurate – vignettes showing ‘ye

Ma[n]ner of their Travelling by la[n]d' and 'the Manner of their Execution'. Along the sides of the map are depicted figures, including one of the earliest European depictions of a Japanese soldier. Korea is shown as a long island and Japan is drawn after Ortelius and Teixeira. The Great Wall of China ("built by ye King of China against ye breaking in of ye Tartars") separates China from the 'Desert Lop', which divides it from Russia. Here, small diabolical figures are illustrated, accompanied by the warning that "men are thought to be seduced by wonderful illusions and divilish spitting".

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

The mapmaker 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.

Provenance

Price: £5000

Inventory reference: 21928

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