

Double-page engraved map, with hand-colour.

SPEED’S MAP OF EUROPE

Europ

Author
SPEED, John

Publication date
1626, [but 1627-1632].

Publisher
Are to be sould in popes-head alley, against the Exchange by George Humble,

Publication place
[London],

Physical description

Double-page engraved map, with hand-colour.

Dimensions
395 by 515mm. (15.5 by 20.25 inches).

Notes

The map of Europe from the first atlas compiled and published by an Englishman, Speed’s ‘Prospect’. Along the top border are vignettes with views of eight cities, among them Paris,

Constantinople, and Venice. As the lop-sided slant of the River Thames reflects, the views have been inadvertently reversed by the engraver. Down each side are depicted figures in regional dress. In the top left-hand corner, between Greenland and Iceland, is Frisland, the phantom island that pervades 16th and 17th c. cartography.

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

Provenance

Price:

Inventory reference: 21914

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