

Fine original hand-colour, heightened in gold.

SUPERB EXAMPLE OF SPEED’S MAP OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

The Kingdome of Great Britaine and Ireland

Author
SPEED, John

Publication date
1610.

Publisher
I. Sudbury and George Humble, Popes Head Alley,

Publication place
London,

Physical description
Fine original hand-colour, heightened in gold.

Dimensions
390 by 515mm. (15.25 by 20.25 inches).

Notes
A map of Great Britain and Ireland, with inset views of London and Edinburgh and a map of the Orkneys. The pendants to the views are each side of a coin issued by Cunobeline, an Ancient British king, later immortalised by William Shakespeare in his play Cymbeline, produced for the first time the year before Speed’s work was published.

The royal coat of arms in the top corner and the inset views of both London and Edinburgh demonstrates Speed's royalist intention to show all the kingdoms under James I of England and VI of Scotland. The map is decorated with ships and sea monsters, with several cherubs posing with feathers, sextons, and globes.

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' was the first atlas of the British Isles: Speed prepared the maps himself about two years before they were published. The present map is taken from the 1627 English edition published by George Humble, who was granted a privilege to print it for twenty-one years from 1608. The 'History of Great Britaine' (1611) and its companion atlas volume, the 'Theatre of the Empire of great Britaine' (1612) were published together and "were an immediate success: three new editions and issues of each appeared during Speed's lifetime, and a miniature version was first published about 1619-20. The maps in the 'Theatre' became the basis for subsequent folio atlases until the mid-eighteenth century.

Bibliography

Provenance

Price:

Inventory reference: 24172

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