

## John Speed Continental Maps, 1626



John Speed (1552-1629) is arguably the most famous English cartographer of any period, in 1626, Speed's *Prospect Of The Most Famous Parts Of The World* was published with 21 finely engraved maps.

The *Prospect...* was the first world atlas by an Englishman, and its maps are famous for their bordering panels of national characters in local costume and panoramic views depicting the areas of major towns and cities. In addition to the obvious decorative quality of the maps, regular atlas copies have two pages of English text printed on the reverse, giving a charming description of life in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century of the area shown. The maps of the world and America show California as an island and are amongst the earliest ever printed to depict this 17<sup>th</sup> century cartographic "fact".

By the time of the publication of the *Prospect ...* in 1626, John Sudbury had retired from the partnership with George Humble, and, after his death in 1640, the copperplates were in possession of his son, William Humble. William continued publication on a rather *ad hoc* basis before relinquishing rights to William Garrett who, in turn, passed the plates to Roger Rea. William made some changes to the dates on some of the plates but issued only small numbers of any edition of the atlas.



*Africae, Described, the Manners of their Habits, and Buildinge...*

Side borders contain two sets of five decorative costumes of various African peoples; the top border shows views of eight African cities. The source of the Nile is based upon Ptolemy (two lakes) *Monomotapa* dominates southern Africa. The map is richly illustrated with animals, ships, sea serpents and other decorations.

This is the first map of Africa prepared by an English cartographer. It is based closely on the maps of Jodocus Hondius and Willem Blaeu. It presents a typical, early 17<sup>th</sup> century view of the continent with the interior filled with fictitious mountains, rivers and lakes. The origin of the Nile conforms to the Ptolemaic tradition of the large twin lakes in the southern part of the continent. The kingdom of *Monomotapa* occupies a large region in southern Africa. There are numerous interesting notations, including several concerning where gold can be found. The English text on verso provides a fascinating view of the European concept concerning the wildlife, customs and manners of the African people. There is a description of *Anthrophophagi*, cannibals, who kill their own babies to avoid the trouble of raising them; but, in order to preserve their race, steal children from their neighbors. The beautiful *carte-a-figures* border features natives in their tribal costumes.

At top is a panel of panoramas and plans illustrating the towns of Tangiers, Ceuta, Alger, Tunis, Alexandria, Cairo (*Alca*), Mozambique and the Canaries. Finely engraved by Abraham Goos, with his signature at lower left.





Speed's map of Tartary includes a decorative *carte à figures*. Side panels depict costume figures, while above are vignettes of the cities of Astrakhan, Samarkand and Cambalu, with an illustration of a house in Nova Zembla. The Great Wall of China is clearly seen, and the interior is heavily annotated.





*The Kingdome of China*, one of the first English-language maps of China. Note the generally correct outline of the Ming China, with many provinces labeled (Cantam/Guangdong, Quancii/Guangxi, Chequiam/Zhejiang, Quicheu/Guizhou, Fuquam/en:Huguang/ Huguang, Honao/Henan, Xanton/Shandong, Xiamxii and Sancii (Shanxi and Shaanxi?). "Xuntien alias Quinzay" more or less corresponds to Beijing (the name Shuntian Prefecture was indeed in use). However, north of China proper, John Speed had also placed *Cathaya, the Chief Kingdome of Great Cam*, with the capital *Cambalu* (Khanbaliq - i.e., in fact, the same Beijing). This kind of duplication was common on the maps of the period, as geographers had not apparently yet fully identified Marco Polo's *Cathay* with the China then known to Europeans, and *Cambalu* with Beijing. The Great Wall is depicted on the map, along with several annotations. Korea is shown as an Island. Japan is also shown using a very curious depiction. The map includes a portion of India within the Ganges region, extending well into Central Asia. In addition to the wonderful land-views showing a sailing land craft, manner of execution (crucifixion) and city views of Macao and Quinzay and the costumed figures of Chinese, Japanese and Pegu men and women, there are interesting notes throughout the map on various historical and mythical aspects of China, including a region where men are seduced by wonderful illusions and dirt is spun into cloth.





*America with those known parts in that unknowne worlde both people and manner of buildings described and enlarged by I.S. Ano 1626*

America by John Speed showing California as an island. A full color example of the 1676 edition of Speed's landmark map of America, the first atlas map to depict California as an island and to accurately depict the East Coast of North America, from Speed's *Prospect of the Most Famous Parts of the World*. The map was engraved by Abraham Goos, who drew upon his own map of North America of 1624 and the 1625 Briggs for his depiction of California. The *Straits of Anian* and hint of the northwest coastline also appear. The mythical islands of *Brasil* and *Frisland* still appear in the North Atlantic. The Plymouth colony in Massachusetts and Jamestown colony in Virginia are both shown.

The vignettes on the two sides depict the native costumes of Greenland, Virginia, Florida, Mexico, *New Englande*, Peru, Brazil, *Mochan* and *Magellanica*. The eight views across the top represent town plans for cities in the New World (*Havana*, *S. Domingo*, *Cartagena*, *Mexico City*, *Cusco*, *Il of Moca*, *Rianeiro*, *Olinda*). The inset depicts Greenland and Iceland. No sign of the Great Lakes or Mississippi River. A number of sea monsters and sailing ships also decorate the map.







Included in the four views at top is a view of *Nova Zembla*, the winter quarters of Barents, the Dutch explorer who searched for a northern passage between Russia and America. English text on verso provides a 17<sup>th</sup> Century description of the region. Decorated with 10 costumed figures and eight town plans of important early Asian cities (Candy, Goa, Damascus, Jerusalem, Orumus, Bantam, Aden and Macao). Korea is shown as a slender oddly projected peninsula.

The Great Wall of China is shown, along with an elephant above the source of the Ganges. A nice simple/naïve northeast passage is shown, along with a piece of North America and sea monsters in the extreme North Pacific and Southern Indian Sea. The text on the verso presents a fascinating Anglo-centric view of Asia in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. Size: 20 x 15 inches





Includes birds-eye views of London, Paris, Rome, Constantinople, Venice, Prague, Amsterdam and Lisbon, plus 10 decorative European costumed figures.