



# Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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## **The Theatre of the Empire of Great Britaine: Presenting An Exact Geography of the Kingdomes of England, Scotland, Ireland, and the Iles adioyning: With The Shires, Hundreds, Cities and Shire-townes, within ye Kingdome of England, divided and described By Iohn Speed:**

**Stock#:** 93080  
**Map Maker:** Speed  
  
**Date:** 1646  
**Place:** London  
**Color:** Uncolored  
**Condition:** VG  
**Size:** 11.5 x 16.5 inches  
  
**Price:** SOLD



### **Description:**

#### ***The First English Atlas of the Entire British Isles.***

A fine example of Speed's cornerstone *Theatre of the Empire of Great Britaine*, the most famous and quite possibly the most decorative atlas of Britain and Ireland ever published.

While the atlas is sometimes said to be cartographically derived from Saxton's 1579 *Atlas of England and Wales*, Speed in fact adds thousands of new towns and features as well as coverage of Scotland and Ireland. In addition, Speed's maps show his distinctive city views and plans, as well as a host of other decorative features to each of his maps. Most maps depict the county seats and one other city, and historical monuments engraved include Stonehenge, St. Paul's, and Henry VIII's famous Nonsuch palace.

Speed's *Theatre* includes two maps of the British Isles, as well as regional maps of England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland. In addition, there are forty-four county maps of England, thirteen county maps of Wales, and four county maps of Ireland.

This is the 1646 edition of Speed's atlas (with a title page from the 1627 edition), which was first published in 1612 as an accompaniment to his *History of Great Britaine* (1611). The first map engraved for the atlas had been completed in 1604 (*The County Palatine of Chester*), although the death of the engraver William Rogers delayed publication. Jodocus Hondius, whose name is signed on many of the maps, took over and completed the project.



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**Collation**

[Engraved Title]; [xiv]; [47 double-page engraved maps]; [iv]; [14 double-page engraved maps]; [iv]; [1 double-page engraved map]; [iv]; [5 double-page engraved maps]; [10].

**Detailed Condition:**

Folio. 19th-century three-quarters calf with marbled boards, rehinged. 66 engraved double-page maps. Complete. (Minor wear and rubbing to spine and corners. Small repaired tear on I2 and lower corner of L11 strengthened. Upper corner of K torn, away from image. Minor dampstaining in the lower margin from Ccc-Ddd2.) A-E2, E-E2, G-Z2, Aa-Zz2, Aaa-Zzz2, Aaaa-Gggg2, Hhhh.