



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

7407 La Jolla Boulevard
La Jolla, CA 92037

www.raremaps.com

(858) 551-8500
blr@raremaps.com

Asia Secunda Pars Terrae in Forma Pegasi [Asia in the Form of Pegasus]

Stock#: 94173
Map Maker: Bunting
Date: 1587 circa
Place: Wittenberg
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG+
Size: 14 x 11 inches
Price: \$ 3,600.00



Description:

Asia in the Shape of A Winged Horse

Heinrich Bunting's map of Asia is a whimsical yet poignant work that transforms cartography into a realm of fantastical symbolism.

Published in the 16th century, Bunting's map deviates from the traditional geographical representation of territories. Instead, it shapes the entire continent of Asia into the figure of Pegasus, the mythical winged horse from Greek mythology.

Bunting, a German Protestant pastor and theologian, is renowned for his distinctive approach to cartography, which in this instance combined geographical accuracy with creative, theological, and symbolic elements. His map of Asia, one of the most famous in his collection, exemplifies this fusion, creating a metaphorical bridge between the earthly realm of geography and the celestial domain of mythology.

In this map, Bunting has masterfully contoured the territories of Asia to form the silhouette of Pegasus. The horse's body covers the majority of the continent, from the Middle East to East Asia, while the wings extend into the territories of Russia. The horse's head, pointing west, is where the Arabian Peninsula is situated. The well-defined outline of the figure is complemented by interior details, such as mountain ranges, rivers, and key cities, all meticulously placed within the constraints of the Pegasus form.

One of the most striking elements of the map is the powerful symbolism it carries. Pegasus, known as the



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carrier of thunderbolts for Zeus, represents power, wisdom, and inspiration in Greek mythology. Bunting's choice of Pegasus as the embodiment of Asia may be seen as a nod to the continent's profound influence and significance during the period, representing its might, knowledge, and cultural richness.

Moreover, the choice of Pegasus may also reflect Bunting's own theological perspectives, symbolizing the divine providence or spiritual elevation. Bunting often used maps as a medium to discuss religious themes, and his Pegasus map could be read as a metaphor for the divine or spiritual journey.

Despite the unconventional representation, the map doesn't entirely sacrifice geographical precision. Important cities and regions of Asia, such as Jerusalem, Persia, and India, are distinctly marked, offering viewers a real sense of the continent's geographical expanse and political boundaries.

Plates and Blocks

Bunting published this map in his *Itinerarium*, an important religious treatise on biblical geography. The book was illustrated with maps from its first edition in 1581, published in Helmsstadt, but the present map made its first appearance in the 1587 Wittenberg edition.

While the woodblock edition of the map continued to be published in different formats throughout the 16th, 17th, and even 18th centuries, a few editions of the book used a copperplate engraving to illustrate the map. These include the 1592 Prague edition and the 1646 Brunswick editions.

Both copperplate editions can be easily recognized from the lack of the wave pattern present on the woodblock edition:

- The Czech edition can be recognized from the Czech-language text on the verso (instead of Latin or German), as well as the presence of a coat of arms in the lower right corner on the map. The seas are also stippled in this edition.
- The Brunswick leaves the ocean blank and includes additional text below the map.

Detailed Condition:

Tape removed from recto.