

Engraving with aquatint, original hand-colour.

ASIA AS A WILD BOAR!

A Geographical Picture of Asia.

Author
LAURIE, Richard Holmes and WHITTLE, James

Publication date
12th May, 1817.

Publisher
Published by Jas. Whittle and Rd. Holmes Laurie, No.53, Fleet Street,

Publication place
London,

Physical description
Engraving with aquatint, original hand-colour.

Dimensions
360 by 480mm (14.25 by 19 inches).

Notes
Caricature map of Asia, here represented as a wild boar, with a leaf (the Arabian Peninsula) in its mouth.

Caricature maps featuring animals are highly uncommon, especially in the early part of the nineteenth century. Traditionally countries would be represented by people, as in the works of

Gillray, and most notably Robert Dighton, whose droll caricatures of England, Ireland, and Scotland proved hugely popular in the late eighteenth century. Another unusual aspect of the map is the use of aquatint, a medium often reserved for views rather than maps, due to its tendency to obscure detail. Here it is used to great effect with the boar's coat rendered beautifully, superbly framed by great waves which crash along the southern and eastern coasts of Asia. The wild boar or pig was often seen as a symbol of wealth, abundance and good luck in many east Asian cultures including China and Japan.

The Laurie and Whittle partnership was formed in the late eighteenth century by Robert Laurie (1755-1836) and James Whittle (1757-1818).

Laurie was apprenticed to Robert Sayer in 1770 and made free in 1777. He was a skilled artist, who exhibited at the Society of Artists from 1770, winning a silver palette for a drawing in 1770, and he was also an accomplished engraver of mezzotint portraits and produced views and other decorative items. In about 1792 he returned to the Sayer business and took it over from the ailing Sayer in 1794.

Whittle was apprenticed into the Needlemakers' Company, evidently made free by 1792, and joined with Laurie to take over the Sayer business in 1794.

The foundation of their business was the existing Sayer stock of printing plates, both for maps and atlases and also decorative prints, but they continued to add new material to freshen up the atlases, as well as separately-published maps on topical issues, notably events during the Napoleonic Wars.

Laurie retired in 1812. His son Richard Holmes Laurie replaced him in the partnership and, eventually, took over the firm after Whittle's death in 1818. Presumably under the influence of Richard Holmes Laurie, the partnership became noted as chartmakers and publishers, with the business existing to the current day as Imray, Laurie, Norie and Wilson.

We are only able to trace one institutional example: the British Library; and we are unable to trace another example coming up at auction in the last 50 years.

Bibliography

Provenance

Price:

Inventory reference: 14928

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