

The curious collection of maps as stood out through the latest centuries of the history of cartography. To be more precise, we should say that the symbolic cartography is an enthralling chapter with multiple manifestations within the general outlook of this science in the Medieval and Renaissance Europe. Truly, these celebrated maps by Heinrich Bünting, extracted from his *Itinerarium Sacrae Scripturae*, are amongst the oldest and most famous cartographic rarities.

The description of the Biblical Places that we find in this *Itinerarium*, published for the first time in 1581, would be widely spread until the mid 18th century. It eventually had more than 60 editions in different European languages – German, Latin, Dutch, English, Swedish or Czech among others.

This success would not be easy to explain without drawing attention to its symbolic elements, which Bünting skillfully enriches. The author is a Theology teacher, born in Hanover in 1545, and is close to the great reformist movement of the German church. He fundamentally understands his work as a travel guide for the Christian reader, who is lead through the places where the passages in the gospels take place. We can link Bünting to this trend of “Descriptive Geography” of these locations which are considered sacred by Christians; he provides a great deal of detail, such as old coins, measurement, uses and customs, etc.

However, despite the scientific dimension of his work, the personality of Bünting is above all that of an evangelical preacher more concerned about the vision of geography as a great religious allegory than about the contentious contribution of contrasted data. He is more linked to the medieval cartographic tradition, the maps of which are complex icons inspired essentially in theological concepts and in the fantastic tradition, than to the elements typical of a modern cartography that little by little breaks through.

Christianity was more interested in the cartographic representation as the great stage of divine work during the Middle Ages. Hence, all the Ancient Greek cartographic and cosmographic breakthroughs become involved and mixed with biblical elements; as happens with the famous maps of T in O (see *monograph* #205) which will appear in several codices and manuscripts ever since the appearance of the *Etimologies* by Isidoro de Sevilla.

The O, as a geometric symbol of perfections, would contain the *ecumene* – the world inhabited and inhabitable by mankind. The T, which divides this *ecumene* into the three known continents – although Bünting already hints at the existence of a fourth, the new American world – would remind one of the Christian Cross. That is to say, throughout many centuries he persisted – and we could say that somehow it remains – on a tendency of transforming maps and diverse cartographical representations in the most varied symbolic shapes.

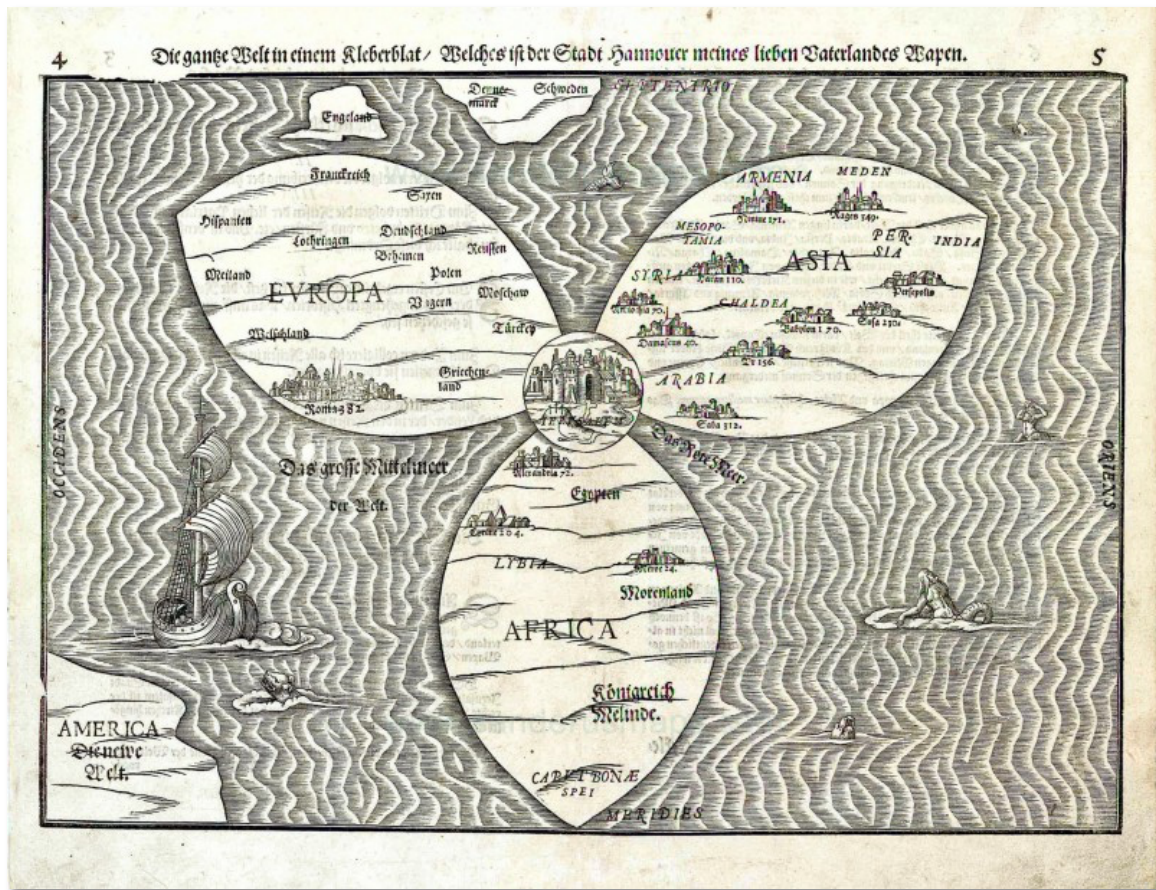
One of the most beautiful exponents of this transformation can be found precisely in these maps by Bünting: The *Clover* worldmap, which attempts to represent the Trinity in Christianity. Besides, the *Asia Pegasus*, mystical winged horse, skillfully drawn adjusting to the profile of the Asiatic continent; or the beautiful lady or *Queen*, with whom Bünting wants to represent Europe, which has rightfully become a classic within this symbolic cartography.

To sum up, in this amazing trip or itinerary into Holy Land that Bünting proposes, the reader discovers a vision of the world with some pretensions of geographical proximity, though still immerse in a deep religious or theological concept which pervades the fabulous tale and the cartographic trajectory we are invited to cover. What we face is the simple image of a German evangelical theologian from the 16th century, who presents us with an itinerary through the sacred places of Christianity, and in the covering of which, unexpectedly and surprisingly, these precious pearls of Renaissance fantastic cartography, which amaze us with their shapes and colors, at the same time they help us understand the concept of the world that still was in the minds of those of that time a bit better.

This map is among the earliest representations of a landmass in the form of an animal (or human). The German theology professor and cartographer Heinrich Bünting [1545-1606] was a contemporary of Gerard Mercator and Sebastian Munster. He included three anthropomorphic maps in his successful scientific atlas *Itinerarium Sacrae Scripturae* [Travels according to the Holy Scriptures]: the world as a flower, Europe as a woman, and the Near East as the flying horse *Pegasus*. In *Pegasus Map* the face is Anatolia, the chest is in the Holy Land and the legs are in Sinai Peninsula. The head represents Asia Minor with the mouth at Istanbul. The wings portray Central Asia and Siberia. The Caspian Sea appears horizontally between the wings and the saddle. Persia is delineated on the horse blanket with the forelegs forming Arabia. The hind legs represent the Indian and Malay Peninsulas. The atlas was published first in 1581 and had more than 60 editions till the end of the 18th century."



This map by Bünting is named *Europa Prima Pars Terrae in forma Virginis*, made in Hanover, 1581 (or 1588). Europe is a body politic or, of course, the *Res publica Christiana*. Spain is clearly the head of the continent's political system: the "thinking member" of it. And, inside Spain, this centrality is dwelling, according to the map, in Castile, Aragon and Navarra being peripheries of the head. Then Bohemia is in the placement of the heart: the continent "beats" from Bohemia. For the rest France is a "chest"; Italy is the right hand; and interestingly the British Isles and Scandinavia are "out of place": they float somewhere in the seas around Europe, but are not a "real" part of it, or maybe a "flag", a banner in the hands of Queen Europe.



The maps contained in Bünting's *Itinerarium Sacrae Scripturae* offered a geographical guide to the Holy Land. The popular book was reprinted in more than sixty editions in various languages and contained as many as twelve maps. Most of the cartography faithfully portrayed biblical lands, but three of the maps took much greater liberties with geography: a clover leaf map of the world with Jerusalem at the center, a map in which Europe takes the shape of a woman as the classical virgin *Europa*, and a map of Asia as *Pegasus*, the mythical winged horse. This is still very conceptual geography; the clover-leaf map is merely a new version of the medieval T-O map, in which the world is inhabited by the descendants of Noah dwelling in Asia, Africa and Europe. Jerusalem is at the center of the world as it has always been. Even though it is almost a century after Columbus, Heinrich's "world" map only references the eastern hemisphere. His *Europa* map was stolen from one of the most popular books of the 16th century: Sebastian Münster's *Cosmographia*, first published in 1544 and issued in many editions (illustrated above). This is what these new, colorful, fantastical maps are all about: competition in the new age of print. On the *Pegasus* map, *Asia Secunda Parsterr Informa Pegasi*, Asia has been reshaped to conform to the horse's outline. Asia Minor occupies the head, the Holy Land is situated in the chest region, and Babylon appears on the steed's shoulder. Persia is a blanket draped across the horse's back, and India is its hind legs and haunches. *Asia Secunda Parsterr Informa Pegasi* appeared in several editions of *Itinerarium* as either a woodcut or a copperplate.



Jerusalem is at the center, if not the physical at least the symbolic one, of our world. We know that, in respect of the world's shape, its "center" stems from social construction and choices, and not "natural" or physical reasons. Bunting's *Cloverleaf* map of the world, is a good example of this socially-constructed centrality. Heinrich Bunting did know that the world does not look like a cloverleaf. But he wanted to go beyond the positivist knowledge of our globe's surface, to the one of symbols where the physical is not necessarily the "real" (In this regard we can say that he was a real geographer: a specialist of space who did not only consider positivist space but also socially-constructed ones). Here Jacques Keilo argues that those social constructions of centrality, medieval ones, are still effective and very influential in our Weltanschauung today, and are still used for political and social propagandas, notably in what concerns Jerusalem, still regarded as one of the holiest sites on Earth and the epitome of desire of two major civilizations.

This simple woodcut map in the form of a cloverleaf recalls geographical ideas of the Crusades. Jerusalem is at the center of the world, the crossroads of three continents. While the Crusader "T-O" maps showed the division of the world among the three sons of Noah (see #205), Bünting's curious cloverleaf is a celebration of his native city of Hannover. The trefoil arms of Hannover is used as the format, with the continents distorted into the three leaves. It is oriented to the north; the islands off the coast of Europe are Scandinavia and Great Britain, labeled Denmark and England. The New World lies in the far southwest corner. Dividing the continents are inlets from the "world ocean": the Mediterranean, Caspian, and Red seas. Jerusalem occupies the circular

center. Major cities mentioned in the Bible are illustrated by vignettes, and distances are recorded between some cities and Jerusalem.

This is one of ten maps in Bünting's *Itinerarium Sacrae Scripturae*, in which the author, a theological commentator, rewrote the Bible as an illustrated travel book. Other maps in the series shown here bear out his imaginative approach to cartography, which pictures *Europe as the Queen of the World*, and *Asia as Pegasus*. The work was quite popular, with many editions and translations into Latin, English, French, Danish, Swedish, and Dutch. Though Bünting's world map is more a statement of his civic pride than a serious attempt at cartography, it was not without precedent. During the period of the Crusades, the "T-O" map with Jerusalem at the center was a convenient method for showing the trinity of the known continents and the primacy of the Holy Land. Shortly before Bünting's map appeared, Andre Thevet, the great French cartographer, published for the king of France a map of the world in the form, predictably, of a fleur-de-lis. Unfortunately, no copies of his map have survived.

This playful and imaginative diagram would have appealed particularly to viewers of the late 16th century who still cherished ties to the past. As with Crusader maps, design was more important than geographical accuracy. Asia and Africa were shown as distant as they must have felt in those times. The New World appears uncertainly in a corner. The lands of the Bible remained as central to Protestant Germany as they had been to the Europe of the Crusades.

