



# Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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## Mappa Britanniae Facie Romanae Secundum Fidem Monumentorum Perveterum Depicta

**Stock#:** 28428  
**Map Maker:** Stukeley / Bertram  
**Date:** 1809  
**Place:** London  
**Color:** Uncolored  
**Condition:** VG  
**Size:** 15 x 12.5 inches  
**Price:** \$ 975.00



### Description:

#### ***A British Antiquarian Scandal***

Scarce map of the British Isles in Roman times, supposedly based upon a Medieval manuscript and made by the eighteenth-century forger, Charles Julius Bertram.

The map is east-oriented with Albion (England, Wales, and Scotland) situated toward the top of the map, and with Ireland toward the bottom. A tip of Gallia (France) is also included. The lands are split into polities with roads, forests, mountains, and settlements marked.

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Bertram (1723-1765) was a 23-year-old English teacher at the Royal Marine Academy in Copenhagen when, in 1746, he began corresponding with the noted British antiquarian William Stukeley. They



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discussed Bertram's "discovery" of a manuscript fragment by a Richard of Westminster. Bertram wrote that the fragment consisted of, "four sheets & an half in Quarto, the half of Parchment on which is depicted in colours the Islands of Britain, but in a manner peculiar to this Author" (Bertram to Stukeley, 1747, Bodl. Oxf., MS Eng. lett. b.2, fols. 7-8).

Stukeley was excited by news of the manuscript. Bertram sent him a transcript and a copy of the map. With the help of Mr Widmore, librarian to Westminster Abbey, Stukeley identified the manuscript's author as the fourteenth-century monk, Richard of Cirencester. David Casley, keeper of the Cottonian Library, agreed that the manuscript language and style indicated a fourteenth century origin.

Stukeley pushed Bertram to sell him the full manuscript, which the savant wanted to donate to the newly-opened British Museum. Bertram demurred, although he did mention that he knew who had the full manuscript, and that this person had supposedly stolen it from a British library. Undeterred, Stukeley instead pushed Bertram to publish the fragment and map.

He did so, publishing the fragment for the first time in 1757 alongside two genuine early medieval texts by Gildas and Nennius. In the same year, Stukeley published an account of the manuscript with the map. Both men died in 1765.

Although there were some who suspected the manuscript from the beginning, it was generally believed to be genuine. Interestingly, Bertram's fictional names of Roman stations were integrated into Ordnance Survey maps. This printing of the map accompanied Henry Hatcher's English translation of the manuscript fragment, published anonymously in 1809. In 1866, however, B. B. Woodward, royal librarian of Windsor Castle, published a blistering essay in the *Gentleman's Magazine* exposing the fraud.

The Stukeley-Bertram map combines two fascinating and underappreciated map collecting topics, fakes and early reproductions of unobtainable manuscript maps. This is one of the instances where a forgery of a medieval manuscript map enjoyed a lengthy run of legitimacy before being debunked. Viewed in context, the map is a dynamic artifact in its own right and offers marvelous insight into a period of history when Britain was actively exploring and publishing its own pre-history.

#### **Detailed Condition:**

Minor foxing.