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[Early Photographic Facsimile of the Catalan-Estense World Map]

Stock#: 66756
Map Maker: Anonymous
Date: 1450 -1460 (but circa 1890)
Place: n.p. (Catalonia ?)
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 43 x 43 inches (if joined)
Price: \$ 9,500.00



Description:

A Fantastic Nine-Sheet Facsimile of an Important Early World Map. From the Collection of Famed Early Map Scholar Edward Luther Stevenson.

Finely executed black and white photographic image on 9 sheets of the Catalan world map in the Biblioteca Estense, (C.G.A.1).

The map is on a sheet of vellum with a 10-millimeter blue border.

The map belonged to the collection of the Dukes of Ferrara, who, from 1452, had also been Dukes of Modena and Reggio. The map can be traced to 1598 and Cesare d'Este, the illegitimate son of Duke Alfonso I.

The website MyOldMaps includes the following description of the original:

To the extent that it is based on the portolan [nautical] chart tradition, there are rhumb-lines (thirty-two out of each of sixteen centers) and two unlabeled scales; also the map features shields and flags over Europe and kings in tents elsewhere. However, the equator is drawn in and named three times. The map aims at covering all the lands of the "Old World", but including the whole of Africa. The



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central point is not Jerusalem but near the abode of the mythical Christian king Prester John [Presta Iohan], placed in Nubia between the two branches of the Nile. The abandonment of Jerusalem as a central point is found on several other European mappaemundi of the 14th and 15th centuries. Africa, to which the cartographer's attention was clearly directed as new discoveries were incorporated, is enlarged, crosses the equator, and reaches a southern coast. Asia is largely confined to the northern hemisphere. The Atlantic occupies a larger space than is usual for the period.

The legends for the lower part are written so as to be read from the North above, and for the upper part from the South at the top. The language of the fifty-two legends, apart from the one in Latin on the Canaries, is Catalan. A Latin cosmography with very similar wording exists in Genoa University Library Codex B.1.36. Textually comparable are the legends on the Catalan map at the Central National Library, Florence Port. 16, to be dated after 1416. There are also linguistic and topographical similarities with a fragment of a Catalan world map in the Topkapu Saray Library, Istanbul. As these Catalan maps developed, some of them aimed at including the latest information available from European navigators and compilers. This offers clues to historians of cartography as to approximate dates.

The map uses a system of rhumbs of 800 mm. in diameter to sixteen secondary centers, each comprising thirty-two lines; The center of the system is on the vertical axis of the map, but at 150 mm. south of the horizontal axis. The east-west horizontal line passing through the center of the rhumb system is designated by three legends as the equinoctial line. There are two scales of miles (in the North West of Africa and the North of Europe), no doubt taken from the nautical chart which served as a model for the Mediterranean basin. The land forms a roughly circular block, offset from the center of the ocean around them, the latter being wider to the West.

Detailed Condition:

9 photographic sheets, unjoined. The primary image illustrates the map if it were joined.