



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

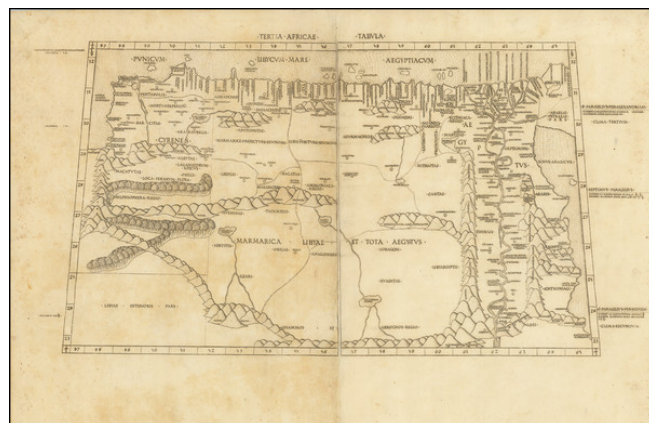
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Tertia Africae Tabula

Stock#: 72528
Map Maker: Ptolemy / Swenheym
Date: 1478 (1507)
Place: Rome
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 20 x 11 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Rare edition of Ptolemy's map of Northeastern Africa, extending from Egypt and the Red Sea (Sinus Arabicus) to Libya,

Conrad Swenheym's finely engraved map of Northeastern Africa and Egypt is the earliest obtainable map of the region, preceded only by a map published in Bologna in 1477 which is essentially unobtainable for collectors. The map shows the region based upon the writings of the Alexandrian mapmaker Claudius Ptolemy, who flourished in the second Century A.D. and whose geographical text was translated into Latin and later inspired manuscript maps using Ptolemy's table of geographical coordinates. The earliest surviving examples of such manuscript maps date to the beginning of the 14th Century. Ultimately these maps and Ptolemy's text would be compiled to form the most influential treatise on Geography in the 15th Century, concurrently with the advent of the printing press, resulting in its widespread distribution in Europe, which ironically eclipsed the work of other Greek Geographers of the period, such as Strabo, whose work was probably more accurate than Ptolemy's calculations.

Conrad Swenheym introduced the printing press to Italy at the height of the Renaissance, having been apprenticed to Gutenberg. Initially, under the enthusiastic patronage of Pope Paul II, Swenheym concentrated on publishing texts, but later turned to producing the first illustrated *Cosmographia* in the early 1470s, when enthusiasm was not sustained by the Pope's successor, Sixtus IV.

Despite being beaten out by one year (for the honor of the earliest printed edition of Ptolemy's work) by Taddeo Crivelli, who published his edition in Bologna in 1477, the copper plates produced under Swenheym's close supervision, and finally printed just after his death in 1478, are considered vastly superior. The plates were then purchased by Petrus de Turre in 1490, who published the second edition, in which this map appeared. The only difference in the maps are the watermarks in the paper. A third edition



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was issued in 1507.

Rarity and Dating

Historically, it was difficult (if not impossible) to date separate maps from editions of the 1478/1490/1507-08 Rome Ptolemy. In 2017, R.H.J. Peerlings, F. Laurentius, and J. van den Bovenkamp undertook a study of the watermarks in the different editions of the atlas to establish a chronology of watermarks that could be used to date separate maps.

The present map has a light tau-in-circle watermark. These kinds of watermarks appeared in both the 1490 and 1507-08, though this one is apparently associated with the later edition.

Maps from all editions of the atlas are rare, though the 1478-datable maps appear to be up to an order of magnitude rarer than the later editions.

Detailed Condition:

Minor soiling. Archivaly backed.