



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

7407 La Jolla Boulevard
La Jolla, CA 92037

www.raremaps.com

(858) 551-8500
blr@raremaps.com

[Northwest Africa & Balearic Islands] Prima Affrice Tabula

Stock#: 100547
Map Maker: Ptolemy / Reger
Date: 1486
Place: Ulm
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG+
Size: 20 x 14.5 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

First Map of Northwestern Africa & The Balearic Islands etc., Printed North of the Alps

Based upon the work of the 2nd Century Alexandrian polymath Claudius Ptolemy, this map is perhaps the single most important and decorative map of Morocco and northwest Africa printed in the 15th century.

The map covers the westernmost part of the Mediterranean, naming the Balearic Islands (*Balearicum Pealagus*) Maiorca (*Maior*), Menorca (*Minor*) Ebiza (*Ebissus*) and Formentera (*Ophi Usa*) in the so-called Mare Ibericum. The regions of Spain shown are named *Hispania Betica*, *Hispanie Lusitane*, and *Hispanie Terraconeusis*.

Below the Straits of Gibraltar (*Fretum Herculum*) is a reference to the Pillars of Hercules, the ancient name for the two promontories on either side of the Strait that guarded the entrance to the Mediterranean. The name finds its origin in Greek mythology, when Hercules had to perform twelve labors, one of them (the tenth) was to fetch the Cattle of Geryon of the far West and bring them to Eurystheus, which marked the westward extent of Hercules' travels. A lost passage of Pindar quoted by Strabo was the earliest traceable reference in this context: "the pillars which Pindar calls the 'gates of Gades' when he asserts that they are the farthestmost limits reached by Heracles." There is one to one association between Herakles and Melqart since Herodotus, thus "Pillars of Melqart" in the temple near Gades/Gádeira (modern Cádiz) were widely proclaimed to be the true Pillars of Hercules.

The map finds its richest detail in northwestern Africa, reflecting the then-modern divisions of the Kingdom of Mauretania, as established by Emperor Claudius in the 1st Century, A..D. The map extends south to the Atlas Mountains and the Cinnaba Mountains and the Madethubadus Mountains. and north to



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the coastal regions of Morocco and Algeria, which are given the Roman provincial names Mauritiana Tingam Ca and Mauritania Cesaensis, references to the original tribal origins of the Moors. Mauretania existed as a tribal kingdom of the Mauri people (who gave their name to the wider term Moors) on the Mediterranean coast of North Africa, from at least the 3rd century BC. The Mediterranean coast of Mauretania had commercial harbors for trade with Carthage since before the 4th century BC, but the interior was controlled by Berber tribes, who had established themselves in the region by the beginning of the Iron Age. The earliest recorded mentions of the Mauri are in the context of Phoenician and Carthaginian settlements such as Lixus, Volubilis, Mogador and Chellah.

King Atlas was a legendary king of Mauretania credited with the invention of the celestial globe. The Mauri were in close contact with Numidia. Bocchus I (fl. 110 BC) was father-in-law to the Numidian king Jugurtha. Mauretania became a Roman client kingdom of the Roman Empire in 33 BC. The Romans installed Juba II of Numidia as their client-king. When Juba died in AD 23, his Roman-educated son Ptolemy of Mauretania succeeded him. The mad Emperor Caligula had Ptolemy executed in 40. Emperor Claudius annexed Mauretania directly as a Roman province in 44.

In the 1st century AD, Emperor Claudius divided the Roman province of Mauretania into Mauretania Caesariensis and Mauretania Tingitana along the line of the Mulucha (Muluya) River, about 60 km west of modern Oran:

- Mauretania Tingitana was named after its capital Tingis (now Tangier); it corresponded to actual northern Morocco (including the Spanish enclaves).
- Mauretania Caesariensis was named after its capital Caesarea (Mauretaniae) and comprised actual western and central Algeria as far as Kabylie.

The Ulm Ptolemy

The 1482 Ulm edition of Ptolemy's *Geographia* was the first edition printed north of the Alps map and the first to appear in color which was applied by the publisher. The 1482 Ulm edition of the *Geographia* was one of the most important cartographic texts of the early Renaissance and the first edition of the work to be printed outside Italy. The text for this edition was based upon a manuscript translated into Latin by Jacobus Angeli and edited by Nicolaus Germanus that had been brought to Ulm from Rome in 1468. The Ulm Ptolemy was first published in 1482 by Lienhart Holle, the same year as Berlingheri's Florence edition. Ashley Baynton Williams notes:

Working independently of Berlinghieri, but apparently using the same or similar models, Holle also added modern maps of Spain, France, Italy and Palestine, but also the first printed map of Scandinavia, composed by Cornelius Clavus, circa 1425-7. Holle's maps were printed from



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woodcuts, and are characterised by heavy wash colouring for the sea areas, typically a rich blue for the 1482 edition, and an ochre for the 1486 edition. These bright colours, and the greater sense of age that woodcuts convey, make this series the most visually appealing of the [Ptolemeic] maps.

Holle went bankrupt shortly after the original publication and the work was taken over by Johann Reger, who issued a second edition in 1486.

Detailed Condition: