



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

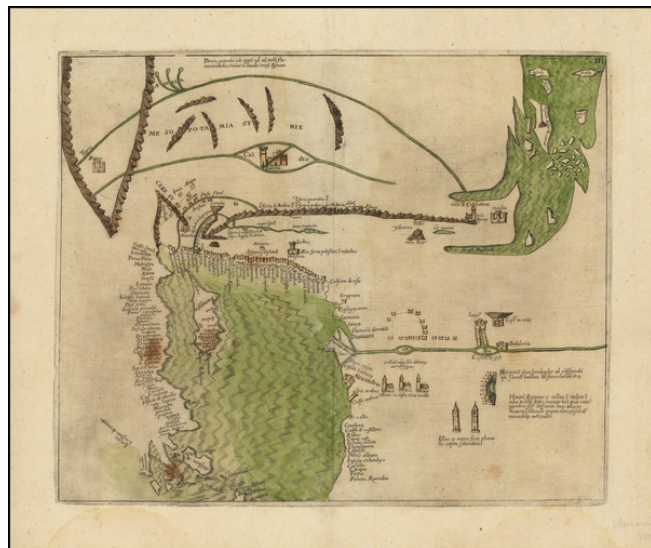
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[Portolan of the Eastern Mediterranean and Levant]

Stock#: 82980
Map Maker: Vesconte / Bongars
Date: 1611
Place: Hanover
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG
Size: 12.5 x 10.5 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Rare Medieval Map of the Levant by Pietro Vesconte

This interesting map of the Levant represents the earliest printed record of a manuscript drawn by Pietro Vesconte, which was presented to Pope John XXII by Marino Sanudo Torsello in 1321, as part of a grand proposal for a new crusade.

Oriented with East at the top, this remarkable medieval map of the Levant extends from Turkey to Mecca and Cairo, and includes a fine early depiction of Medieval Cyprus. The original manuscript map was drawn by Pietro Vesconte sometime between 1318 and 1321. Vesconte was the premier Portolan chartmaker in Venice between about 1310 and 1330, and was the author of the earliest known surviving Portolan chart of the Mediterranean which is signed and dated.

The map appeared in Bongars' *Orientalium expeditionum historia. Gesta Dei per Francos, sive Orientalium expeditionum, et regni Francorum Hierosolimitani historia* (Hanau, 1611). Bongars (1554-1612) was one of the best regarded chroniclers of then surviving medieval texts, including important works dating to the crusades. During his lifetime, he amassed over 500 manuscript works.

The present map is the earliest surviving printed example of the map of the Levant drawn by Pietro Vesconte for Marino Sanudo Torsello's *Liber secretorum fidelium crucis* (Book of Secrets of the Faithful of the Cross), prepared in 1321. Sanudo, a Venetian merchant and statesman, presented the work to Pope John XXII, in order to promote a new Crusade to the Holy Land to take back the lands conquered by



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the Mamaluk rulers of Egypt following the Siege of Acre in 1291.

Pietro Vesconte was a Genoese cartographer and geographer, who was one of the most important and influential makers of Portolan charts. His map of the Levant combines the style of the medieval portolan maps in its treatment of the Eastern Mediterranean, with a stylized medieval depiction of the lands between the coast, Mecca and the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. As noted in the abstract to the work of Stefan Schroeder:

The design of [Vesconte's] . . . differs considerably from other contemporary maps, such as the mappae mundi of Ebstorf and Hereford or the so-called 'situs maps' that present an idealised depiction of the city of Jerusalem. In total, the maps seem to focus on the transmission of geographic rather than religious knowledge, thus conveying the impression of a more 'accurate' view of the physical reality. As a consequence, they have been interpreted as marking the beginning of a new phase in the history of cartography that led towards modern practices of map-making. [However, Schoeder concluded that] . . . Vesconte's maps do not represent a fundamental change concerning religious aspects in the perception of the world, [but instead are the result of a focus on geography] . . . from the use of Arabic- Islamic templates as well as techniques that characterise Portolan charts. Taken together, both features allowed the reader of Sanudo's text to better visualise the author's complex [crusadee] plan. Nevertheless, they did not diminish the maps' potential to make it possible to contemplate God's creation and to follow salvation history, an essential function of pre-modern maps. . . some elements of the maps even introduced new details of religious knowledge.

Rarity

The map is scarce on the market.

AMPR lists only 3 examples in dealer catalogs in the past 30 years.

Detailed Condition:

Hand-colored engraving on laid paper. Some spots of staining, as illustrated.