



The Empire of Prester John in central Africa

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Æthiopia Superior vel Interior; vulgo Abissinorum sive Presbyteri Ioannis Imperium.

Amsterdam, 1640, Latin edition. Original colour. 385 x 505mm.

£600

A decorative map of Eastern Africa with the fictitious kingdom of Prester John, the mythical Christian king. The map shows a wide section of central and eastern Africa including Mozambique north to present day Sudan. Highly embellished with elephants, ostriches and other animals within the map, as well as the decorative cartouche. The two Ptolemaic lakes of Zaire and Zaflan are in the lower portion of the map. Lake Niger, and the supposed course of the Niger River, is shown flowing westward. This map is based on Ortelius' map of Prester John of 1573. The myth of Prester John, the good Christian King of Africa waging his own crusade and defeating the enemies of Christianity, was based upon earlier legends of the Crusaders and is a fascinating piece of early mythological cartographic history

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