



The mythical Kingdom of Prester John

KEERE, Pieter van den.
Abyssinorum sive Pretiosi Joannis Imperium.

Amsterdam: Jan Jansson, 1630. Coloured. 135 x 195mm.

£180

A map of Abyssinia and central Africa, engraved by van den Keere for the Jansson's issue of Mecator/Hondius pocket atlas, the 'Atlas Minor'. The map marks the Kingdom of Prester John, the mythical Christian king descended from David and regarded as an important defence against the barbarians. Originally believed to be somewhere in the Middle East, Pope Alexander III sent John a letter to beg help against the Mongols (1177), but his messenger never returned. As Polo and other travellers opened the East without finding him, Prester John's kingdom retreated into the unknown. Although Waldseemüller's maps of 1507 places him in India, Fries moved him to Africa in 1522. Ortelius followed Fries, and dedicated his map of central Africa to John's son David!

KOEMAN: Me 196.

Stock ID :21955