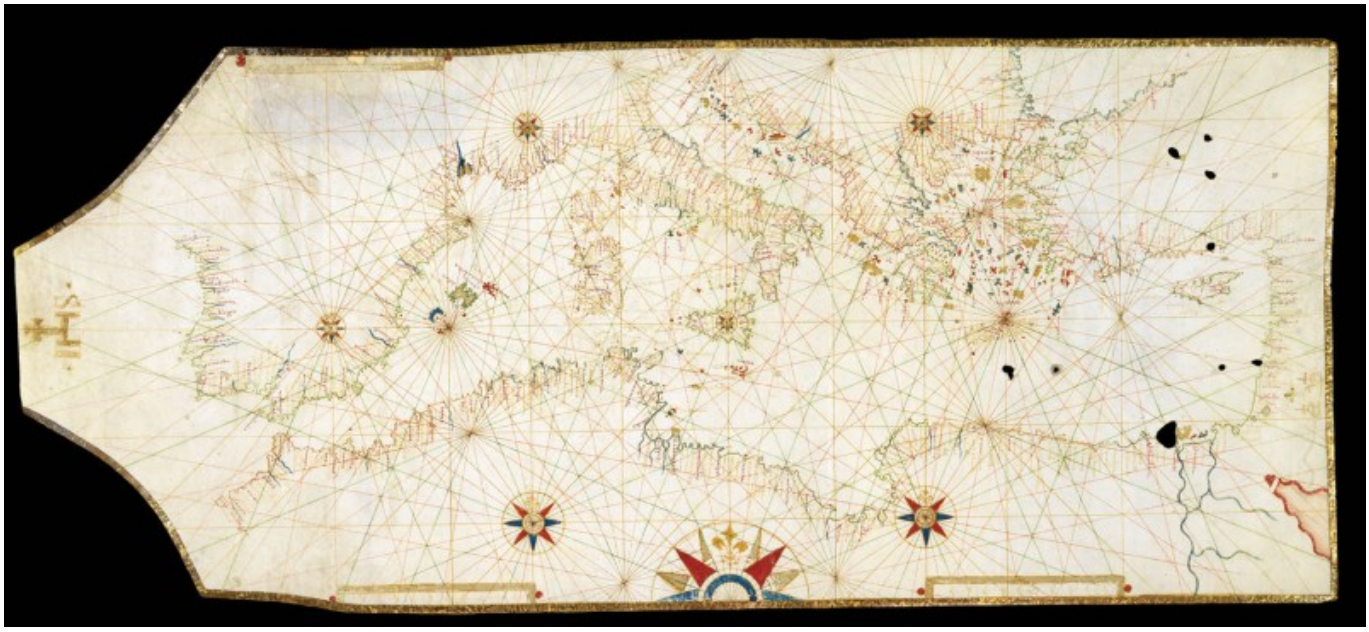


Pen, ink, and wash colour on vellum, extending west to east from Cape Finisterre to the Holy Land, and north to south from the Adriatic to the north coast of Africa, islands in red, blue and gold, rivers in blue, numerous coastal place-names in red and sepia in semi-italic lettering, six large and small compass roses all with fleur-de-lys north points, heightened in gold, Christogram to neck, image of Calvary to the Holy Land, the whole chart divided by red, green, and sepia, rhumb lines extending from the compass roses, gilt borders, scale upper left, lower left and lower right, a few small holes right portion of chart, one to left portion.

A FINE PORTOLAN BY ONE OF THE MOST PROLIFIC CHART MAKERS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN

[Plan des cotes de la mer mediterranee].

Author
[OLIVA, Joan]

Publication date
c1595].

Publisher

Publication place
[?Messina,

Physical description
Pen, ink, and wash colour on vellum, extending west to east from Cape Finisterre to the Holy Land, and north to south from the Adriatic to the north coast of Africa, islands in red, blue and gold, rivers in blue, numerous coastal place-names in red and sepia in semi-italic lettering, six large and small compass roses all with fleur-de-lys north points, heightened in gold, Christogram to neck, image of Calvary to the Holy Land, the whole chart divided by red, green, and sepia, rhumb lines extending from the compass roses, gilt borders, scale upper left, lower left and lower right, a few small holes right portion of chart, one to left portion.

Dimensions

200 by 460mm. (7.75 by 18 inches).

Notes
Finely drawn chart of the Mediterranean attributed to Joan Oliva.

The chart has been attributed to Joan Oliva (fl.1570-1614), a leading member of the Oliva family, a cartographic dynasty who dominated portolan production in Europe during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Charts signed by no fewer than 16 different members of the Oliva family are recorded between 1538 and 1673, and individual members apparently worked throughout the Mediterranean world, as their charts originate from Mallorca, Messina, Naples, Livorno, Florence, Venice, Malta, Palermo, and Marseilles. The exact relationships between the various members are unclear, but Joan appears to have been one of the most prolific and highly regarded. The earliest of his charts were executed in Messina, but he is also recorded as living in Naples as well as Marseilles, where he is thought to have died.

The present chart is a fine example of his work, with liberal use of gold leaf to the compass roses, islands, river mouths, Christogram and border. The coastline and cursive script are all finely drawn, and the whole chart is criss-crossed with lightly drawn rhumb lines. The eastern half bears similar stylistic traits with a signed chart dated 1599, and housed in the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, in Venice. The rendering of both Crete and Cyprus is almost identical, as are the placement of the rhumb lines. In the Holy Land, Calvary is depicted in a similar fashion and there is a small bridge over the tip of the Red Sea.

Bibliography
Richard L. Pflederer, Census of Portolan Charts & Atlases, (privately published, 2009); Pflederer, Finding Their Way at Sea: The Story of Portolan Charts, the Cartographers who Drew Them and the Mariners who Sailed by Them, (Houten: Hes & De Graaf, 2012), 98.

Provenance

Price:

Inventory reference: 11860

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