

Fra Mauro – Cosmographus Incomparabilis

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Abstract

The Fra Mauro map is a map of the world made around 1450 by the Italian cartographer Fra Mauro, which is “considered the greatest memorial of medieval cartography.” It is a circular planisphere drawn on parchment and set in a wooden frame that measures over two by two meters. It includes Asia, the Indian Ocean, Africa, Europe, and the Atlantic. It is oriented with south at the top.

The Fra Mauro world map is a major cartographical work. It took several years to complete and was very expensive to produce. The map contains hundreds of detailed illustrations and more than 3000 descriptive texts. It was the most detailed and accurate representation of the world that had been produced up until that time. As such, the Fra Mauro map is considered one of the most important works in the history of cartography. It marks the end of Bible-based geography in Europe and the beginning of embracing a more scientific way of making maps, placing accuracy ahead of religious or traditional beliefs.

The map was made for the rulers of Venice and Portugal, two of the main seafaring nations of the time. The map is usually on display in the museum Museo Correr in Venice in Italy.

His other famous work is a topographic sketch of a part of western Istria from Poreč to the Lim Channel with its hinterland. It shows the places, roads and boundaries of the property of the monastery of Sv. Mihovil Limski. This is the first large-scale topographic map of a part of Istria.

Keywords: Fra Mauro, world map, Istria, St. Mihovil monastery