



Vesconte World Map

Description: Vesconte Maggiolo is the head of a family of Genoese cartographers active since the early 16th century later, whose charts are highly decorated but delicate at the same time, representing - like all medieval *portolan* charts - the Mediterranean basin. A watercolor parchment (92 x 139 cm) of 1504, kept at the Biblioteca Federiciana in Fano, depicts the lands known in the early 16th century, i.e., immediately after the discovery of the New World. Oceanic islands and coastlines are just outlined while inland geographic information is poor and inaccurate; there are twelve roses of 32 winds, and place names, written in various Mediterranean languages, are in red or black depending on the importance of the places.

His son Jacopo is the author of a chart on parchment kept at the Naval Museum of Genoa, where the representation is extended to the Atlantic coasts of Europe and Africa, with a profusion of decorative elements: roses and scales are simple, but striking is the multitude of colorful tents in Africa and Asia, the number of ships in full sail, the kings seated on thrones in their respective countries, the many vignettes scattered along the coasts, including Genoa, highlighted by a stretch of blue sea.

A contemporary paper by the same author, kept at the Biblioteca Civica Berio in Genoa, is very similar in style, colors, and in the decorative apparatus, which suggests that these late parchment products were by then only intended for amateurs and bibliophiles rather than for mariners.