

SA1210077

A 19th century mezzaro dell'albero vecchio

Price

GBP 2,800

| USD \$3,777 | EUR 3,275

Item Reference: SA1210077

Date of manufacture: 19th Century

Dimensions

Height = 237 cm (93.3")

Width = 180 cm (70.9")

Description

Circa 1840-1850. Probably Genoese. The cotton ground block printed with a tree of life design, the branches heavy with exotic flowers above rising hillocks, and with a variety of animals and birds. The term mezzaro possibly derives from the Arabic 'mi'zar', meaning to cover, and references in 16th century Genoese inventories to a 'mezzaro turchino' and to 'meizari due Indiane' indicate their origin via the thriving oriental commerce of the port. Production of mezzari of the present type had commenced in Genoa by the late 18th century and thrived in the first half of the following century. Although they must have served a variety of purposes, contemporary images show women wearing them as shawls, often attached at the crown of their heads with a silver clasp (a method which had the effect that, in many cases, the cotton is weak or damaged at the centre). They were made to set designs, the majority inspired by Indian palampores and giving prominence to a central flowering tree. The name of each type of mezzaro is taken from a distinguishing feature of the design and, as is the case with several others, the name for this variation, the 'mezzaro of the old tree', is known fr...

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