



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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[World]

Stock#: 31044
Map Maker: Reisch
Date: 1503
Place: Freiburg
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 16 x 12.5 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

First edition of Gregor Reisch's untitled map of the World, widely regarded as the first printed map to provide information concerning Columbus' discoveries in the New World.

This is the 1st of 4 world maps by Reisch, which appeared in his *Margarita Philosophica*, first published in Freiburg in 1503. As noted by Suarez in *Shedding The Veil* (p. 36), the map includes "the first hint of Columbus' discoveries on a printed map. Though Ptolemaic in its geographic content, this map contains a legend which alludes to the discovery of the New World. The legend appears on the Ptolemaic landbridge connecting Southeast Asia to Africa. It states, in Latin, that *here there is not land but sea, in which there are such islands not known to Ptolemy.*" The islands to which Reisch refers may be either Australasia, the Spice Islands, or most likely, the Caribbean, as Columbus had sailed west in search of a navigable trade route to Asia and was then actively promoting his strongly held belief that he had made landfall in the South China Sea, still unaware that he had in fact discovered a new western continent. Hence, the location of the note concerning the discovery of the New World in the landbridge is consistent with Columbus' belief that he had made contact with the islands off the coast of Asia.

In addition to the important reference to Columbus' discoveries, the map is also widely recognized as the first map to incorporate a scale of measurements for longitude and latitude, a landmark scientific advance. The map is embellished 12 lively windheads, one of which includes what is believed to be the first printed depiction of eyeglasses. The stylized windheads are a significant departure from the traditional cherubic faces normally scene on 15th Century printed maps.

Reisch studied at the University of Freiburg in 1487 and received the degree of magister in 1489. Following his matriculation, he entered the Carthusian Order. From 1500 to 1502, he was prior at Klein-



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Basel, and from 1503 to shortly before his death he was prior at Freiburg. Reisch was confessor of Maximilian I. In his travels, he became friends with the most celebrated Humanists of the time, e.g., Erasmus, Wimpfeling, Beatus, Rheanus, Udalricus Zasius, and the celebrated preacher, Geiler of Kaisersberg. Reisch developed a good reputation for adaptability and his knowledge was so broad and profound he became regarded as an "oracle." His *Margarita Philosophica* was the first modern encyclopedia to appear in print and a landmark in the history of modern science. Constructed as a dialog between teacher and student, for university curriculum, it provides an overview of many subjects. Reisch divides the text into twelve books, (1) Grammar, (2) Dialectic, (3) Rhetoric, (4) Arithmetic, (5) Music, (6) Geometry, (7) Astronomy, (8) Principles of Nature Philosophy (de principiis rerum naturalium), (9) Origin of Natural Objects (de origine rerum naturalium) containing references to minerals, metals and mining, (9) Psychology, (10) Logic, and (12) Ethics. Alexander von Humboldt said of Reisch's book that it had "for a half-century, aided in a remarkable manner the spread of knowledge".

Detailed Condition:

Minor discoloration at one fold. Trimmed at right edge, just affecting one windhead.