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Amasonia (with Amazons!)

Stock#: 34461
Map Maker: Schedel

Date: 1493
Place: Nuremberg
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 10 x 17 inches

Price: SOLD



Description:

Fascinating city view of Amasonia (apparently a city in Albania), with images of the fabled Amazon women.

Hartmann Schedel's *Liber Chronicarum: Das Buch der Croniken und Geschichten* (commonly referred to as the Nuremberg Chronicle, based upon the city of its publication), was the first secular book to include the style of lavish illustrations previously reserved for Bibles and other liturgical works. The work was intended as a history of the World, from Creation to 1493, with a final section devoted to the anticipated Last Days of the World. It is without question the most important illustrated secular work of the 15th Century and its importance rivals the early printed editions of Ptolemy's Geographia and Bernard von

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Breydenbach's Perengrinatio in Terram Sanctam in terms of its importance in the development and dissemination of illustrated books in the 15th Century.

Published in Nuremberg by Anton Koberger, the book was printed in Latin and 5 months later in German (translated by George Alt), and enjoyed immense commercial success. A reduced size version of the book was published in 1497 in Augsburg by Johann Schonsperger. The illustration for Venice is adapted from the larger illustration of Venice in Breydenbach's Peregrinatio, which was illustrated by Dutch artist Erhard Reuwich, who was working in Mainz in the 1480s. Schedel's view of Florence is one of the earliest obtainable views of the City and realistically the only large format 15th Century illustration available to collectors. The view is an adaptation of Francesco Rosselli's now lost six-sheet engraving of Florence, which is believed to have been engraved sometime between 1471 and 1482, known only through a single woodcut copy in the Kupferstichkabinett of Berlin. Rosselli is perhaps best known as the cartographer responsible for the Contarini-Rosselli World Map of 1506 (the first map to depict America, based upon information derived from Columbus) and his world map of 1508, the first depiction of the World in an Oval Projection, which includes a depiction of the Southern Continent which may have been the influence for the world maps of Piri Reis (1513), Lopo Homem (1519) and Juan Vespucci (1524).

Hartmann Schedel was a prominent physician and writer, who assembled one of the largest private book collections of the 15th Century. Schedel's work is illustrated by over 1800 woodcut images by Michael Wohlgemut (1434-1519) and his stepson Wilhelm Pleydenwurff (1460-1494). Wohlgemut, an important painter and xylographer, is perhaps best known as having been an early teacher of Albrecht Durer, who apprenticed in Wohlgemut's workshop from 1486 to 1489. It is believed that Durer was involved in the production of several of the illustrations in Schedel's *Liber Chronicarum*, as work on the illustrations commenced during the period when Durer was apprenticing with Wohlegut and a study of several of the illustrations suggests they may have been drawn by Durer, who would have prepared the drawings used as forms for the craftsmen who cut the woodblocks.

While the majority of the illustrations in the book include images of the various saints, royalty, nobles and contemporary clergy, the work is perhaps best known for the large format views of a number of the major European Cities, including Rome, Venice, Paris, Vienna, Florence, Genoa, Saltzburg, Crakow, Breslau, Budapest, Prague, and major cities in the Middle East, including Jerusalem, Alexandria, Constantipole, as well as a number of cities in what would become the German Empire. The work also included a magnificent double page map of the World, a large map of Europe and several famous illustrations, including the "Dance of Death," and scenes from the Creation and the Last Judgement. While many of the double-page city views are less than accurate illustrations of the cities as they existed at the end of the 15th Century, the illustrations are of great importance in the iconographic history of each of the cities depicted. Some of the double-page views were also apparently offered separately for sale, including some

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which had been colored prior to sale.

Schedel based his World map upon the contemporary editions of Ptolemy, omitting Scandinavia, southern Africa and the Far East, and depicting the Indian Ocean as landlocked. The depiction of the World is surrounded by the figures of Shem, Japhet and Ham, and the sons of Noah, who re-populated the Earth after the Flood. On the left, printed from a separate block, are pictures of various mythical creatures, based upon classical and early mediaeval travellers' accounts, including "a six-armed man, possibly based on a file of Hindu dancers so aligned that the front figure appears to have multiple arms; a six-fingered man, a centaur, a four-eyed man from a coastal tribe in Ethiopia; a dog-headed man from the Simien Mountains, a cyclops, one of those men whose heads grow beneath their shoulders, one of the crook-legged men who live in the desert and slide along instead of walking; a strange hermaphrodite, a man with one giant foot only (stated by Solinus to be used a parasol but more likely an unfortunate sufferer from elephantisis), a man with a huge underlip (doubtless seen in Africa), a man with waist-length hanging ears, and other frightening and fanciful creatures of a world beyond." The World map also includes a large island off the west coast of Africa, which may relate to the account of Martin Behaim's voyage to the region, which is referenced by Schedel in the text.

In 1552, Schedel's grandson, Melchior Schedel, sold about 370 manuscripts and 600 printed works from Hartmann Schedel's library to the noted 16th Century Collector Johann Jakob Fugger. Fugger later sold his library to Duke Albert V of Bavaria in 1571. This library, one of the largest formed by an individual in the 15th century, is now mostly preserved in the Bayerische Staasbibliothek in Munich. Among the surviving portions of Schedel's libary are the records for the publication of the work, including Schedel's contract with Koberger for the publication of the work and the financing of the work by Sebald Schreyer and Sebastian Kammermeister, as well as the contracts with Wohlgemut and Pleydenwurff for the original artworks and engravings. The collection also includes the original manuscript copies of the work in Latin and German.

Detailed Condition:
Minor soiling.