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Secunda etas mundi (World Map Before Discovery of America)

Stock#: 74844
Map Maker: Schedel
Date: 1493
Place: Nuremberg
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG
Size: 20 x 14.5 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

One of the Earliest Obtainable World Maps, and one of the Most Visually Evocative of its Time

A fine example of Hartmann Schedel's map of the World, from the German edition of his *Liber Chronicum*. This world map, published only a year after Columbus's discovery of the Americas, shows the Old World in a marvelous Ptolemaic projection.

Schedel's map is one of the earliest obtainable world maps, and, visually, one of the most evocative of its period. Published just forty years after the invention of printing, Schedel's map presents the world as seen just prior to Columbus' voyage and the rounding of the Cape of Good Hope by Dias.

The general contours of the map primarily show the influence of the most important geographical work of antiquity, Ptolemy's *Geographia*, which had been forgotten during the Middle Ages. However, some of the map's tendencies reveal the work to be distinctly medieval: the Indian Ocean is shown in its land-locked, pre-discovery state, for example. The inclusion of illustrations of Japhet, Shem, and Ham (the sons of Noah who re-populated the earth after the Flood) in the corners suggests the theology-centered medieval view of the world. Also on the map is the familiar decorative motif of the twelve wind-heads that is found on many early printed world maps. The 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.

The engraving reveals the medieval attitude toward peoples of distant lands through the grotesque creatures found on the left side of the map as well as the verso; these creatures were believed to inhabit



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unexplored areas. This helps to explain the ease with which Europeans were able to demonize indigenous peoples they encountered in the New World. These engravings are based on early medieval travelers' accounts. Shirley, in his *The Mapping of the Early World*, describes the some of the figures as such:

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 elephantiasis), 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.

Editions

The first edition of the map can be distinguished by the inclusion of Latin text (rather than German) and by the placement of the map on the sheet (the Latin edition has the map at the top, with the text at the bottom, the German has the opposite).

This is the Latin first edition.

Detailed Condition:

Wide margins. Restoration at centerfold with some minor reinstatement in facsimile where the map was originally stitched. Presents as VG+