



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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Imagines Coeli Meridionales

Stock#: 41758
Map Maker: Durer
Date: 1515 (1867)
Place: n.p.
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG+
Size: 24.5 x 22.5 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Fine example of the 1867 lithographic printing of Albrecht Dürer's map of the Southern sky.

Albrecht Dürer's celestial maps of the southern and northern hemispheres are the earliest maps of the celestial hemispheres to have been engraved using meaningful scientific accuracy. First engraved in 1515, the charts were highly accurate for the period, combining accuracy of starplacement with classical constellation figures.

The charts are a fine blend of ancient and modern information, incorporating information from Aratus of Cilician Soli (315-240 BC), Claudius Ptolemy (90-168 AD), Marcus Manilius (1st Century AD) and Abd al-Rahman Al-Sufi (903-986 AD), whose images appear in the outer corners of the Northern Hemispheric map. Dürer was in fact an avid astronomer, with an observatory atop his house in Nuremberg. as noted by Patrick Hunt:

... Dürer ... shows these astronomers with appropriate astronomical accoutrements: each is holding a sky globe, but Ptolemy has an added pair of measuring divider calipers, and Marcus Manilius also holds a book open to calibrate his measurements to known data.



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Dürer's companion Meridionales (Southern Hemisphere) woodcut has fewer constellations because this part of the sky had not yet been much mapped out by Europeans, since this was only the beginning of the Age of Exploration in the Renaissance. Primary identified constellations along the unfinished mapping of the southern sky, falsely appearing like a less crowded portion of the Milky Way, include the Argonavis (the ship of the heroic Argonauts sailing vast unknown seas), Centaurus, Canis major, Canis minor and of course Orion, mostly seen in the Northern Hemisphere in winter. Ridpath points out that Marcus Manilius (one of Dürer's astronomers) compared the Milky Way "to the luminous wake of a ship", which is fitting here in that the ship Argo plies it. Also noteworthy at top left is the heraldic blason of Cardinal Matthäus Lang von Wellenburg surmounted by the distinctive red cardinal's hat. Lang also later became Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg. Stabius (Stöberer) is also acknowledged as the creator of the accompanying cordiform projection that later bears Johannes Werner's name, the Werner Projection, although he credited Stabius. Dürer's own heraldry follows that of Stabius and Heinfogel at bottom left.

Dürer produced these charts under the patronage of Emperor Maximilian I and Cardinal Matthäus Lang von Wellenburg of Salzburg, in cooperation with Maximilian's Royal Astronomer, mapmaker mathematician and court historian Johannes Stabius (1460?-1522) and the astronomer Konrad Heinfogel (1455-1517) of Nuremberg, who made the astronomical calculations. Only a few examples of the 1515 printing are known to survive, although Dürer's original plates survived in the 18th Century, when they re-used for the first time in 1781.

The present example was printed by the R. von Retberg, a noted Dürer collector and researcher. Retberg published the Celestial maps in an edition of 25 as presents for friends and other collectors.

Detailed Condition: