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[World Before Columbus]

Stock#: 101881
Map Maker: Ptolemy / Reger
Date: 1482 - 1486
Place: Ulm
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG+
Size: 22 x 16 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

The Ulm Ptolemy World Map -- First World Map Printed North of the Alps and First To Appear in Original Color

Finely colored example of the Ulm Ptolemy map of the world, perhaps the most famous and highly sought of all fifteenth-century world maps and certainly the most decorative.

The Ulm edition of Ptolemy's *Geographia*, which included this iconic pre-Columbian map of the world, was first published in 1482 by Lienhart Holle. This is the first map of the world printed north of the Alps and the first to appear in color applied by the publisher and the first to show modern discoveries not described by Ptolemy. In contrast to the two previous illustrated editions - Bologna (1477) and Rome (1478) - the maps in the Ulm edition are woodblock prints, not copperplate engravings. This is also the earliest world map signed by its engraver, Johanne Schnitzer. Schnitzer, also known as Johann the blockcutter, came from Armsheim, Germany. While this map is signed, others of his are not but can be identified by the backwards capital 'N' which he reverses in his woodcuts.

The maps in the Ulm edition were drawn from the manuscript maps of Donnus Nicolaus Germanus, a Benedictine monk from Breslau who produced brilliant presentation examples of Ptolemy's *Geographia* for Italian bibliophiles in the 1460s and 1470s. Specifically, the 1482 Ulm was patterned after the manuscript atlas prepared by Germanus for Pope Paul II.

While Ptolemaic in its basic construction, the Ulm world map includes more recent information in Scandinavia, based upon Claudius Clavius's map of 1427. In addition, the map includes the earliest printed depiction of the Polar Seas (Mare Glaciale) and "Glacias" (also referenced at "Glacialis Insula" in



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late 15th centuries texts), which some commentators have identified as an unknown Arctic Land (Sigurðsson 1971, 83-84). Curiously however, the Portuguese discoveries in Africa are omitted. The map retains a closed Indian Ocean, with a land bridge or unknown Southern Continent connecting Asia and Africa. Twelve wind-heads ring the map, each of which is named.

The Ulm Ptolemy was the first book Holle published, but it was also to be one of his last. Holle went bankrupt shortly after the original publication. The work was then taken over by Johann Reger, who issued another edition in 1486. The brilliant blue of the 1482 maps, made from crushed lapis lazuli, was replaced by a brown color in the 1486 making the 1482 copies beautifully distinct.

Detailed Condition:

Original hand-color, substantially retouched and augmented. Bottom margin expertly extended from just around the neatline.