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AN INCUNABLE PROSPECT OF PRAGUE

£1,450.00

Praga.

Cartographer SCHEDEL, D. Hartmann.

Date 1493

Stock #: 24451

Publication: Nuremberg, Anton Koberger, 1493, Latin text edition. Coloured woodcut, image 190 x 495mm, set in a page of text.

Condition: Restoration to binding stitches at centre fold, as usual, slightly trimmed at top, affecting page titles and pagination.

DESCRIPTION:

An early prospect of Prague, one of the double-page views from the famous 'Nuremberg Chronicle'. On the reverse are seven more coloured woodcuts, including a religious burning, locusts and the comet of 1351. The Liber Chronicarum, or Nuremberg Chronicle, was the most extensively illustrated printed book of the fifteenth century: many of the 646 woodcuts by Michael Wohlgemut and his stepson Wilhelm Pleydenwurff (both of whom are mentioned, very unusually, in the colophon of the Chronicle) were used more than once, so there are a total of 1,809 illustrations, including the double-page maps of the world and Europe. However, as the young Albrecht Durer (the publisher Kolberger's godson) was apprenticed to Wolgemut from 1486-1489, some of the plates, particularly the Last Judgement, have been tentatively ascribed to him.

The text, by Hartmann Schedel (1440-1514), a Nuremberg doctor and humanist, consists of a year-by-year account of notable events in world history from the creation down to the year of publication. It is a mixture of fact and fantasy, recording events like the invention of printing, but also repeating stories from Herodotus. Even the world map is decorated with strange beings from the far reaches, including a cyclops and a four-eyed man. However, of particular importance is the inclusion of contemporary events, for example the invention of printing, Wycliffe's heresy, and the exploration of Africa and the Atlantic.

It is estimated that this first edition, published on 12th July, consisted of 1400-1500 examples; the vernacular edition of 23rd December the same year consisted of 700-1000.