



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

7407 La Jolla Boulevard
La Jolla, CA 92037

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(858) 551-8500
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(Map of Florida, Caribbean, South America, &c)

Stock#: 46666
Map Maker: Martyr d'Anghiera
Date: 1511
Place:
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 10.5 x 7.5 inches
Price: Not Available



Description:

The First Printed Map of the New World. A Legendary Rarity.

Fine example of Peter Martyr d'Anghiera's map of the Caribbean, Burden One, the first printed map of the New World.

This extremely rare map is the first dedicated solely to the New World, and records on it the information gathered on the earliest American explorations. Stretching from Florida to the River Essequibo in the south and to Panama and the Yucatan in the west, the map provides an unparalleled picture of European (particularly Spanish) knowledge of the Western Hemisphere less than two decades after the its discovery by Christopher Columbus.

The map is the work of Peter Martyr d'Anghiera, and was published in only one of two known editions of his *Legatio Babylonica* of 1511. The map was compiled with information received from voyages up to around 1508, and is the first graphic record of the discovery of many places, including Florida, Bermuda, the Yucatan.

Martyr was born in Arona on the western border of Lake Maggiore in 1455. He was born to a prestigious Milanese family that was originally from the to of Anghiera. In 1477 he left for Rome to join the priesthood. While there he met the Castilian ambassador, the Count of Tendilla, and returned to Spain with him. There he joined the Court of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella from whom he received several honoring commissions. In 1494, he was made tutor to the royal children. In 1501 he was sent to Egypt on a diplomatic mission to the sultan.



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He was a royal counsellor on matters related to the Indies and was on the Council of the Indies, which gave him unparalleled access to the secret information about the New World. He recorded much of this in his *De Orbe Novo*. That work took the form of a series of letters and reports on the explorations of the New World, which was later anthologized. Martyr was closely acquainted with the foremost explorers of the time including Columbus, de Gama, Magellan, Cabot, and Vespucci. He died in 1525 and was buried in the cathedral of Granada.

The Peter Martyr Map and the Discovery of Florida

One of the more intriguing aspects of the Martyr map is its inclusion of a reef and archipelago north of Cuba and a large coastline still farther north. This has been taken by many as evidence of the discovery of Florida, predating the official discovery by Ponce de Leon in 1513.

Writing at the end of the 19th century, Henry Harrisse cogently explained why Florida must have been discovered before the official voyage of Ponce de Leon. According to his reasoning, Castilian pilots would have known of the existence of a large land mass to the northwest of Cuba, not just from the maps of Juan de la Cosa, but also from Portuguese charts of the Caribbean. Harrisse points out that it would have extremely unlikely that maps showing a continent to the north and west of Florida were available in Italy and Germany, but that they would not have been known in Spain.

Harrisse explains:

The first positive mention of countries to the west of the Lucayas islands visited by Spanish mariners about that time, is to be found in the map which accompanies certain issues of the first edition of certain works of Peter Martyr, published at Seville in 1511.

The reasons of a geographical character which prompted such attempts can easily be ascertained. The Castilian pilots knew of the existence of a north-western continent, not only by the great maps of Juan de la Cosa, but also by Portuguese charts; for it is impossible that mappamundi of the type of Cantino and Canerio, which could be so easily obtained in Lisbon, and circulated in Italy and Germany, should have remained unknown to the Spaniards. The land, however, which haunted their imagination was supposed to be of a different type altogether, as the probability is that, with the conception of the value of things then prevalent, what they knew of our east coast was but little alluring to adventurers who were only in search of gold, pearls, and spice. They seem to have been led by the hope of discovering a number of imaginary islands, of which the Lucayan archipelago had given them a foretaste and idea, but



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surmised to be richer. And it was in their repeated endeavours to reach those insular regions that several bold mariners before Ponce de Leon, and afterwards that navigator himself, landed in Florida, which they then, and for a number of years, considered to be a mere island, though of vast size.

But a distinction must be established at the outset. Different points of the Floridean [sic] peninsula were thus explored; these the Spanish pilots and cartographers believed to belong to separate islands. The "Isla Bimini", "Bimene," or "Beniny;," which seems to correspond with the most southern part of our Florida, was first seen and named, according to current information derived from the Lucayan Indians.

On the verso of the present map, Martyr wrote an epistle addressing Cardinal Ximenez. In it he expounded on the need to illustrate the text with a map. Importantly it includes the following allusion to the discovery of Florida:

"Ad septentrionem vero miras etiam terras micosque tractus reperunt quorum vestigia cerne dextrorsuz sculpta." That is: "At the north there have been discovered marvellous countries and lands, of which, on the recto [of the present leaf] see the engraved representation."

It is particularly noteworthy that Martyr chose definite language to denote the *actual* discovery of these lands and to underline that his mapping represented a real place.

Both Las Casas and Herrera note that voyages to the lands north of Cuba and Lucayan archipelago happened around 1511 and that the knowledge of these voyages helped spur Ponce de Leon to explore the region. Later writing by Peter Martyr add some confusion to the precise dating of those voyages, which he seems to say happened after 1520. The most cogent appraisal of the available evidence is the aforementioned quoted from Harris.

Given his position in the Spanish court, Martyr had access to the most up to date information and rumors available to the Spanish, and through his sources, what was also known to the other European powers at the time. Douglas Peck highlights the regard with which this information was held, not only by Martyr, but also by Ponce de Leon:

Peter Martyr, a learned historian and cosmographer in the Spanish court, undoubtedly had access to all the knowledge and reports from the Spanish discoveries, from spies, and from Portuguese, French, and English expeditions. Ponce de Leon probably did not have a copy of this map, but, as an aristocratic conquistador, he had access to the same sources of information used by Martyr to draw his map. The Martyr map was among the latest knowledge



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available at the time of Ponce de Leon's planned voyage, and it became a graphic picture of the "news" of which he spoke. The large land mass north of Cuba, labeled on the Martyr map as the "Isla de Beimeni parte," was the Islands of Beniny and was Ponce de Leon's goal according to his patent.

Most importantly, the geography presented by Martyr is very good; while Florida is a bit wider than it is in reality, its placement vis-a-vis Cuba is correct, and the islands north of Cuba surely represent the Florida Keys and Cay Sal Bank.

Alonso de Ojeda and the North Coast of South America

Peter Martyr's information from along the northern coast of South America is derived from the 1499-1502 voyage of Alonso de Ojeda, among others. The Spanish navigator set sail from Hispaniola, making landfall at Coquivacoa in Venezuela, from there he made his way southeast along the coast as far as the mouth of the Essequibo, where he turned out into the Atlantic and headed back to Spain. Substantial information was also gathered through Columbus's third voyage.

Juan Diaz de Solis and the Yucatan

There has been considerable doubt over the veracity of the depiction of the Yucatan in the Peter Martyr map; so much so that a near-consensus has arisen describing his image as a fancy, some representation of India or another part of Asia. This is strange, however, considering the Martyr map's geography is quite good; he depicts two groups of islands off the eastern coast, one likely the Turneffe Atoll, the other more northerly one, Cozumel. The Roatán Islands are also depicted off the north Honduran coast; they are labeled "guanasa" close to the present-day Guanaja, and possibly deriving from the archipelago's original association with India and the Ganges. These islands were visited first by Columbus during his fourth voyage.

The doubt over Martyr's depiction hinges on the assumption that the Yucatan was not discovered by Europeans until Francisco Hernández de Córdoba's slaving voyage of 1517. In reality the Yucatan had been visited at least twice before; first on Columbus' fourth voyage, and second on the 1505-07 explorations of Juan Diaz de Solis, who rounded the tip of the Yucatan and made it as far on the northern coast as Rio Lagartos.



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Perhaps the best evidence of a genuine discovery of the Yucatan is Martyr's labeling the northern coast "baya de lagartos". It is established that Juan Diaz de Solis sailed west from Hispaniola to the so-called Golfo Dulce and northward from there around the tip of the Yucatan to Rio Lagartos on the north shore, in the years 1506-07. It is difficult to imagine how this information would have arisen on Martyr's map if it had not been reported from an authoritative source.

Christopher Columbus and the Central American Coast

Martyr incorporates knowledge from all of Columbus's voyages into his map. Columbus was responsible for the discoveries along the Central American, mainly Panamanian, coast shown here, as well as some of the places labeled along the northern South American coast (which had also been visited by others).

The western edge of Central America is not depicted, as it was not until not until 1513 that the first European, Vasco Núñez de Balboa, reached the Pacific and claimed it, and all of its shores, for the Spanish Crown.

Rarity

In 1511, Ferdinand II of Aragon issued a decree strictly controlling the dissemination of the map, and specifically forbidding it from falling into foreign hands. This, no doubt, contributed considerably to its present-day rarity.

Harrisse asserts that the map was possibly included in the *First Decade* after that book's publication, in much the same way that Hall map of Virginia was inserted in *Historia Mundi* after the actual date of publication. If this is true, it might be a factor contributing to the rarity.

Places Depicted

Peter Martyr was perfectly positioned to compile information from actual explorations of the Caribbean. We know from an appraisal of the toponyms included on the map that Martyr relied on numerous authoritative sources. The following is a catalog of named places on the Peter Martyr map and their respective voyages of discovery:



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Bermuda, here "la bermuda", was discovered by Juan Bermudez in 1505.

Puerto Rico appears as "sant juá", it was discovered and named San Juan Bautista by Christopher Columbus during his second voyage in 1493.

Hispaniola was discovered and named on Columbus's first voyage in 1492. Here it is named "isla española." The coastal detail is fine enough that Gonâve Island is shown.

The Cayman Islands are shown but not labeled. They were discovered by Columbus in 1503.

The Bahamas [i.e., the Lucayan archipelago] are labeled "los lucaios." and are shown in remarkable detail, they were first seen by Columbus in 1492, during his first voyage.

Florida appears under the name "isla de beimeni parte.", it is said to have been named and reported to the Spanish as an archipelago by Lucayan Indians. Its definitive discovery is referenced by Peter Martyr on the verso of this map. The information may have come from an unofficial circa 1507-08 slaving expedition. Ponce de Leon was aware of the same reports, and they contributed to his exploration of the area.

Cuba is here written as "isla de cuba." The insularity of Cuba was officially established with the island's 1508 circumnavigation, which was ordered by Sebastian de Ocampo. Peter Martyr says it was known that Cuba was an island before 1500, this is in keeping with the early manuscript map record.

Jamaica, here "iamaica." was discovered on Columbus's second voyage in 1494.

The most northwesterly location labeled on the map is "baya de lagartos", conforming with the location of Rio Lagartos in the northern Yucatan. Juan Diaz de Solis sailed up the eastern coast of the Yucatan and turned inward exploring to this point 1506 or 1507.

The Roatán Islands are labelled "guanasa", they were discovered on Columbus's fourth voyage.

Cabo Gracias de Dios [i.e., "c. gra de dios."] perhaps corresponds to the area of the future settlement of Nombre de Dios, the location for which was discovered on Columbus' fourth voyage.

Almirante Bay is depicted as a large bay with an integral archipelago. It is labeled "abruema" and was discovered on Columbus's fourth voyage.

Veragua is here labeled "beragua." this region was discovered during Columbus's fourth voyage, in 1502-03, and was later unsuccessfully claimed as his personal domain.



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Cape Tiburon, on the present-day border between Colombia and Panama, is called "el marmol", so named by Columbus in 1502-03.

The reference to "taricue" may be related to Darien, but this is tenuous. In the amended facsimile (see following note) the name is changed to "tariene", confusing the relationship.

Bastidas and Juan de la Cosa sailed in the Golfo de Uraba, here "uraba" in 1500-1502.

Cabo de la Vela, Colombia is shown as "c. de la vela." and was seen by Ojeda, Cosa, and Vespucci on their voyage of 1499-1502.

Coquivacoa, in Northern Venezuela, is here called "equibacoa". Alonso de Ojeda arrived on the South American coast at this point during his 1502 explorations, but it was seen before then as well.

It has been suggested that Isla de Cubagua, Colombia is shown here as "g. de las plas". This area was mapped by Ojeda, Cosa, and Vespucci in 1499-1500.

Isla de Margarita, "la margarita", was named on Columbus's third voyage in 1498.

The Gulf of Paria, "g. de paria", was discovered on Columbus's third voyage.

It seems most probable that "isla verde" is Tobago, although it could also be Grenada; both were sighted on Columbus's third voyage.

Martyr's "la trinidad" [i.e., Trinidad] was discovered on Columbus's third voyage in 1498.

Martyr's "r. grande" [i.e., Rio Grande] is probably the Orinoco River, discovered on Columbus's third voyage in 1498.

Martyr's "cap de cruz" probably represents the northern bank of the Essequibo River, which Alonso de Ojeda discovered around 1502.

Note

There is an obvious facsimile of the map which has been used by several scholars in their analysis. Unfortunately the facsimile significantly changes some of the toponyms, apparently in an attempt to clarify them. It is possible that the facsimile refers to another, as yet unidentified state of the map, but so far we



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have found no originals with names matching those on the facsimile.

Institutional copies:

British Library

Dallas Pratt Collection, American Museum, Bath, England

Huntington Library

James Ford Bell, University of Minnesota

John Carter Brown Library, Brown University

John Work Garrett Library, Johns Hopkins University

Lilly Library, Indiana University Bloomington

Newberry Library

New York Public Library

Osher Collection

Palacio Real, Madrid

Seminario de San Carlos de Zaragoza, Spain

References:

Church (1907) no. 35

Harris (1866) no. 66

Harris (1892) page 474



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Nebenzahl (1990) page 60

Schumacher, (1879), Petrus Martyr, der Geschichtsschreiber des Weltmeeres

Skelton (1960), page 59

Suarez (1992), page 58

Vindel (1955)

Winsor (1884), page 12

Walter and Doneghy (1950), pages 209-210

Detailed Condition:

Trimmed at right, with slight loss of image.