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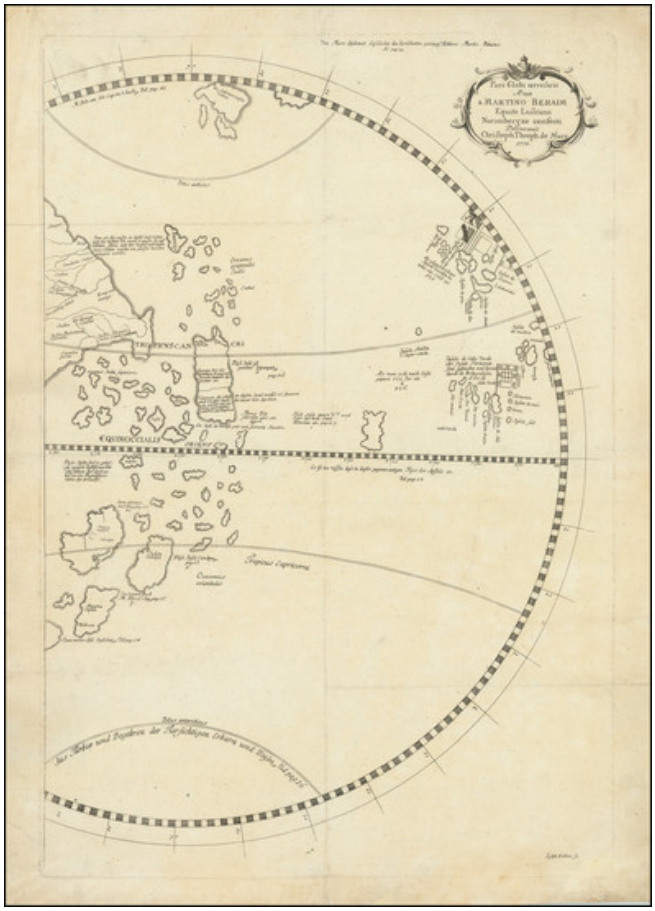
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Pars Globi terrestris Ao. 1492 a Martino Behaim Equite Lusitano Norimbergae confecti Delineavit Christoph. Theoph de Murr 1778

Stock#: 89803
Map Maker: de Murr

Date: 1778
Place: Gotha
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 16 x 23 inches

Price: $ 1,800.00



Description:

Engraved Map Depicting a Section of Martin Behaim's Globe of 1492, Oldest Globe in the World

Extremely rare map illustrating the "western" section of Martin Behaim's globe of 1492, the oldest surviving globe in the world. It shows the region from Madeira and Grand Canary Island to China and Java Major; America conspicuously, to the modern eye, is absent. The map is filled with fantastic and fantastical details; for example, in the far west are islands, the Manilas, with a note that says they can't sailed by ships containing iron, as they will be affected by extreme magnetism.

Even without America, which was contacted by Columbus in the same year this globe was made, there are several remarkable features on the map. To the east, at the right side, are well-known islands, including

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the Azores, the Cape Verdes, and Madeira. Go a little farther west, however, and the reader finds *Insula Antilia*. During the fifteenth century, this island was believed by geographers to be somewhere in the Atlantic, west of the Iberian Peninsula. Also called the Island of Seven Cities, as this map says, the island came from an Iberian legend dating from the time of the Muslim Conquest in the eighth century. Supposedly, seven Catholic bishops set out in ships to the west to flee the Muslim invaders; they settled on Antilia. The island first appeared on a portolan chart in 1424 and continued to be shown until the 1490s, when the more frequent traffic of ships across the Atlantic called its existence into question.

Another unknown island to modern eyes is that of St. Brendan, a large island just west of the Cape Verde. The map says, "The year of 565 St. Brendan arrived with his ship to this island." St. Brendan was the founder of the Clonfert monastery and school in Ireland. St. Brendan set out across the seas not to flee Muslims, like the Spanish bishops, but to convert souls. His flock and he were said to have found this island on their travels. The island was first mentioned in a ninth-century text, from where the story entered into folklore. The idea was revived in the fourteenth century under the exploration-supporting Henry the Navigator and appeared on many fifteenth century charts and maps.

The influence of Marco Polo

Travelling farther west, across a narrow ocean, one comes to Cipangu, or Japan. Due to limited information about the Spice Islands, Behaim claimed that Cipangu was the "richest island in the Orient in spices and fine gems. There is gold." Cipangu "has a particular King, a particular language, and they love idols," he continues. To the north are forests bearing nutmeg and pepper, and mermaids are supposed to swim in the waters to the east. All of this information is drawn from Marco Polo's travels, which are cited throughout the map.

Marco Polo (1254-1324) travelled throughout Asia in the late thirteenth century. After 24 years abroad, he returned to Venice in 1295. Soon thereafter, he was captured in a war with Genoa. While in jail, Polo dictated his travels to a romance writer, Rustichello, who spread the story around Europe. It was Polo who described Cipangu and Cathai, the Chinese coastline shown here.

Polo also mentioned two islands, Java Mayor and Java Minor, which were in the East Indies. Here, both islands seem relatively small. However, a printing error in the 1532 editions of Polo's *Travels* (Paris and Basel) called Java Minor the largest island in the world. Thereafter, mapmakers conflated the island with the Southern Continent, *Terra Australis Incognita*.

Martin Behaim and the "earth apple"

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Martin Behaim (ca. 1459-1507) was a Nuremberg merchant, mathematician, and geographer. Trained as a young boy in mathematics, Martin later travelled Western Europe as a merchant's apprentice and then served as an apprentice weaver in Flanders. In the 1480s he sought out Lisbon and the court of King John II. The King was impressed with his mathematical skills and joined the King's council of mathematicians in 1483. In this capacity, Behaim tested and demonstrated navigational equipment such as the cross-staff. From 1485 to 1486 Behaim sailed with Diego Cam along the coast of Africa. On the return trip, Behaim settled at Fayal in the Azores where he married and started a Flemish colony; this colony is marked on the map.

In 1490, Behaim returned to his native Nuremberg. There, the town commissioned him to create a terrestrial globe, which he completed over the course of a year. This globe is the oldest surviving specimen of its kind. Behaim prepared the globe gores, which were drawn by an artist named Glockenthon. The globe measures 21 inches in diameter and is made of papier-mache coated with gypsum. It includes 1,100 geographical places and represents a Ptolemaic world with additions from Marco Polo, Sir John Mandeville, and others. Once displayed, the residents of Nuremberg began to call the wonderful object *Erdapfel*, earth apple.

Upon completing the globe, Behaim returned to Portugal in 1498 where he served as emissary to Belgium and the Netherlands. The English captured him and brought him to England, but he escaped from the island and made it to Lisbon, where he died in 1507.

It is easy to critique the Behaim globe as false or as ill-informed. However, such a view does not take into account that Behaim used the most reliable resources available to him at the time. In the late fifteenth century, this would have been one of the best-possible approximations of the globe as it was understood according to Ptolemy's works and recent exploration. It is an insightful example of the world Columbus thought he was sailing into, as opposed to the world he found.

This is a fine example of a section of the most famous of all pre-Columbian globes, which exists in only a single example. De Murr's image of Behaim's globe is the only engraved large format representation of Behaim's globe which we have ever seen on the market.

Detailed Condition: