

America's Oldest Birth Certificate

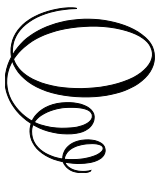
America's Oldest Birth Certificate:

An Over 500-year old Hidden Treasure

By

Stefaan Missinne

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To my wife Andrea and my two sons David and Alexander
and
in Memoriam of Henri Albert Missinne, Irma Maria Jonckheere,
Martha De Fruytier, my parents in Belgium
and of the late Mr. Robert (Bob) Felix Childs and the late Mrs. Patricia (Pat) Ann (Allwine) Childs

Who among doctors (except perhaps a fool or a savage) dares to prescribe medicines if he does not know correctly the latitude, the longitude, his (the patient's) state of being and especially the climate of the region in which he is staying?

—Jean Descolis, *Cosmographiae Introductio*, Lyon 1507

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PROLOGUE

Since the publication in *Advances in Historical Studies* in July 2015 entitled “America’s Birth Certificate: The Oldest Globular World Map: c. 1507”, more than a decade has now passed. Since that time, a lot has happened in the history of cartography. On occasion of the 250th anniversary of the independence of the USA in 2026, it seemed opportune to publish an updated version in book format.

The name “America” refers to what we now call South America and predates the independence of “the United States of America,” which was founded in 1776.

This new research will also include my updated formerly published work, on the discovery of falsifications of woodcut globe gores. Published in 2015 and downloaded numerous times, it took until 2023 before an international globe expert referred to my work. Albeit hidden in a small inconspicuous footnote (4), she accepted the dating and “admitted” that the arguments in my research were convincing enough to be mentioned: “The dating of 1508 (Globe segments by Louis Boulengier) is based on arguments by Stefaan Missinne.”¹

Although a single footnote, it does show an academic “concession” and recognition. By analogy with Armstrong’s famous quote of “That’s one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind”, this appears to be one small footstep, but it has a big effect on the dating of the Oldest Cartographic Birth Certificate of America.

A second important discovery since the *AHS/SCIRP* publication in 2015 resulted from Chet Van Duzer’s detailed investigation of the Henricus Martellus Germanus (Florence c. 1480–c. 1496) Map. In this reference publication evidence is offered that the cartographer of what is called the Oldest Cartographic Birth Certificate of America namely Martin Waldseemüller (c. 1470–1520) world map exhibited at the LoC was based on a template of Henricus Martellus. Waldseemüller re-edited this work for his “own” historical map, of which only one undated copy dating from after 1515 has survived the centuries.

A third noteworthy development is a small but not insignificant shift in dating of the French engraved map, in short Boulengier map, as it is attributed to Louis Boulengier (?–c. 1547), in short Boulengier, sometimes also spelled Boulenger. It can be found on the webpage of the Museo Galileo—the Institute and Museum of the History of Science, in collaboration with the Fondazione CR Firenze and the Library of Congress and has been online since 2016. It was posted just one year after my *AHS/SCIRP* publication on the 1508 Boulengier map. On the webpage of the Museo Galileo, a historically first, the date of the Boulengier map, moved from 1517/1518 to 1509. However, the Boulengier map is incorrectly but creatively credited to none other than Waldseemüller. In addition, it is erratically assembled with a row of woodcut gores and the Green Globe.² The history of cartography is quite fascinating as surprises are guaranteed.

Waldseemüller, like many of his colleagues before and after him, used the cartographic knowledge of Martellus. An unresolved question is how Waldseemüller managed to get the Martellus painted map or a derivate across the Alps and into the little village of Saint-Dié-des-Vosges (in short Saint-Dié). There are all sorts of exotic hypotheses, such as a map by Martellus being brought to a meeting between Matthias Ringmann (1482–1511) and Giovanni Francesco Pico della Mirandola (1469–1533), i.e. Pico della Mirandola, his nephew in Carpi in November of 1505, or using a secret copy of a Martellus map that would have come to rural Saint-Dié via Portugal.

Finally, recently discovering a paragraph containing the diameter of the world in a 1425 manuscript by Gregorio Dati (1362–c. 1432), which appears to have served as a source for Leonardo da Vinci’s (1452–1519) 7000 miles and his world globe dating from 1504, was a big leap forward.

¹ Elly Dekker, Die Konstruktion von Globusstreifen: Theorie und Praxis im 16. und im 17. Jahrhundert, *Der Globusfreund. The International Journal for the History of Cartography*, Volume 76, 2024, pp. 30–46.

² Museo Galileo—Institute and Museum of the History of Science; Fondazione CR Firenze; in Collaboration with the Library of Congress, 2016 <https://exhibits.museogalileo.it/waldseemuller/ewal.php?c%5B%5D=39734> accessed 31 December 2024. For a detailed online view of the Boulengier map (here still dated 1514) see also: <https://www.raremaps.com/gallery/detail/115426/universalis-cosmographie-descriptio-tam-in-solido-quem-plano-boulengier> accessed 14 January 2026

INTRODUCTION

The name of America and its portrayal on cartographic material have been a topic of debate for quite a long time.

In this book, I scrutinise Martin Waldseemüller's world map exhibited at the Library of Congress (G3200 1507.W3), the extant woodcut globe maps credited to Waldseemüller and the sophisticated Boulengier map.

First, I examine some of the background that initiated this research. I explain the type of methodology that I use in this examination and offer the sources for the investigation.

A key topic at the outset is Waldseemüller's first world map. Its spectacular discovery in 1901 is reviewed. An examination of a German poem printed on the reverse side of Waldseemüller's world map and the evidence that it is a reprint are offered. Some key aspects relating to the content of Waldseemüller's world map and other contemporary map makers are reviewed.

I question Waldseemüller's locational choice of the important spice port named "Calliquit" (also spelled Calicut). This is followed by what encouraged its makers for the finding of a name for the newly discovered world, the so-called New Indies.

What sources were available to Waldseemüller, his group and during the pre-production time? For the first time sources for and the influence of Rodrigo Fernández de Santaella's (1444–1509) 1503 translation; Gregor Reisch's (1467–1525) world map dating from 1503; the 1505 and 1507 poems of Matthias Ringmann; and Walther Lud's (1448–1527) *Speculi orbis* dating from March 1507 are perused. The question is raised as to whether the use of Americi by Ringmann in March of 1507 preceded the naming of America.

After this intense start, in the next chapter, the young poet Matthias Ringmann's early New High German translation of Caesar (100 BC–44 BC), the eminent influence of the Habsburg King Maximilian I (1459–1519) on the timing and content of Waldseemüller's world map, and the naming of America are reviewed. Moreover, Lud's astrological instrument including an alidade and the long-lasting aspiration of the J.C. Brown Orbis Typus Map, to be the first to name America prior to 1506 are assessed.

Next, it is questioned what the possible reasons were for Waldseemüller's market entry of his first world map being unsuccessful. What were the roots and difficulties of Waldseemüller's cartographic project? What led to a lawyer's takeover of Waldseemüller's work in 1508 who completed his job without specifying him by name in 1513?

This is followed by a detailed analysis of the pre-entry and underestimated contemporary source known as the Mirror of the World printed in Strasbourg in 1507 by Johannes Grüninger (1455–1531). Vespucci's *Mundus Novus* letter and Grüninger's 1509 "Der Welt Kugel" are treated in detail.

I then come to the question of the misunderstanding and erroneously translated word *Solidum* and Waldseemüller's alleged globe construction. Why was *in solido* interpreted as being a globe? What were the most common reasons why Waldseemüller was believed to have made small globes?

Thanks to newly published excellent research by the American historian of cartography Chet Van Duzer, the next chapter looks at Martellus as a model and as a cartographic source for Waldseemüller. The form and iconographic significance of Waldseemüller's world map is examined. The question is raised if della Mirandola was a source for Waldseemüller and some interesting new findings on Johannes Schöner's (1477–1547) grid on Waldseemüller's world map are offered.

The rather popular name "The fourth part of the Earth" is subsequently used as a part of the title for the next chapter. In that, the dating of a watermark from 1516 is offered as evidence of an invalid dating of 1507 for the now uncrowned Waldseemüller world map. The question is raised if perhaps the convening of the Diet of Constance on 27 April 1507 played a role in Waldseemüller's urgency expressed in his letter to a friend dating from 5 April 1507 and on the naming of America on 24 April 1507. Another question is if there is any evidence that Waldseemüller and Ringmann did tailor their large world map and the accompanying booklet, the *Cosmographia Introductio*, following the "dynastic stroke of luck" as Philip I the Handsome, son of Maximilian of Habsburg inherited the Spanish kingdoms of Castile and Aragon in 1504 but unexpectedly passed by in 1506?

The chapter on the Boulengier map naming America begins with the finding and description of the rare edition of the version of the *Cosmographia Introductio* (in short *CI*) printed in Lyon. It is succeeded by a heuristic investigation of the

use of or the absence of the word America between 1508–1516 on cartographic reference volumes and globes. The question then arose: are there maps that provide a view of Waldseemüller's world map, of which no copy of the first edition exists anymore? A unique secondary source on Waldseemüller's world map is offered by Heinrich Glarean (1488–1563) by means of his reduced copies dating from c. 1510 and by Schöner's globes. This leads to Sebastian Münster (1488–1552), his reduced copies of Waldseemüller's large world map and the upcoming Protestantism. This detailed and lengthy review of what Glarean has held with his study of Waldseemüller's world map is useful. In it I unveil hitherto unknown new aspects. This methodology allows us to find out whether Waldseemüller adjusted his cartography, and if so, which maps and in what form.

The question of the influence of Waldseemüller's epic world map on the archetypal world map of Caspar Vopel (1511–1561), on Schöner's 1515 globe and on the Italian Green Globe is treated next.

After this detailed research, answers to several questions regarding the gore world maps are presented in the next section where for the first time in history the woodcut gore world maps and the only extant Boulengier map from the beginning of the 16th century are scrutinised. Do the watermarks of the woodcut gore world maps support the evidence of a different ranking in time? What evidence results from a detailed analysis of the location of Calliquit and the Tropic of Cancer on the Boulengier map compared to the woodcut types? What can be learned from the spelling of Armenia, the shape of the so-called Tiger-Leg and the heavily incised oceans on that same intricate Boulengier map compared to the woodcut types?

The findings of the forgoing chapter lead to a reappraisal of the Boulengier map, the copper-engraved world map bearing the name America. But who invented this map? Was the author the German runaway Benedictine monk who lived in Italy named Donnus Nicolaus Germanus (c. 1420–1479)? What does the aesthetic character of the convoluted Boulengier map want to tell us and what is the Donnus (Donis/Donnis) projection?

The Boulengier map and its proportion to the diameter of the earth as applied by Leonardo da Vinci to construct his globe are identical. This astonishing topic is handled in a separate chapter. The aesthetics of the Boulengier map are quite uncommon. Therefore, what follows in this chapter concerns a very close examination of this theme. Here I hope to bear the fruits of my prior detailed analysis of various maps at the beginning of this volume. Indeed, there are many unique cartographic aspects such as the engravings of the sea, water courses, letters, possible interchanges, etc. that require attention. The provenance of the Boulengier map is indeed significant. I test the hypothesis of the possibility of discovering bibliographical sources based on the comparative textual analysis of the names used for the wind directions.

What is of interest after the above is completed is how the details of Waldseemüller's two separate insert maps compare versus Waldseemüller's world map. Could it be that the Boulengier map was influenced by the insert maps of Waldseemüller?

Subsequently a juxtaposition of the Boulengier map with two versions of the woodcut gore world maps, the insert maps and the Waldseemüller world map is made.

In the next chapter Louis Boulengier, sixth consul from the city of Albi in Southern France, to whom the engraved map has been attributed is examined. The invalid dating of this world map is also treated. What are the other two copper engravings, the *Astrolabium physicum* and the *Motus none spere* (*Motus nonae sphaerae*)? A comparative textual analysis of the names of the wind directions follows. I believe that this exercise, particularly regarding the sources regarding the typology of the wind directions, is perhaps a historical first.

Because of its relevance to the research, the cultural and historical context of the name of Robertet, both Jacques Robertet (1467–1518) and Florimond Robertet (Florimond I de Robertet d'Alluyes) (1459–1527), and their connection with Albi is deepened. Who was this Jacques Robertet (James Robertet) and who was his elder brother Florimond Robertet? What is the significance of Albi? Is there a possible link between them and the Boulengier map? Why does the date of 1507 remain in the version of Waldseemüller's *Cosmographia Introductio* printed in Lyon and why is it dedicated to Jacques Robertet, member of the famous and highly influential Robertet family? Why is there a "to the reader" section in the *Cosmographia Introductio* from France making a secretive reference to medicine or possibly natal astrology? These questions are treated one after the other, and as far as possible, answers are given.

A chance find of a recorded reference from the 16th century in the Dupuy Institute Archive is presented. The transcription of the French text is the first to confirm the authenticity of the engravings. It also appears to be a confirmation that the Boulengier map was printed separately from the *Astrolabium physicum* and the *Motus none spere*. The question if they were sent to the famous Robertet is discussed and answered.

As in a detective story, an architectural detail in the tracery of a French cathedral in Albi and a partial watermark on the gore world maps are scrutinised. This allows for a further investigation of the artistic style, the hidden or undetected religious iconographical aspects of this gore world map and its orientation towards the East.

To exclude any possible doubts, a transcription, using applied stemmatics, of the Boulengier map, which is to be the oldest engraved map, to name America and therefore America's original birth certificate, is made. What does a printed singular phrase referring to "other printed globe gores" in the *Cosmographiae Introductio*, dated 1507, edited by Louis Boulengier from Albi, mean for this research? Is there any evidence of a relationship between Martin Waldseemüller and this gore world map? And finally, what can I learn from the most decisive arguments which led to the false 19th century attribution and invalid dating of this small iconic gore world map? Why was the German monk Johannes Trithemius's (1462–1516) letter from 12 August 1507 used as a justification based on a dubious source and an erroneous citation?

I end with the *Astrolabium physicum*, a medical astrolabe, by Guillaume G. de Wissekerke (1444–c.1511), his endeavours from the time of the discovery of America and the role of natal astrology. This leads to the importance of the medical astrolabe for the 45th degree north, related to the correct prescription of medicine based on the geographic knowledge of latitude and longitude of the patient.

Befitting the time of the rare planetary alignment in early 2025 at the time of writing the introduction to this new book, I use this comparative imagery to explore some selected important names in cartographic history and include them in this work, starting with Fra Mauro (c. 1385–1459) and followed by Donnus Nicolaus Germanus, Henricus Martellus, Francesco Rosselli (1445– before 1513), Martin Waldseemüller, Johan Schöner, Peter Apian (1495–1552) and Caspar Vopel. This list is not exhaustive and purely indicative.

The reader will then be guided through a particularly significant section of the history of cartography, during the Italian and French Renaissance around the turn of the 16th century and the life of a German runaway Benedictine monk, which eventually will summit with a rather surprising ending.

The result of the exciting search in far-away libraries and dusty archives is a historical cartographic narrative with surprising twists and new discoveries that helps redraw the very beginning of American history.

This volume, containing the newest discoveries is a reappraisal of a small cartographic treasure, the Oldest Cartographic Birth Certificate of America. It is presented in the year of the celebration of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States of America.

BACKGROUND, METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES FOR THE EXAMINATION

On regular occasions, the world press reports about the discovery at an auction of a very valuable and early world map. In 1954 the James Ford Bell Library purchased a small early 16th century woodcut gore map, apparently intended for a c. 11 cm diameter globe, for 45,000 US\$, equivalent of roughly 500,000 US\$ (2024 purchasing power).

Thirty-seven years later the Bavarian State Library paid 2 million Deutsche Mark for another printed version of the same gore woodcut map. Fourteen years later, following a publication of a discovery in a German newspaper, a quasi-identical but readily trimmed gore world map was offered for auction at Christie's in London and sold for more than 1 million US\$, to an anonymous buyer.

In 2012, the University Library Munich made the pleasant discovery of a very similar printed woodcut gore map. This resulted in worldwide media coverage on its discovery.

But during the research on a sample of the map that the Bavarian State Library had acquired for 2 million Deutsche Mark in 1991, the absence of carbon in the black ink led to a rather unpleasant verdict.³ The findings indicated that it was a modern reprint, resulting in even greater worldwide media coverage in 2018 originating from the Bavarian capital.

This came to light earlier by chance when Christie's became suspicious when comparing a sixth example surfaced of this globe's gores with the copy of the Bavarian State Library (2 Inc.c.a 1820 a # Kt.2). The "newest" now sixth copy was up for sale at auction in 2018 in Lot. 97 with the estimated price of 690,000–1,000,000 Euros.

The two copies appeared to be identical in every detail, implying that they were based on the same print template.

A paper restorer working and living in the USA of Czech descent, Michael Peichl and his wife Lindsay, of the company Paper Restoration Studio, had determined in December 2017, so prior to the auction, that a drop of glue was present under the photomechanical, black-and-white reproduction, and not vice versa.⁴

Other experts including the rare-book specialist Nick Wilding in New York and Alex Clausen, a rare-map dealer working with Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc., were consulted and came to the same verdict. Professor Nick Wilding⁵ was the expert who, with the help of the late Harvard University Professor Owen Gingerich (1930–2023), uncovered a pair of forgeries by the Napolitan Marino Massimo de Caro (1973–) of Galileo Galilei's (1564–1642) 1610 book *Sidereus Nuncius*.⁶

This detective's masterly performance prompted a book on the forgery found at the Bavarian State Library.⁷ The map's image was superimposed on the paper after it had been removed from a book.⁸ It is worthwhile scrutinising how these irregularities in the supposed woodcut map stood out on closer examination. Areas in the printed image were clearer and deeper or missing altogether compared to other gore world maps.

As mentioned, glue residue could be seen below the print rather than above the print. This indicated that the image on the blank sheet was copied after a forger had torn this sheet extra from an old book with blank pages. But the most telling clue came in the form of a white line that sat exactly where the James Ford Bell Library at the University of Minnesota had added extra paper to restore a tear on their copy.

This restored tear could only be reproduced by forging another map. Coincidentally, this tear was also discovered on another copy in the Bavarian State Library in Munich which was, of course, an extremely embarrassing incident for this

³ <https://www.bsb-muenchen.de/en/article/bavarian-state-library-confirms-that-its-own-waldseemuller-globe-gores-map-is-a-forgery-2274/> accessed 16 October 2024.

⁴ Yale University, *Globe Gores Forgery after Martin Waldseemüller*. General Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, <https://collections.library.yale.edu/catalog/32335781> accessed 19 November 2024.

⁵ Nick Wilding, Forging the Moon, *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 2016, 160, 1, pp. 37–72.

⁶ Nicolas Schmidle, A very rare book, *The New Yorker*, 2013, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2013/12/16/a-very-rare-book> accessed 18 December 2024.

⁷ Wolfgang Jahn, *Geschichte einer Fälschung: Die Waldseemüller-Globensegmente in der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek*, Allitera Verlag, München, 2019.

⁸ Michael Blanding, "Why Experts Don't Believe This Is a Rare First Map of America", *The New York Times*, 10th December 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/10/arts/design/why-experts-dont-believe-this-is-a-rare-first-map-of-america.html>

world-renowned library. Christie's, who had put the map up for sale, estimating its value between \$800.000 and \$1.2 million, regretfully called off the auction of this lot.

Unfortunately, the above-mentioned restorer, who came to visit me to personally inspect the da Vinci Globe in the summer of 2022, did not receive recognition therein. During this development of intended auction sales, revelations and cancellations the total but provisional sample of woodcut gore maps had increased to six. We are back to four, but this number may be temporary.

It is not unusual in the preparations of auctions for in-house analysts at auction houses to base their "analysis" on readily available sources and make use of copy and paste techniques to meet auction deadlines.

These rather basic woodcut gore maps have already attracted a great deal of media attention over the years and continue to do so. One might thus assume that these gore world maps, including their respective watermarks, would have been thoroughly researched by now. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Why the topic, namely the watermarks of the gore maps, which is part of my investigation⁹ has been neglected in the literature remains an enigma.

Instead of using a historiographical approach, I decided to use the methodology of comparative analysis of the locational accuracy in maps, the study of size and proportion of the cartographical material, mathematics and analysis of the available textual sources, the latter as developed by Karl Lachmann (1793–1851). The Lachmannian method of finding common errors is the most effective for studying derivations.¹⁰ I use the wording gore map instead of globular map.

An additional word about the methodology used. I present summaries based on authentic research, field research, contacts with world leading experts and offer evidence based on new research.

In this research I combine the history of the scientific development of globes and technology, including engraving techniques and printing with regard to medical astrolabes and a "*Motus none spere*".

The field research took me to Paris, Nancy, Saint-Dié, Antwerp, Brussels, Gent, Arezzo, Milan, Nuremberg, Bamberg, Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Bremen, Rome, Kortrijk, Munich, Florence, Vienna, Vinci, Brussels, the Vatican, London, Innsbruck, Ingolstadt, Regensburg, Graz, Lisbon, Madrid, New York, Seville, Arezzo, Sienna, Venice among others.

On a few occasions, authentic research is "combined" for example by using my own compilation hoping to lead to new results.

It was judged that all these very rudimentary woodcut gore maps, all intended for a globe diameter of c. 11 cm, were from the first decennia of the 16th century. When printed these woodcut gore maps were to be sold, so it was alleged, together as part of some kind of a "media package" with the *Editio princeps* of Martin Waldseemüller's *Cosmographiae Introductio* (in short C.I.) or Introduction to Cosmography and his impressive world map.¹¹

The case that all woodcut gore maps are intended for a c. 11-centimeter diameter of an unmounted globe may sound irrelevant, but the evidence of the discovery of the da Vinci Globe dating from 1504 as the cast model for the Lenox Globe, preserved at the New York Public Library (in short NYPL), all also having a diameter of c. 11 centimetres enlarged the research sample.

Therefore, I test the hypothesis that the prior mentioned is not a statistical coincidence.

⁹ Stefaan Missinne, "America's Birth Certificate: The Oldest Globular World Map: c. 1507", in *Advances in Historical Studies*, 4, 2015, pp. 239–307.

¹⁰ I thank the expert Univ. Prof. Dr. Paolo Chiesa for his confirming e-mail dating 1 May 2025.

¹¹ For a work on the nomenclature used by M. Waldseemüller and J. Ruysch I refer to Gregory C. McIntosh, author of *The Johann Ruysch and Martin Waldseemüller World Maps* (Long Beach, CA: Plus Ultra Publishing, 2012).

WALDSEEMÜLLER’S FIRST WORLD MAP: REPRINT, DISCOVERY, CALLIQUOT, INSPIRATION FOR THE FINDING OF A NEW NAME AND SOURCES

3.1 Examination of the poem printed on the reverse side of Waldseemüller’s world map

The English Curator of Graphic Arts in the National Museum of American History, part of the Smithsonian Institution, Elizabeth M. Harris offered in 1985¹² key evidence regarding the valid dating of Waldseemüller’s “1507 LOC” world map, or what I prefer to call the Waldseemüller world map, on view at the Library of Congress (LoC).

Harris used a hyper spectral image of a pastedown to show text from a German palm reading poetic manual on the reverse side of the lower right sheet. In other words, old paper that had already been printed on, with a page of a second edition printed in 1515 of an Italian poem translated in German as can be seen in Fig. 1, *Ein schönes Büchlin der Kunst Chiromantia*, with astrological-alechemistic symbols, referring to the ancient gypsy art of reading hands to predict the future.

The German first edition was printed in 1514, after the Italian was printed in Venice in 1513.¹³ The text is based on the *Chiromantia*¹⁴ by the Italian Andrea Corvo della Mirandola (c. 1470–1514),¹⁵ and interestingly the paper with the poem on one side as evidence elucidates comparing Fig. 2, Fig. 3 and Fig. 4, was reused again to reprint Waldseemüller’s world map on the unprinted side.

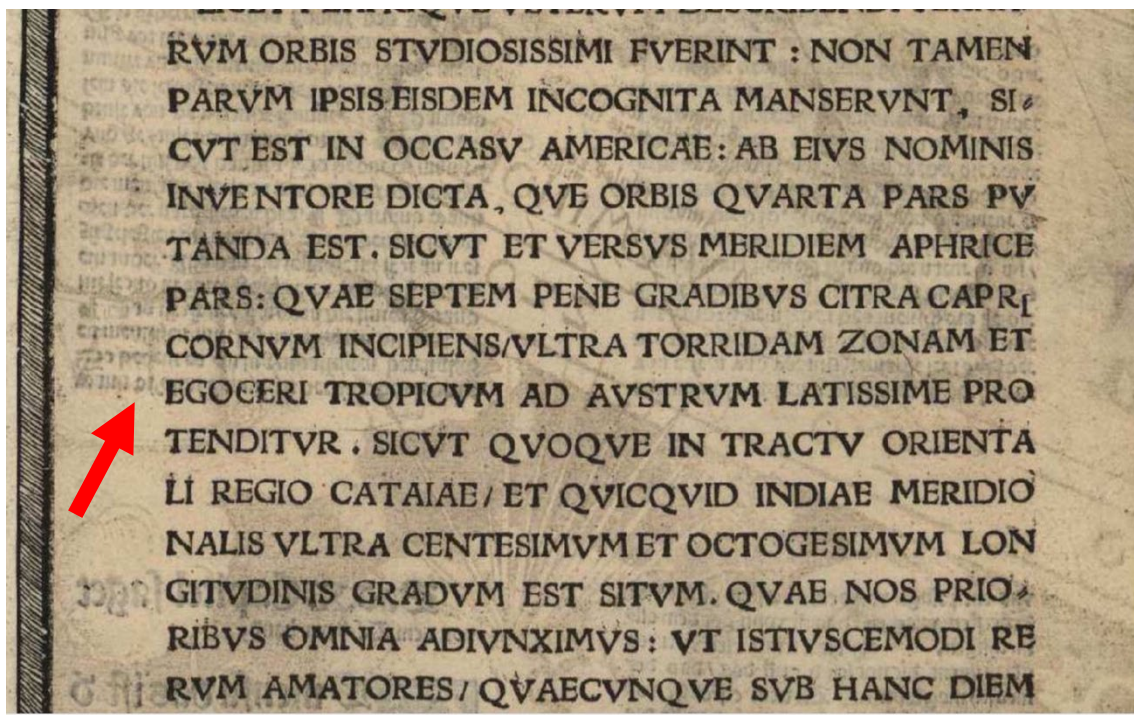


Fig. 1: Detail of the lower right corner of the map of Waldseemüller with the text of the German poem, *Ein schönes Büchlin der Kunst Chiromantia*, state (issue) dating from 1515, offering evidence of reused paper and the later print of Waldseemüller’s world map. Notice also the black printed lines of the map on the reverse protruding through the paper. (red arrow). LoC. Public domain.

¹² Elizabeth Harris, 1985, “The Waldseemüller World Map. A Typographical Appraisal”, *Imago Mundi*, 37, pp. 30–53.

¹³ <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k9116825s> accessed 17 October 2024.

¹⁴ Gino Sabattini, *Bio-bibliografia chiromantica. Bibliografia di opere antiche e moderne di chiromanzia e sulla chiromanzia con notizie biografiche sui principali autori*. Reggio Emilia 1946, pp. 25–29.

¹⁵ [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/andrea-corvo_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/andrea-corvo_(Dizionario-Biografico)/) accessed 17 October 2024.

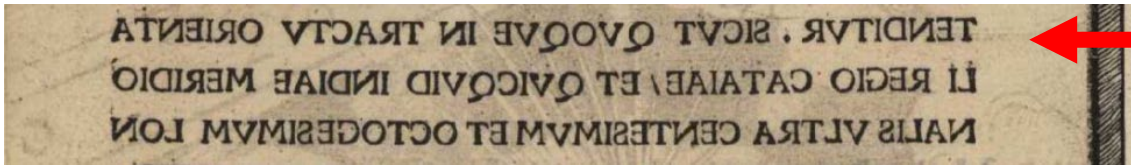


Fig. 2: Mirrored middle section of Waldseemüller's label (red arrow) as can be seen in Fig. 3 made by Elizabeth Harris.

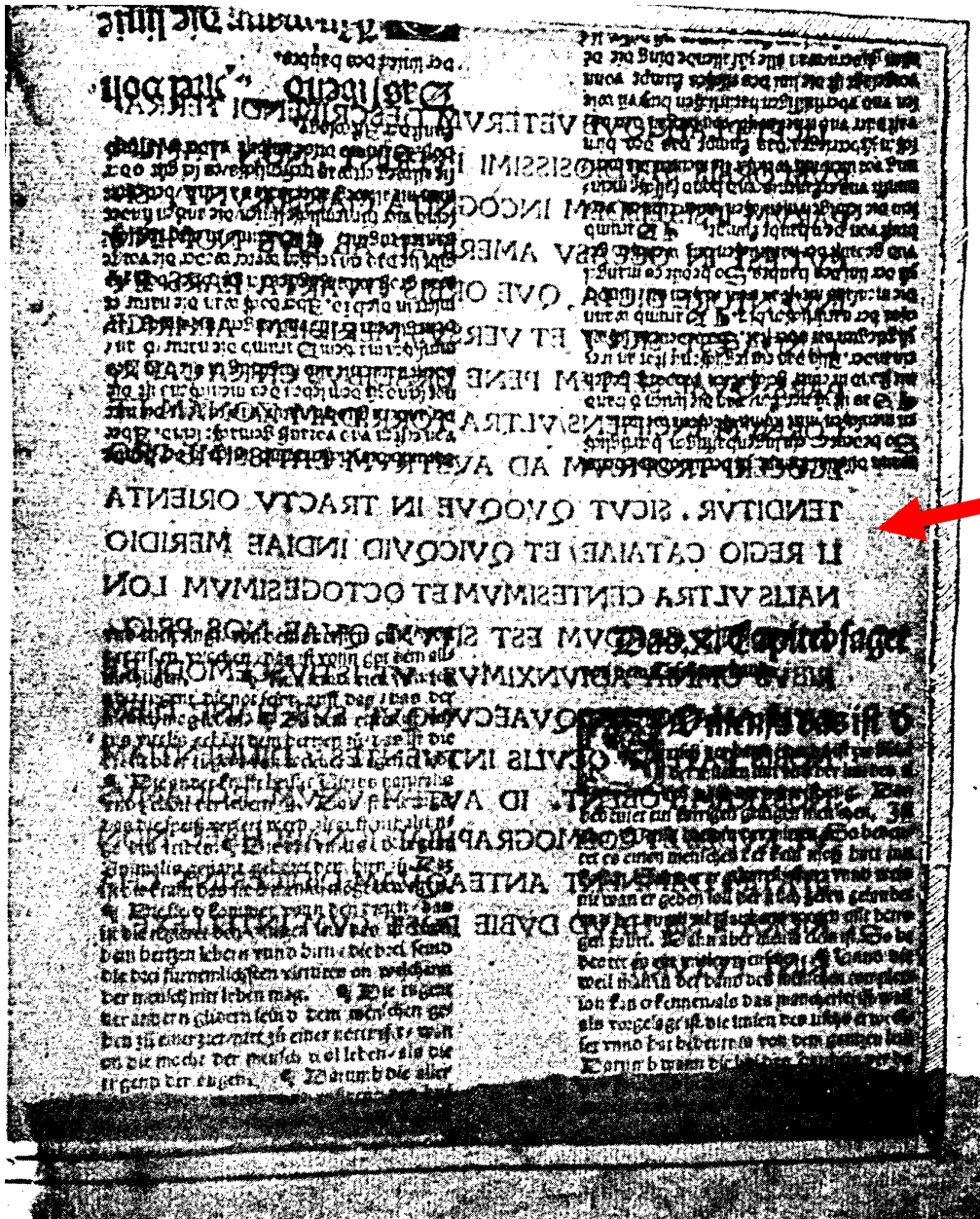


Fig. 3: The *Schönes Büchlin* proof sheet pasted face down on the sheet in the lower corner of Waldseemüller's world map. In this photo, taken from the back with light shining through the sheet, Waldseemüller's label of his world map (red arrow) printing can also be seen, in reverse roman capitals, and in particular the large S to be compared with the large S in Fig. 4. Picture based on Harris's research from 1985.

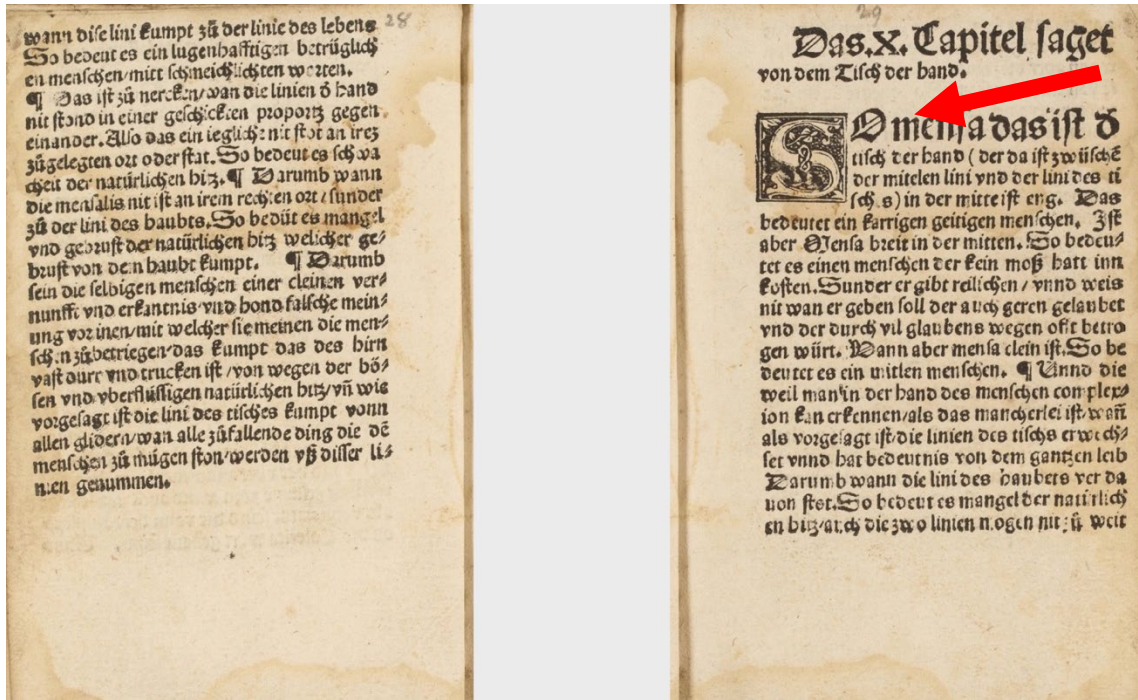


Fig. 4: Two proof pages from the second state of *Ein schönes Büchlin der Kunst Chiromantia* by Magistri Andree Corvi von Mirandola dating from 1515. Notice the capital letter S (red arrow) as on Fig. 3. Picture courtesy of the French National Library. Public domain.¹⁶

Thereby Harris proved as early as 1985 in her scientific research on the occasion of an exhibition at the Smithsonian Museum that the world map by Waldseemüller named later officially “*America’s Birth Certificate*” on display since 2007 at the *Library of Congress*¹⁷ is a reprint copy in the form of a printer’s proof dating from after 1516 instead of 1507, date of the first edition, of which there is no known extant example.¹⁸ Interestingly, Harris also questions the high figure of reportedly a circulation of 1000 examples of this world map.¹⁹

A Spanish expert in the history of cartography discovered an additional important aspect. “By the way”, he wrote to me, “regarding Waldseemüller’s map in the Library of Congress, there is a detail that Elizabeth Harris does not mention and that I think is important. The twelve plates of the map are reuses of others already printed on the back (see Fig. 5). This is inconceivable in an edition intended for sale, whether or not the first edition.”²⁰

It is rather tragic that precisely on the basis of a German poem, first printed in 1515 and most notably in *Ein schönes Büchlin der Kunst Chiromantia*, that the German Waldseemüller had his epic world map “knocked off” its long time “cartographic throne” by Italian based guidelines of how to foresee one his or her fortune in the future.

Chiromancy is divination based on the shape and lines of a hand. Probably to save costs, the printer likely upon the special demand of the scholar Johannes Schöner used leftover paper with the text of the German poem to enable a reprint of Waldseemüller’s map.

The Waldseemüller world map is neither signed nor dated, nor is it numbered. On top of that, there was no automatic counter on the printing machines at that time.

I suspect that by using *Mille* Waldseemüller meant to indicate an uncountable quantity. This is supported by the additional Latin translation of the word *Mille*.²¹ The fact that he does happen to repeat the number *Mille* for the number of copies of the Marina world map also known as the Carta Marina of 1516 is additional evidence.

Although, there is also another extreme view.

¹⁶ French National Library <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k9116825s/f31.double> accessed on 17 October 2024.

¹⁷ John R. Hébert, The Map That Named America: Library Acquires 1507 Waldseemüller Map of the World, *Information Bulletin of the LoC.*, September 2003, Vol. 62, Nr. 9. <https://www.loc.gov/loc/lcib/0309/maps.html> accessed 19 October 2024.

¹⁸ For the discussion on the Naming of America, see Jonathan Cohen, The Naming of America: A Fragment We’ve Shored against Ourselves. *The American Voice*, 1988, pp. 56–72.

¹⁹ E. Harris, op. cit. p. 30.

²⁰ I thank the Spanish author Juan Romero-Girón Deleito for his personal message dating from 29 August 2024.

²¹ Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1958, p. 1144.



Fig. 5: Notice the mirrored image including the mountain range, letters and line on the right side from the print on the left (red arrow). This resulted from the still wet paper turned over. Picture courtesy of Dr. Geert Verhoeven.²² Detail. LoC. Public domain.

Hildegard Binder Johnson (1908–1993) has argued the view that Waldseemüller's 1516 *Carta Marina* was a special proof that was never marketed. According to her, the only surviving copy would not have been part of an edition.²³

Waldseemüller's *Carta Marina* of 1516 with the title: *Carta marina navigatoria Portvgallen navigationes, atqve tocius cogniti orbis terre marisque formam natvram sitvs et terminos nostris temporibvs recognitos et ab antiquorum traditione differentes, eciam qvor vetvsti non meminervnt avtores, hec generaliter indicat*,²⁴ undoubtedly left footprints.

These traces were disseminated both directly and indirectly by Lorenz Fries (c. 1490–1531/1532) in 1525. Primary evidence is his explanatory didactic publication of *Uslegung der Mercarthen oder Cartha marina* dating from 1525 and several reprints of Waldseemüller's maps. His publication makes several references to America including "Von America ein teyl dauon hie beschrieben". It contains an engraving of the important port city of Calliquit.²⁵ The previously mentioned author's inexact assessment, as ironclad evidence, has shown,²⁶ can be refuted. I therefore concur with Eva Germaine Rimington Taylor (1879–1966) assessment dating from 1964.²⁷

²² I thank Dr. Geert Verhoeven from the University of Vienna for his e-mail dating 30 October 2024.

²³ Hildegard Binder Johnson, *Carta marina: World Geography in Strassburg, 1525*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1963, p. 58.

²⁴ Waldseemüller, Martin, Cartographer, and Johann Schöner. *Carta marina navigatoria Portvgallen navigationes, atqve tocius cogniti orbis terre marisque formam natvram sitvs et terminos nostris temporibvs recognitos et ab antiquorum traditione differentes, eciam qvor vetvsti non meminervnt avtores, hec generaliter indicat*. Strasbourg, published 1516, Map.

<https://www.loc.gov/item/2016586433/>. <https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3200m.gct00046/?st=gallery> accessed 17 November 2024.

²⁵ Lorenz Fries, *Uslegung der Mercarthen oder Cartha marina darin man sehen mag, wo einer in der wellt sey, vnd wo ein yetlich Landt, Wasser, vnd Stadt gelegen ist*. Das alles in dem Büchlin zůfinden. Strasbourg, 1525.

https://openlibrary.org/books/OL33223401M/Uslegung_der_Mercarthen_oder_Cartha_marina

²⁶ Frederik Müller, Was Lorenz Fries's 1525 Strasbourg Ptolemy Atlas Complete? Or Were Two Maps Omitted? *Imago Mundi* Vol. 70, Part 1: pp. 1–26.

²⁷ Eva Germaine Rimington Taylor, *Carta Marina: World Geography in Strassburg, 1525*, by Hildegard Binder Johnson, Review, *Renaissance News*, Vol. 17, No. 3, 1964, University of Chicago Press, pp. 239–240.

I now turn to the official description on the webpage of the Library of Congress that has the following message. The title reads: “Recognizing and Naming America: Waldseemüller’s map of 1507”. And further: “This is the only known surviving copy of the first printed edition of the map, which presumably consisted of 1000 copies”.²⁸ This suggests that there were multiple editions and that there is an uncertainty as to whether there were 1000 copies in the first edition. Was his map a success? Let us hear what Waldseemüller has to say about his world map as he wrote about it on the *Carta Marina* dating from 1516:

As we have lately come to understand, our previous representation pleased very few people. Therefore, since true seekers of knowledge rarely color their words in confusing rhetoric, and do not embellish facts with charm but instead with a venerable abundance of simplicity, we must say that we cover our heads with a humble hood.

This is a *mea culpa*.

Amerigo Vespucci (1454–1512) died in Seville on 22 February 1512. So it could be that Waldseemüller’s reference of “lately” is from between 1512 and 1513.

The dimensions and the scale of his world map are highly impressive. The scale of Waldseemüller’s world map is c. 1:104.000.000. This is based on the empirical measurement of the length of the equator of Waldseemüller’s map which is c. 271,48 cm. As the dimension of the size of the world, and as the Pacific Ocean was undiscovered at the time, I took the measure of 28.249,83 km. This value is based on Leonardo’s calculation.²⁹ A simple comparative test, in particular the actual circumference of the world of 40.075 km minus the flying distance from Tokyo to Cancun, across the Pacific Ocean, which is c. 12.061 km, leads to a then known world size of 28.014 km, a deviation of 0.8% from the above size.³⁰

The world, and Europe are shown in their entire breadth. On top of that, they are overfilled with difficult-to-read topographical terms for cities, rivers and mountains. One searches in vain for a numerical scale bar, but the map is surrounded by a scale with 50 degrees of latitude and 360 degrees of longitude. Besides latitude information, the left edge of the map contains data on length of the day and climate, as handed down from ancient times. Europe and the middle East to central Asia (Scythia), as well as the coastline of Africa are overloaded with horizontal and vertical terms. Waldseemüller glosses over his textual sources. His world map strived for completeness, which in turn reduced the readability.

So, Waldseemüller’s hard work on his world map, so it appears, was not selling. Waldseemüller had been euphoric, but he was no longer so.

Less than twelve months later, Martin Waldseemüller was bitterly complaining in a letter from Strasbourg to M. Ringmann in Basel about an unauthorised edition of his hard labour, while travelling in France on his way to Germany during the traditional holiday of carnival.³¹

It is in February of 1508, printed 31 March 1508, that Martin Waldseemüller laments, as can be seen in Fig. 6 about other plagiarising, i.e., others who falsely attributed his work to themselves.³²

No extant edition by any of his other colleagues like Walther Lud, secretary of the Duke of Lorraine René II (1451–1508), nor from the translator and elegant poet Johann Basinus Sendacurius, Jean Basin de Sandaucourt (before 1494–1523) is known to exist. Ipso facto, Waldseemüller refers to a copy by a third party, that is the one derived from his *CI* printed in Lyon prior to the end of the carnival in March of 1508.

Only a limited number of the adapted version of the *CI* have survived the ages in libraries. Although there is no evidence that the French edition accompanied the Waldseemüller world map or a copy of his map, it must have been a big blow to his self confidence that the French were so quick in producing an unauthorised copy.

In the 1513 version of the *Margarita Philosophica Nova* the earlier mentioned Latin paragraph is shortened and only “*Cosmographiam*” is used.³³ This is a mere indicator Waldseemüller only referred to his *Cosmographiae Introductio* and not to his world map.

²⁸ <https://www.loc.gov/collections/discovery-and-exploration/articles-and-essays/recognizing-and-naming-america/> accessed 18 October 2024.

²⁹ Stefaan Missinne, *The Da Vinci Globe*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2018, p. 183.

³⁰ I am grateful to Prof. Dr. Vivian Forbes for his measurement and the control of the calculation of the scale of the Waldseemüller world map on 20 March 2025.

³¹ I refer to the French but incomplete translation on: <https://archive.org/stream/martinhyllacomyl00dgoog#page/n120/mode/2up>

³² Gregor Reisch, *Margarita Philosophica Nova*, Argentoratum: Johann Grüninger 1508 München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek -- Res/4 Ph.u. 117 <https://www.digitale-sammlungen.de/de/view/bsb00007953?page=304,305&q=Philesio> accessed 20 March 2025.

³³ Franz Laubenberger, *Ringmann oder Waldseemüller?: Eine kritische Untersuchung über den Urheber des Namens Amerika*, Bonn, Dümmler, 1959, p. 169.

The letter of Waldseemüller is a crucial contemporary piece of evidence and precedes due to its undisputed authorship secondary textual sources from third parties like Trithemius, to which I will return at the end of this book.

The complaining letter, as can be seen in Fig. 6 under the headline Architecture, is printed by Johannes Grüninger in the first “new” edition of the unauthorised *Margarita Philosophica Nova* in Strasbourg dated 31 March 1508.³⁴ Waldseemüller's letter has been inappropriately interpreted that he was complaining about others from his team in Saint-Dié.

This historical argumentation no longer holds because Waldseemüller himself writes (Fig. 6) this to his colleague, a member of the “*Gymnasium Vosagense*”, while travelling and, even more essential, he is the only one who has his name printed explicitly as “*MARTINUS ILACOMILUS*” on the second page of the first and fourth edition of “*GYMNASIUM VOSAGENSE*”, and on the back page of the remaining three editions, all prior to 1508.³⁵

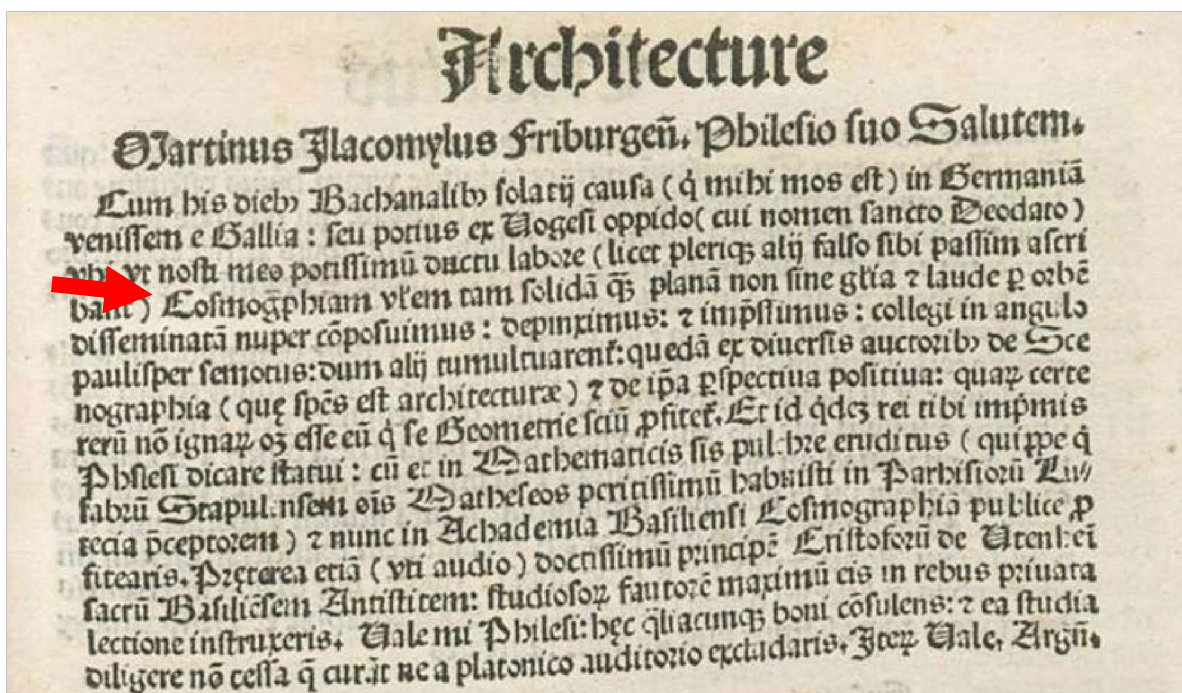


Fig. 6: Evidence of Waldseemüller's complaint about others plagiarising (appropriating to themselves) his hard work, e.g. his *Cosmographiae Introductio* (red arrow). Detail from *Margarita Philosophica Nova*, Strasbourg, 31 March 1508. Public domain.

The transcription³⁶:

Architecture

Martinus Ilacomylus Friburgensis. Philesio suo Salutem.

Cum his diebus Bachanalibus solatii causa (quod mihi mos est) in Germaniam venissem e Gallia, seu potius ex Vogesi oppido (cui nomen Sancto Deodato) ubi, ut nosti meo potissimum ductu labore (licet plerique alii falso sibi passim ascribant) Cosmographiam universalem tam solidam quam planam non sine gloria et laude per orbem disseminatam nuper composuimus, depinximus et impressimus; collegi in angulo paulisper semotus, dum alii tumultuarentur, quaedam ex diversis auctoribus de Scenographia (quae species est architecturae) et de ipsa perspectiva positiva: quarum certe rerum non ignarum oportet esse eum qui se Geometrie scium profitetur.

Et id quidem rei tibi imprimis Phiesi (= Philesi) dicare statui, cum et in Mathematicis sis pulchre eruditus (quippe qui fabrum Stapulensem omnis Matheseos peritissimum habuisti in Parhisiorum Lutecia preceptorem) et nunc in Achademia Basiliensi Cosmographiam publice profitearis. Praeterea etiam (uti audio) doctissimum principem Cristoforum de Utenheim sacrum Basiliensem Antistitem, studiosorum fautorem maximum eis in rebus privata lectione instruxeris.

Vale mi Philesi, haec qualiacumque boni consulens, et ea studia diligere non cessa quam curant ne a platonico auditorio excludaris. Item vale. Argen (= Argentinae).

³⁴ Marie Armand Pascal d' Avezac, *Martin Hylacomylus Waltzemüller, ses ouvrages et ses collaborateurs: voyage d'exploration et de découvertes à travers quelques épîtres dédicatoires, préfaces et opuscules en prose et en vers du commencement du XVIe siècle: notes, causeries et digressions bibliographiques et autres*, Challamel Ainé 1867, p. 107.

³⁵ Franz von Wieser. *Die Cosmographiae Introductio des Martin Waldseemüller*. Strasbourg: J. Heitz, 1907, pp. 8–24.

³⁶ I thank Dr. Davide Baldi Bellini for his full transcription and translation received 13 April 2025.

The translation:

Architecture

Martinus Ilacomylus of Freiburg to his friend Philesius, greetings.

During these recent Carnival days, as is my custom for recreation, I traveled from France to Germany — or more precisely, from the town of the Vosges known as Saint-Dié-des-Vosges — where, as you know, under my own direction and effort (though many others falsely claim the credit), we have recently composed, illustrated, and printed a Universal Cosmography, as rigorous as it is accessible, and now disseminated throughout the world with widespread praise and acclaim.

While others were engaged in festivity, I withdrew briefly into a quiet corner and gathered from various authors certain reflections on scenography (a branch of architecture) and on positive perspective — subjects which, without doubt, anyone claiming expertise in geometry ought not to be ignorant of.

I have resolved to dedicate this work especially to you, Philesius, since you are well-versed in the mathematical sciences — indeed, you studied in Paris under the craftsman of Étapes, a man of great renown in all branches of mathematics — and now publicly teach cosmography at the Academy of Basel. I also hear that you have privately instructed the most learned Prince Christoph von Utenheim, sacred bishop of Basel and a most generous patron of scholars, in these same subjects.

Farewell, my dear Philesius. Kindly receive these modest offerings in good spirit, and continue to cherish those studies which ensure that you will never be excluded from a Platonic academy. Farewell again.

Written in Strasbourg.

This letter was printed less than a year after the publication of the first edition of the CI in 1507, together with his colleague Ringmann in Saint-Dié. Notice the translation of *tam solidam quam planam* as *as rigorous as it is accessible*.

It is striking that Waldseemüller uses an unauthorised edition of the work of his former teacher Gregor Reisch to print his letter complaining about others using his hard-earned literary work. This is of interest, particularly as Boulengier's reputation as an editor is tarnished by accusations of plagiarism for "his" edition of the CI of Waldseemüller, specifically by Lucien Gallois (1857–1941). Plagiarising was not a one-way street from Germany to France. Just one example suffices to support the above: that of Jean Pélerin. Jean, also called Viator (c. 1433/1444–1524), titled his book *De artificiali perspectiva*; it was published at Toul in 1505 and was pirated in Nuremberg by Jörg Glockendon (1484–1514) in 1509.³⁷

The famous cartographer writes a letter to warn his working colleague and poet Matthias Ringmann (Philesius).

As researched by Alexander von Humboldt (1769–1859), this complaining letter from Waldseemüller³⁸ explains why he in 1509 decides to assure that his name is put on subsequent printed material including the 1509 CI Edition printed in Strasbourg and corrected by Johannes Adelphus (1485–1523)³⁹ and the subsequent *Margarita Philosophica Nova* 1513.⁴⁰

Some including Auguste d'Avezac (1780–1851), Van Duzer, Toby Lester⁴¹ and others have misinterpreted this letter as if Waldseemüller was boasting about the great world success of his work.⁴² This is to be refuted. If one complains bitterly about someone else running away with the fruits of his hard labour, it is most certainly not a success but a big disappointment and even a source of disillusionment. Sometimes selected historical arguments from letters and old primary sources to substantiate claims, for good or ill, are a means to an end, but when investigating the merits, completing the whole picture and checking primary sources with hard labour is necessary.

This letter by Waldseemüller that gives this key insight is printed, and until now, was misinterpreted that he was complaining about others from his team in Saint-Dié. I will return to this issue later in this volume.

³⁷ Jean Pélerin, *De artificiali perspectiva*, Toul 1505: bound with Vitruvius, *De architectura libri decem*, Venice 1511: bound with Albrecht Dürer, *Unterweysung der Messung*, Nuremberg 1525, Catalogue, numbered series 17, Robin Halwas Ltd. London, 2000, https://www.robinhalwas.com/index.php?controller=attachment&id_attachment=220&name=016003-Pelerin.pdf accessed 1 May 2025.

³⁸ I thank Dr. M. Lehmann for his e-mail dated 27 October 2014 and his help to identify the 1508 printed version with Waldseemüller's earlier complaint.

³⁹ <http://daten.digitale-sammlungen.de/~db/0001/bsb00011246/images/index.html?id=00011246&fip=eayaxsqreayayztseneayaeayaeayaeay asdasxdsyd&no=36&seite=7> accessed 23 October 2024.

⁴⁰ Alexander von Humboldt, *Examen critique de l'histoire de la géographie du nouveau continent et des progrès de l'astronomie nautique aux quinzième et seizième siècles*. Tome Quatrième, Section Deuxième. Paris: Librairie de Gide, 1837, pp. 112–113.

⁴¹ Chet van Duzer, *Martin Waldseemüller's 'Carta marina' of 1516: Study and Transcription of the Long Legends*, Springer Open, 2019, p. 15.

⁴² Hildegard Binder Johnson, *Carta marina: World Geography in Strassburg, 1525*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1963, p. 125.

His world map, combining Ptolemy (c. 100 AC–c. 170 AD) and Vespucci, was very large and apparently rapidly outdated. In addition, in the very competitive printing business world, he had no copyright protection at all, as it did not exist yet.

In 1512, the Polish Professor Jan of Stobnica (c. 1470–1530) adorned himself with foreign feathers and used Waldseemüller's geographical knowledge and cartographic skills in a printed version without any kind of reference to its famous author.

As I will show, Glarean soon copied Waldseemüller in a miniature manner: the University Library Munich has two maps, one from the insert hemispheric map on top of the world map of Waldseemüller and one of the world maps of Waldseemüller without the insert hemispheric map.⁴³ I return to Glarean and his other reduced manuscript maps in other libraries at a later stage in this volume.

Johannes Schöner's bound copy is a reprint (facsimile) of Waldseemüller and the former copied him to make his own globes (1515/1523). Peter Apian copied Waldseemüller to do his own printing business with maps and was succeeded in the map business by his fourth child Philipp Apian (1532–1589).

Waldseemüller's profane map did not have any copyright, nor did he have any kind of imperial or any other protection from a Church official for a period of years. So, he hoped his *Carta Marina* would be more successful than his first world map. An amended *Cosmographiae Introductio* was printed by the French in Lyon. This was done after the first print-run of the two *CI* editions of April 1507, to which I will return later in this book. And most certainly it did not help his alleged success to make some key errors in his world map.

Apparently, Waldseemüller printed on stock, without waiting for orders. Nor is his large world map to be found in any of the printed catalogues of the famous annual Frankfurt Book and Map Fair. It is thus no wonder that no other copies survived, for instance, in one of the many royal, university and other famous libraries. But it is true that large wall charts have a short life. One could almost say the bigger the map the shorter its life span.

Waldseemüller's world map is not, contrary to popular belief, the first cartographic work to show an ocean, as a separate body of water, west of the New World. The da Vinci Globe of 1504 and its copper cast replica, the Lenox Globe in the New York Public Library, provide evidence to the contrary.

What is striking is that an important "detail" is apparently not made public, not even by the LoC.

Namely that the LoC reprint dates from later than 1515 and cannot be from 1507. A German researcher in 2013 put it unmistakably this way: "*Ein Abzug aus 1516*",⁴⁴ which means "a reprint dating from 1516". In other words, a resuscitated and reissued version.

In the history of cartography, the rule is to distinguish between the year of the first state (issue), even if no copy is known, and the year of reissued versions.⁴⁵ The reason is obvious, though. The differences between the first, unaltered state, if a sample is preserved, and subsequent issues, also known as later versions, potentially allow for an interpretation of various historical-geographical developments.

The deduction of the above is that the use and re-use of the date 1507 in all scientific publications since Father Joseph Fischer's SJ (1858–1941) discovery in 1901, knowing that this is not correct, for the date of Waldseemüller's world map, without mentioning the map is dated later than 1515 and not 1507, means that interpretations made based on an altered map can be refuted and thus are to be taken with a large grain of salt.

The question rises why this is the case. For this I take a close look at Waldseemüller's world map and its discovery.

3.2. A closer look at the discovery of Waldseemüller's world map

The first person to study Waldseemüller in detail, using his Latin name *Iacomilus*, was Alexander von Humboldt (1869–1959). It was he who first proved the identical identity of Martin Waldseemüller or *Martinus Iacomilus*.⁴⁶

⁴³ Edward Heawood, Glareanus: His Geography and Maps, *The Geographical Journal*, 25/6, 1905, pp. 647–654. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/1776451> accessed 23 October 2024.

⁴⁴ Hermann Baumeister, *Der Kosmograf Martin Waldseemüller, seine Weltkarte und der Erdglobus von 1507, Die Jugend des Martin Waldseemüller, Schau-ins-Land*, Freiburg, 2013, pp. 1–31. https://regionalia.blb-karlsruhe.de/frontdoor/deliver/index/docId/17687/file/BLB_Baumeister_Martin_Waldseemuller.pdf accessed 23 October 2024.

⁴⁵ Leo Bagrow, Ashlin Raleigh Skelton, *Meister der Kartografie*, Berlin, Safari Verlag, 1963, p. 195.

⁴⁶ Franz von Wieser, *Die Cosmographiae Introductio des Martin Waldseemüller*. Strasbourg: J. Heitz, 1907, p. 13.

The Austrian professor and Jesuit priest Joseph Fischer (Fig. 7)⁴⁷ persistently searched for Waldseemüller's map for seven years. His extraordinary and somewhat surreptitious discovery of the hitherto untraceable and above all very valuable world map in the hot summer of 1901 in a German Renaissance castle tower, namely that of the princely family of Waldburg-Wolfegg in Upper Swabia (the map was part of a collection known as the Wolfegger Kabinett), still captures the imagination today.

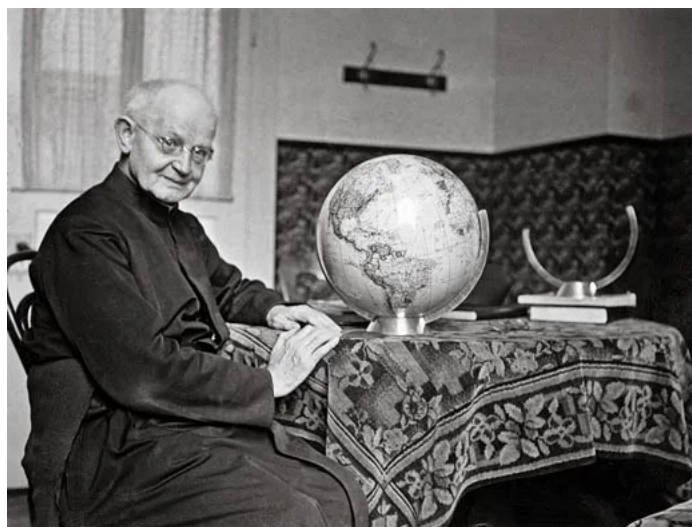


Fig. 7: Prof. Joseph Fischer, SJ. Picture dating from 1937, courtesy of the ÖNB, Vienna.

The separated printed sheets of Waldseemüller's world map were bound together with other loose sheets of other valuable maps, including the Carta Marina, and bits and pieces of glued paper gores for a celestial globe collected by Johannes Schöner.⁴⁸

The ex libris by the Nuremberg cartographer and printer Johannes Schöner authored 1516 in Latin in the volume found by Fischer reads: "To posterity, Schöner leaves this as a gift and lasting reminder of his talent."

In the 1528 portrait (Fig. 8), the now settled and rich clothed Schöner holds a beautiful celestial globe. In this globe Boötes, the herdsman, can be clearly discerned. Striking is that the herdsman is wearing a skirt made of straw. The Nuremberg artist Hans Springinklee,⁴⁹ employee of Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528), adapted the celestial constellation and covers the herdsman's naked behind. In contrast, in Schöner's 1522 hand painted celestial globe, part of the Brixen Globes, the herdsman is without a skirt.⁵⁰

The attributes of the heavenly southern sky with the zodiacal element of the scales (Libra) refer to his main field of interest, especially cosmography and possibly also the production of globes.

It is therefore not surprising that this gift, including the long sought after world map, of which only one copy exists, purchased mainly with the money of many private American sponsors has acquired iconic institutional, media and historical significance.

⁴⁷ Josef Fischer and Franz von Wieser, *Die älteste Karte mit dem Namen Amerika aus dem Jahre 1507 und die Carta Marina aus dem Jahre 1516 des M. Waldseemüller (Ilacomilus)* / Innsbruck: Verlag der Wagner'schen Universitäts-Buchhandlung. 1903.

⁴⁸ Sven Hauschke, "Kurfürst Johann Friedrich von Sachsen und der Astronom und Mathematiker Johannes Schöner: Das Globenpaar von 1533/1534 in Weimar = Elector John Frederick of Saxony and Johannes Schöner, Astronomer and Mathematician: The Globe Pair of 1533/1534 at Weimar". Nr. 51–52, 2005, f. 2003/2004, pp. 9–19.

⁴⁹ Monika Maruska, *Johannes Schöner - Homo est nescio qualis' Leben und Werk eines fränkischen Wissenschafters an der Wende vom 15. zum 16. Jahrhundert*. PhD. University of Vienna, 2008, p. 315.

⁵⁰ I thank Dr. Kristin Lippincott for her finding and e-mail dating 11 December 2024.

<https://collections.britishart.yale.edu/catalog/orbis:11416653> accessed 12 December 2024.



Fig. 8: Portrait of Johannes Schöner dating from 1528 by Hans Springinklee (c. 1490–1540). The inscription reads:

“CORPORIS HANC FACIEM HVNC VVLTVM SCHONERVS HABEBAT / CVM IAM DESINERET
CONDERE LVSTRA DECEM: / ARTIS ET INGENII DECORA HAEC DIVINA TENEBAT / VNDE SVI
PRIMVS TEMPORIS ILLE FVIT: / M.D.XXVIII”.⁵¹ Striking is the constellation Boötes, i.e. the herdsman, who decently wears a skirt made of straw by the artist to cover his naked behind. Picture courtesy of the City Museum of Hannover. Public domain.

After its discovery, interest in Waldseemüller's world map grew. This motivated London bookseller Henry Newton Stevens (1855–1930), a leading dealer in Americana, to acquire the rights from the German owner on the occasion of its (alleged) 400th anniversary to try to offer this Waldseemüller map on the market. He offered the package of Schöner's folio. This conglomerate is known as Schöner's Sammelband,⁵² with the manuscript message of the gift containing the

⁵¹ Elly Dekker, “Globes in Art. Problems of representation and interpretation” in *Globes at Greenwich. A catalogue of the Globes and Armillary Spheres in the National Maritime Museum*, eds. K. Lippincott, et al., London and Oxford: National Maritime Museum / Oxford University Press, 1999, pp. 75–86.

⁵² Library of Congress, catalogue,

Carta Marina of 1516 for USD 300,000 which in today's currency (2025) is USD 10,000,000.⁵³ But Stevens was not successful, and he found no interested buyers. It took about hundred years and a lot of political clout before the map was finally sold.⁵⁴

The sale of this German (European) cultural heritage monument, politically supported by German Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel (born 1954), was not without criticism.⁵⁵ The map was bought for 10 million USD (value of 17 million USD in 2025) by the LoC in 2001, but in 2003 Merkel made the staged symbolic diplomatic handover during the presidency of US President George W. Bush (1946–) for the press and the protocol.⁵⁶ She thereby celebrated the diplomatic act with fanfare, offering it as a gesture designed to underscore Germany's close friendship with America.⁵⁷ The occasion was the EU-US summit in Washington, at which Angela Merkel, as President of the EU Council, solemnly approved the "New Transatlantic Economic Partnership".

The question ensues: why did it take so long to sell this unique map? Was it the deficiency of public funds, its high price, the examination by Harris or were there doubts or even a hope that maybe other samples would turn up or perhaps a combination of the above factors?

Another pressing question that arises is whether Father Fischer, in his joint book with Prof. Fr. Ritter von Wieser (1848–1923) (Fig. 9) published in 1903,⁵⁸ made a written reference to the source and the reuse of paper and therefore to a later dating of Waldseemüller's large world map.

This is not the case. Harris writes that Fischer could decipher some of the words of the Latin printed text on the back but failed to identify the source of the text.⁵⁹ This enigma thus lasted until the late 20th century.

Apparently, the pursuit of publicity and marketing of Waldseemüller's world map by Father Fischer, may have had priority over finding the source and date of the reverse print.

Waldseemüller's impressive world map bears the title: *Universalis cosmographia secundum Ptholomaei traditionem et Americi Vespucii aliorū que lustrationes*. In English: A universal cosmography according to the tradition of Ptolemy and the surveys of America i.e. Amerigo Vespucci and others. In 2003 the map's title was unsuccessfully shortened to the *Cosmographia Mundi*.⁶⁰ For those who haven't noticed: Americi (the person) is in the title. America is defined as a geographical concept.

The word *Cosmographia* is used twice: for the map and for the introduction, in which the name of America was printed for the first time.⁶¹

As for the most important aspect of Waldseemüller's map, its contents, it would lead us too far to go into detail here, but in what follows I look at some most striking aspects relating to its content.

<https://catalog.loc.gov/vwebv/search?searchArg=Scho%CC%88ner%20Sammelband,&searchCode=TALL&searchType=1&recCount=25> accessed 17 October 2024.

⁵³ Official Data Foundation, Alioth LLC, CPI Inflation Calculator, <https://www.in2013dollars.com/us/inflation/2003?amount=10000000>

⁵⁴ Toby Lester, *The Fourth Part of the World*, 2009, pp. 18–19.

⁵⁵ <https://archiv.twoday.net/stories/4689959/> accessed 17 October 2024.

⁵⁶ Peter Müller, Vertragsabschluss und eine Karte als Gastgeschenk, *Die Welt*, 30.04.2007, <https://www.welt.de/politik/article842365/Vertragsabschluss-und-eine-Karte-als-Gastgeschenk.html>

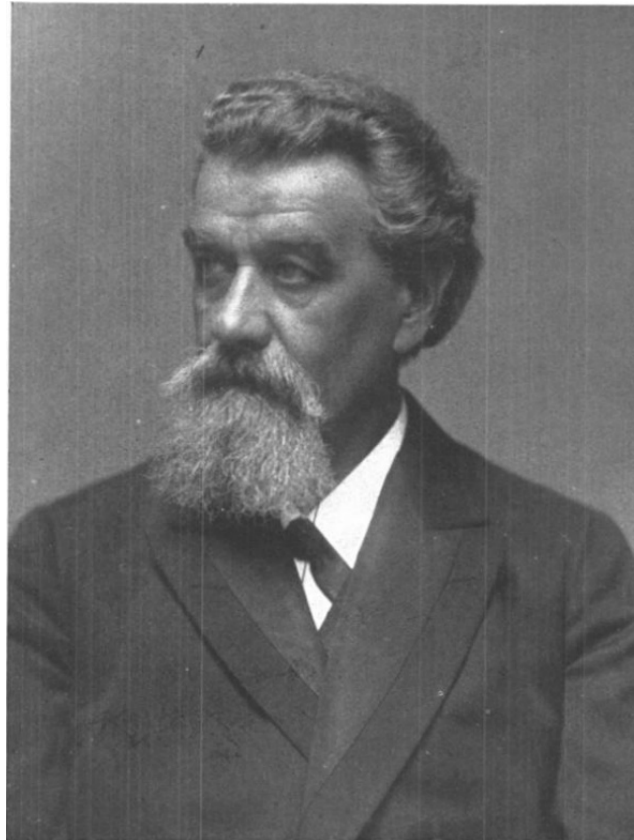
⁵⁷ Ralf Beste, Jan Fleischhauer, Georg Mascolo, Christian Reiermann, Matthias Schepp, and Gabor Steingart, Merkel's Pact with America Germany Rediscovered the US as a Partner, Translated by Christopher Sultan, *Der Spiegel*, [://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/merkel-s-pact-with-america-germany-rediscovered-the-us-as-a-partner-a-480221.html](https://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/merkel-s-pact-with-america-germany-rediscovered-the-us-as-a-partner-a-480221.html)

⁵⁸ Franz Ritter von Wieser, *Gedenkschrift Von Freunden und Verehrern des Verewigten*, Verlag – des Museum Ferdinandeum, Innsbruck 1925, <https://ulb-digital.uibk.ac.at/download/pdf/359118.pdf> accessed 28 October 2024.

⁵⁹ E. Harris, op. cit. p. 41.

⁶⁰ Heather Wanser, Treatment and Preparation of Waldseemüller's Map, *Conservation Corner*, Vol. 62, Nr. 9, LoC, 2003. <https://www.loc.gov/loc/lcib/0309/conserv.html> accessed 19 December 2024.

⁶¹ Raleigh Ashlin Skelton, op. cit. pp. v–xx.



F. v. Wieser.

Fig. 9: Hofrat Univ. Prof. Dr. Franz Ritter von Wieser (1848–1923). Public domain.

3.3. Some key aspects relating to the content of Waldseemüller's world map and other contemporary map makers

What stands out on this world map is the depiction of the presumed part of the coastline of North America, with a large unnamed bay and presumably Florida as a peninsula.⁶² How could this be in 1507 when it is known that Florida was discovered not prior to 1513 and it was then assumed to be an island. And how could the west coast of South America be depicted before its discovery and the completion of the first circumnavigation of the world, which ended in September 1522? But there are even trickier questions, such as why Waldseemüller placed the very important trading port of Calliquit, the source of valuable spices, to the east of Taprobana (present-day Sri Lanka) and not in its proper place to the west? Why did he decide to insert an additional map with two spherical hemispheres on top of the Waldseemüller world map? Why did he include a fly behind Vespucci's portrait on top of the map.⁶³ Here, I get to the bottom of it in this research.

Regarding the answer to the first question with the large unnamed bay and Florida as a peninsula, we know Columbus was convinced he was in Asia. As such, Waldseemüller created a fictional coastline of Asia, thereby adapting cartographic knowledge directly or indirectly from other cartographic sources like the circular map of Fra Mauro,⁶⁴ the Globe dating from 1492 named after Martin Behaim (1459–1507), a Ptolemy Atlas dating from 1486 and others, to portray this coastal line. Fig. 10 depicts the presumed coastal line of North America with the fictitious peninsula of Florida; a visionary and undersized anonymous Gulf with numerous inexistent and unnamed small islands; and Cuba,

⁶² Donald L. McGuirk Jr., "The Presumed North America on the Waldseemüller World Map (1507). A Theory of Its Discovery by Christopher Columbus." *Terrae Incognitae, The Journal of the Society for the History of Discoveries*, Volume 46, 2014 – Issue 2.

⁶³ Alida C. Metcalf, *Mapping an Atlantic World*, <https://acm5.blogs.rice.edu/page-d/> accessed 18 October 2024.

⁶⁴ Angelo Cattaneo, *European Medieval and Renaissance Cosmography: A Story of Multiple Voices*, *Asian Review of World Histories* 4:1, The Asian Association of World Historians, 2016, pp. 35–81.

named Isabella, incorrectly meeting with the Tropic of Cancer, as is the case with Yucatan, Jamaica, and the oversized and misdirected island of Spagnolla (Haiti/Dominican Republic).

The Venetian humanist Alessandro Zorzi (before 1470–after 1538) copied a collection of texts relating to the discoveries in Asia and the New World. His manuscript charts in his codices at the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale in Florence (Magl. XIII, 80–84),⁶⁵ of which the earliest date from c. 1506, allow a better understanding of how Columbus saw the world.

Zorzi's value lies mainly in the fact that he managed to copy several now lost maps by Zuan Rames, perhaps Ambrogio Contarini (1429–1499) or now particularly rare ones including the Cantino map dating from 1502 and the Hernán Cortéz (1485–1547) map of Mexico.

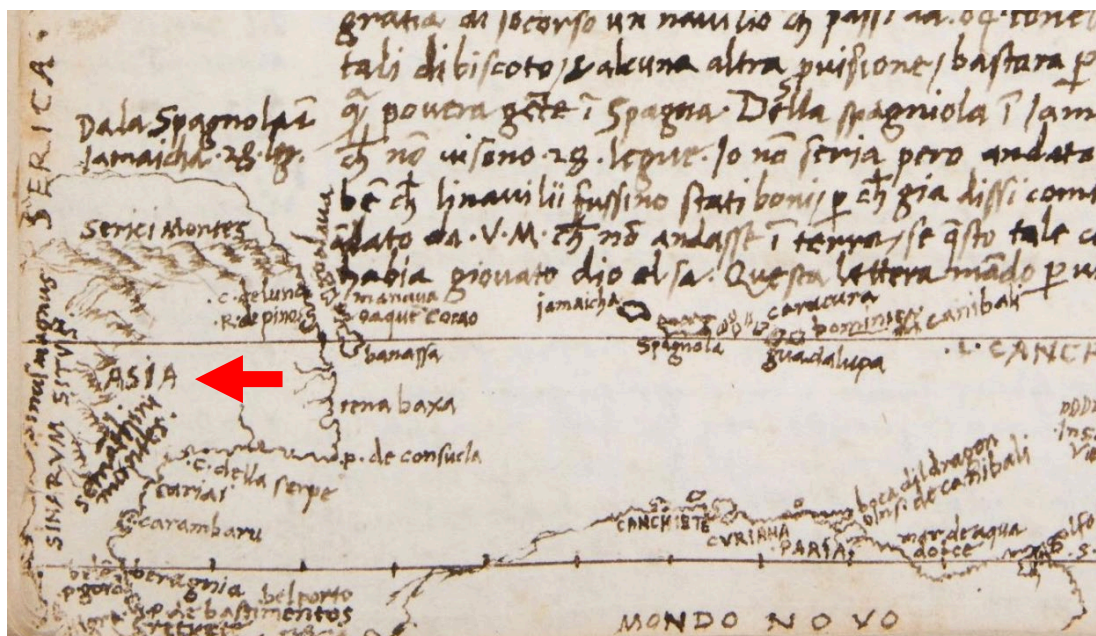


Fig. 10: Detail of the Ferrara Codex, page 60 verso. It contains an amended translation of the July 1503 Christopher Columbus letter from Jamaica, first published in Venice, 1505. Notice the word to the left ASIA in capital letters (red arrow) and the mistakenly protruding peninsula imagined to be Florida. MONDO NOVO, the New World is on the bottom right and is connected to Asia while Japan is omitted. Picture courtesy of the Library of Ferrara.

A detail of Zorzi's manuscript map is portrayed in Fig. 10. It is from one of his codices that contains an amended translation of the July 1503 Christopher Columbus (1451–1506) letter from Jamaica, first published in Venice, 1505. It proves the landmass estimated to be part of ASIA, spelled in capital letters. The protruding peninsula on the coast of East Asia is mistakenly imagined to be Florida. MONDO NOVO, the New World, in the bottom right is connected to Asia while Japan is neglected. The old Ptolemaic world is conjoined by the newly discovered continent.⁶⁶ Except for the deliberate omission of Japan, one could think that Zorzi might have been influenced by Martellus as far as the shape of the coast of Asia is concerned, as Van Duzer claims.⁶⁷

This is what makes the maps in his *Codices Alberico*, also known as *raccolta Alberico*,⁶⁸ so fascinating as they offer a rare compilation of news with copious marginalia about the past and the New World.⁶⁹ Others have named these codices after their author, namely *Codices Zorzi*.⁷⁰ Zorzi's striking miscellanea of geography, containing selected text fragments

⁶⁵ Luciano Formisano, "LA COMPILAZIONE DI VIAGGI DI ALESSANDRO ZORZI FIRENZE, BIBLIOTECA NAZIONALE CENTRALE, B. R. 233–236." *Vespucci, Firenze e Le Americhe: Atti Del Convegno Di Studi (Firenze, 22–24 Novembre 2012)*, edited by Giuliano Pinto et al., 1st edn, vol. 71, Casa Editrice Leo S. Olschki s.r.l., 2014, pp. 441–456.

⁶⁶ George E. Nunn, "The three maplets attributed to Bartholomew Columbus", *Imago Mundi* 9, 1952, pp. 12–22.

⁶⁷ Chet van Duzer, *Henricus Martellus's World Map at Yale (c. 1491): Multispectral Imaging, Sources, Influence*, New York: Springer, 2018, p. 176.

⁶⁸ Elizabeth Horodowich, *Compiled Geographies: The Venetian Travelogue and the Americas*. In: *The Venetian Discovery of America: Geographic Imagination and Print Culture in the Age of Encounters*. Cambridge University Press, 2018, p. 42. <https://dokumen.pub/the-venetian-discovery-of-america-9781107150874-9781316596692-1107150876.html> accessed 21 January 2025.

⁶⁹ Luis A. Robles Macías, *Alessandro Zorzi's sketch maps*, Presentation at the Brussels Circle Map Afternoon (MAPAF) 2017. Royal Library of Belgium, Brussels. 22 April 2017.

<https://hal.science/hal-01528112/file/Presentation%20Zorzi%20maps%20for%20Mapaf%202017%20-%20text.pdf> and

<https://hal.science/hal-01528112/file/Presentation%20Zorzi%20maps%20for%20Mapaf%202017.pdf>

accessed 21 January 2025.

⁷⁰ Francesco Guidi Bruscoli, "A Carreira da Índia nos arquivos italianos." In *Memórias 2015*. Lisbona: Academia de. Marinha, 2016, pp. 229–242. https://academia.marinha.pt/pt/academiademarinha/Edies/Memorias_2015.pdf