



Oliveriana /Pesaro world map

Description: The *Oliveriana* or *Pesaro* map, housed in the Biblioteca Oliveriana, Pesaro, Italy, is so named after its founder Annibale degli Abbati Olivieri Giordani 1708-1789). It was presented to that library in 1904 by Marchese Ciro Antaldi Santinelli, librarian 1894-1907. It is undated and unsigned. Unfortunately no one has succeeded in discovering who was the maker of the *Pesaro* map. The world map measures 114 x 197 cm and is drawn on a strip of parchment of 122 x 206 cm (44 x 77 inches). The *Pesaro* map is a working navigational chart, not an artistic copy made for some prince. There are no elaborate wind-roses, no long Latin captions, no details of the interior. No latitude or longitude is shown. His style is similar to that of another world map, designed by Vesconte Maggiolo of Genoa (#316). Legends are in Latin, and also in Portuguese. Although this is almost certainly the first map to label South America as *Mundus Novus*, it has no west coast of America, and to confound the situation there is no Chinese east coast, as though allowing for a possible linkage of Asia and America.

At first sight its coastline suggests the *La Cosa* map (#305), but comparison shows wide differences, while various features recall the pre-Cosan maps of the eastern extension of Asia, whereof several are known. With none of these does it match exactly (that never happens in maps of the period), though the match might be closer had we the lost Toscanelli map (#252); but in general outline and position of the rivers there is marked resemblance to the East Asian extension as shown on the Doppelmeyr, Ghillany, and Ravenstein reproductions of the *Behaim* globe of 1492 (#258). The probability that it came from that source is increased by the fact that the shape of the *Insula de labrador* is very closely like that assigned the mythical Atlantic island of the seven cities on some pre-Cosan maps, though the island of *GROGAY* is an addition, as is also the land, partially shown in the upper right-hand corner of the mid-Atlantic, obviously representing Greenland. The names, including several on Greenland, are all more or less

obviously associated with the Cabots though they occur in anomalous order and position. Thus, *LASERNT* may well be the *tisane* of La Cosa (#305); *CAUO DEL MATKO* may be the Cape of St. Mark; *BAJA VENTURA*, (or *BONAVENTURA*) *bonaventure*, may survive as Fortune Bay; *TERRA DE CORTE* may be *Cortereal*, meaning *Land of the Cortereals*, marking their western limit and the eastern of Cabots' first exploration; *PONTA DEL PA* may be *ponto del padr* a cape of the territorial mark: while *GROGAY* though applied to an island which would seem intended for *isla de trenidat* (Miquelon-Langlade), may be La Cosa's *GRIGOR* misplaced. The next four names *BACOLAOS*, *BOSAS*, (rosGs?) and *LASPERA* (Cape Spear) are all recognizable, but should be located on the east, not the south, coast. As to *BAJA OE RAS* (or *COS*, as Harrissee makes it), that may be *roses*, not *race*. Taken as a whole, this map seems to represent the attempt of an unknown early cartographer to embody somewhat uncertain information about the Cabot places and names on a map, which, in absence of Cabot's, he compiled from the sources above-mentioned.

The channels by which authentic information of Cabot's expeditions could have come into La Cosa's hands are now a fragment of land in the approximate position of Florida, and this may perhaps be the origin of the representation in the *Oliveriana* map, with a shift northward and eastward and some modification of outline. Since the right-hand section of the *Oliveriana* map is missing, we cannot assume how the cartographer related the lands in the west to the east coast of Asia.

The extreme northern part of the New World is represented as three distinct regions, exhibiting much confusion as to the identity of Greenland and the land discovered by the Corte Reals. The island of *Frislanda* is represented, and the name *Insula de labardor* is given to a small island lying to its southwest. The north continental coastline of the New World appearing, for example, in the chart of Canerio (#307), is omitted. Very many of the West Indian Islands, with names, are represented, while the island of Cuba has the outline as given by Juan de la Cosa, thus indicating an early source. The Atlantic coast of South America is drawn from Yucatan to a point near the mouth of the La Plata River. The names along this coast, not numerous, are of very early origin. The chart maker has represented, with some uncertainty, the mouth of the Amazon River; and while not accurately locating his mountain ranges gives special prominence to the fact that mountains constitute a prominent feature of this continent that he calls *Mundus Nouus*. The *Pesaro* and *Ruysch* (#313) maps are the only ones of the period to bear the words *MUNDUS NOVUS* on South America. This is presumably taken from the *Mundus Novus* letter attributed to Vespucci (1504).

In his outline of the Old World the author is in practical agreement with *Cantino* (#306) and *Canio* (#307).

In the heart of Africa Prester John, the mythical Christian king, is located, for whom the Portuguese made search in the days of Henry the Navigator. One will observe that the Mediterranean is represented with a much nearer approach to accuracy than may be found on the Ptolemy maps and those especially influenced by these maps, but the Caspian Sea, the land of Arabia, the Red Sea, and northern Africa from Cape Guardafui westward to the Atlantic coast are far from having their true relations and proportions given.

On the west coast of Africa between Gibraltar and the Cape of Good Hope, the *Oliveriana/Pesaro* map has 153 place names. There are only 72 on the Portuguese map of 1490. While the line of the equator is not indicated on the *Pesaro* map, the equatorial compass rose is identifiable, and we observe that the Cape of Good Hope on the *Pesaro*

map is as far south of the equator as the Madeira Islands are to the north of it. The Cape is placed only slightly west of the longitude of the mouth of the Nile. Four islands in the Gulf of Guinea in a slightly curving line properly positioned, are named: *De Fernando*, *Principe*, *Antonio* [St. Thomas], and *Amobao* [Anobon]. Three of the Cape Verde Islands and seven of the Canaries are named. Six principal islands of the Azores are named and Corvo and two others are shown. Of the Madeiras, *P. Santo* and *Amadera* are named. All four island groups are in relatively correct positions.

The east coast of Africa indicates the indentation between Mozambique and Cape Corrientes, and the larger indentation between *Mogadisho* [Somaliland] and Mozambique. The southern end of Africa on the east side approximates actuality and does not follow the exaggerated west-east line which it does on the *La Cosa* map (#305). The Gulf of Aden is far too small; the Red Sea extends more nearly east-west than NW-SE; Madagascar is too far south; Ceylon is properly oriented and placed in relation to the tip of India; *Taprobana*, in relation to the peninsula of India, is approximately in the position of Sumatra. The Gulf of Oman is more nearly accurate than on the *King-Hamy* map of 1502 (#307.1). Only the southern half of the Persian Gulf, that which extends east-west, is indicated. India is portrayed as a single peninsula. The Gulf of Cutch and the Gulf of Cambay are indicated, the latter named *Cambara*. On the west coast of India between *Cambara* and *Cape de Curiaz* [Comorin] there are seventeen place names, while seven place names appear on the east coast. To the east of the southern portion of the Indian peninsula, in the position of the Laccadives, seven islands are named. South to Southwest of these, in the position of the Maldives, three others are named.

The coasts of South America are represented in significantly greater length than on previous contemporary maps (*see the detailed redrawing below*). The biggest group of names is along the South American coast, from what may be considered part of Panama to Monte Pascual near Porto Seguro. The angle taken by the coast at *Cauo S(anra) Croxe* is remarkably accurate. As can be seen, there are three large estuaries dotted with small islands, the first two clearly intended for the Amazon and the Para. But the third, which would appear to be the Plate River, is featured as not far from Monte Pascual, sighted by Cabral in 1500, which is actually about 1600 miles distant. The names shown on the detailed redrawn map below include an attempt to correct some wrongly transcribed in the *Raccolta Colombiana*.

In particular, there is the *Río de la Plata* to the south latitude of Africa, and the coast continues over a dozen additional degrees. If the map has been designed around 1505, this supports the thesis that Amerigo Vespucci explored first the coast of South America to 50° S, before Juan Díaz de Solís. *MUNDUS nouus* is given to the mainland. This term was used for the first time in 1504, in a letter attributed to Vespucci eponymous but that could have been written by another. As mentioned, the world map of Ruysch (#313) is the only other known map of this time to use it. The northern part of the map of South America bears the two labels: *Provincia Pariata* and *Onota Provincia*. Does the *Pariata* (from which *Pareas* was derived) mean “apparent, real, seen”, the opposite of “unknown”? If so, the origin of the much-disputed name *Pareas* is made clear.

Interesting, retrograde features of the *Pesaro* map include the fact that it has neither latitudes nor longitudes marked off; its showing *Costa Fermoza* north of Cuba and *Spagnola*; east of this its showing of Newfoundland (*Rivo de los bacalaos* and *Cavo de las resa*), with *Braga Y* to the south of Newfoundland; and then Greenland far separate from Newfoundland, with *Insula de labrador* south of Greenland and if anything a little

west of the middle of Greenland. In none of these features does the *Pesaro* map resemble Ptolemy.

The West Indies are inscribed: *Antilhas del rei de castella descovierta per collombo armirante. Insula de Cuba* [By means of the actual occurrence of the villages, descovierta Antilhas del Collomb armirante. The island of Cuba] is indicated in the form as given on the *La Cosa* map, in particular, we find the “hook” to the southwest of Cuba. Note the fact that the insularity of Cuba was known or accepted by *La Cosa* eight years before De Ocampo first (officially) circumnavigated Cuba.

The *Pesaro* map shows *G. de Urava* [Uraba], the Yucatan Peninsula with an island some distance off to the east of it, and the turn of the coast of Honduras, *Cavo Almaraso* where Cape Gracias a Dios is. It shows *Jamaica Y*, and three islands, *Draconeia Y*, the Caymans.

As mentioned above, the west coast of America is not represented, nor the Chinese coast, which allows the unknown cartographer to equivocate as to whether America is merged with Asia, as is the case in the world map or Ruysch (#313) or Contarini (#308). The absence of the edge of the map can be deliberate, or may be the consequence of the loss of a portion thereof.

The completion date of this map is not known with certainty. The historian R.A. Skelton speculates 1508-1510, Frederick Pohl believes in 1505-1508, Levillier is convinced it is older than the world map of Ruysch (1508), others have suggested dates between 1504 and 1508.

According to Edward L. Stevenson, this map has so many similarities with the notes of Amerigo Vespucci that can be considered very close to *Padron* he had been instructed to carry out in 1508, now lost.

This world map is held in the Biblioteca Oliveriana, Pesaro and is a superb presentation of the data available just after the start of the 16th century. It is drawn on a parchment measuring 122 x 206 cm and is overall 114 x 197cm. The western section illustrates the Spanish and Portuguese exploration of the West Indies and South America as well as the multi country explorations of the NE Coast of Canada. That chart section as described covers approximately one third of the chart area. The central section comprising Europe and Africa covers about 45% of the chart area with the India/Malaysia section occupying about 22%.

And there-in, according to Michael Ferrar, is the presentational problem with South America, etc. occupying the same chart width as the African continent which spans some 68.5 degrees longitude, whilst the Indian/Malaysian section from the River Indus to the River Ganges is 24 degrees longitude. The South American section as drawn may be considered extending from 35°W to 85°W, twice the longitude of the Indian section but drawn three times as large and is thus also about 135% larger than Africa.

According to Michael Ferrar nothing in the research points to the *Pesaro* chart being either by or copied actually from one of the tested charts (i.e/. the *Juan de la Cosa* (#305), the *Cantino* 1502 (#306), the *Caverio* (#307) and the *Vesconte Maggiolo Fano* chart (#307.4) as by reason of their divergence in so many areas. Similarities can be perhaps made visually but when the actual charts are overlaid they become less obvious and thus cannot be considered as brother or sister charts. They all indicate a wide variation in the draughtsmanship and their accuracy which would not be correct for a single author. Like many other charts which are unattributed there-on perhaps always seeking the author is fun but eventually a waste of time unless careful analysis of each can be carried out with the two originals side by side, thus exact comparisons of style etc can be

made.

The stylistic simplicity of the *Pesaro* chart illustrates the fact that this chart is to be considered “geographical” and not a decorated library piece. It is also open to opine that it is not the finished article the draughtsman desired as at this period there was far more information available in the east which could have enhanced the “geography”. The western part is intriguing and would point to a failure by the draughtsman to update his information sufficiently, which could point to a chart being drawn over many years, perhaps 1504 to 1508 and what had been drawn remained unaltered. Thus Ferrar suggests that the large amount of mountainous area drawn is probably a fig leaf for this continuous drawing process as it was impractical to alter the drawn sections to update it all but some stylistic forms were drawn.

The *King-Hamy* map (#307.1) at the Houghton library has been attributed to Amerigo Vespucci and compared to the *Pesaro* map. The *Pesaro* map of ca 1505-1508 at the Biblioteca e Musei Oliveriana, Pesaro Italy has been cited as a fairly good copy of Vespucci's 1508 *Padron Real* of Spain and the *Egerton MS2803* map (#312). *Pesaro* map has not even framed the concept of a continuous mainland from Greenland to Patagonia; it lacks the hand of Cosa. It shows three separate lands corresponding with Greenland, Newfoundland/Labrador and an indeterminate land far to the west, with a hypothetic coastline. The *Pesaro* map lacks all the major features which enrich the *Egerton MS2803* map and clearly cannot be the *Padron Real* from 1508 onwards. It may be based upon Vespucci's voyages, but the *Egerton* map, a map of the New World, stands as the most probable example of the *Padron Real* of 1510 that exists. The map of Juan de La Cosa of 1500 was too early for precision or much information or nomenclature.

The chief interest in the '*Oliveriani*' map is its representation of the northern sections of the New World in an attempt to interpret information gathered from various sources. The three large land masses in the North Atlantic show a conception of a land running east to west, somewhat like the *Cosa* map (#305), to which the West Indies and the western hooked end of Cuba also bear a resemblance. To the north of Cuba is a coast that may be an eastern promontory of Asia or the land shown on the *Cantino* map (#306) and its successors. To the east of this is the land discovered by Cabot (Labrador/Newfoundland); on it is '*Terra de Corte*', probably a reference to the Corte-Reals, and '*rivo de los bacalaos*' [the river of cod]. Below Greenland is a large island, '*Insula de labardor*' [the land discovered by the labrador], Joao Fernandes; this is probably a reduplication of Greenland. The differences between this *Oliveriani* map and its contemporaries show the variation in interpretation possible to mapmakers with the same sources of information. It may be a copy of an early map by Amerigo Vespucci, whose discoveries in South America are shown on it.

Location: Pesaro, Italy, Biblioteca e Musei Oliveriani.

References:

- Cumming, W.P., R.A. Skelton, D.B. Quinn, *The Discovery of North America*, pp. 62-63.
 Dilke, Margaret S. and A Brancati, “The New World in the *Pesaro* Map”, *Imago Mundi* 31 (1977), pp. 78-83.
 Ferrar, Michael, “ChPES/1: *Pesaro* Oliveriana Planisphere, c 1509 Rare Presentational Method that goes Awry”.
 Ganong, William F., *Crucial Maps in the Early Cartography and Place-Nomenclature of the Atlantic Coast of Canada* University of Toronto Press, 1964.
 Ferrar, Michael, “Ch/PES/1; *Pesaro* Oliveriana Planisphere, ca. 1509 Rare Presentational Method

That Goes Awry"

Pohl, Frederick J., "The Pesaro Map, 1505", *Imago Mundi*, Volume 7, 1950, pages 82-83.

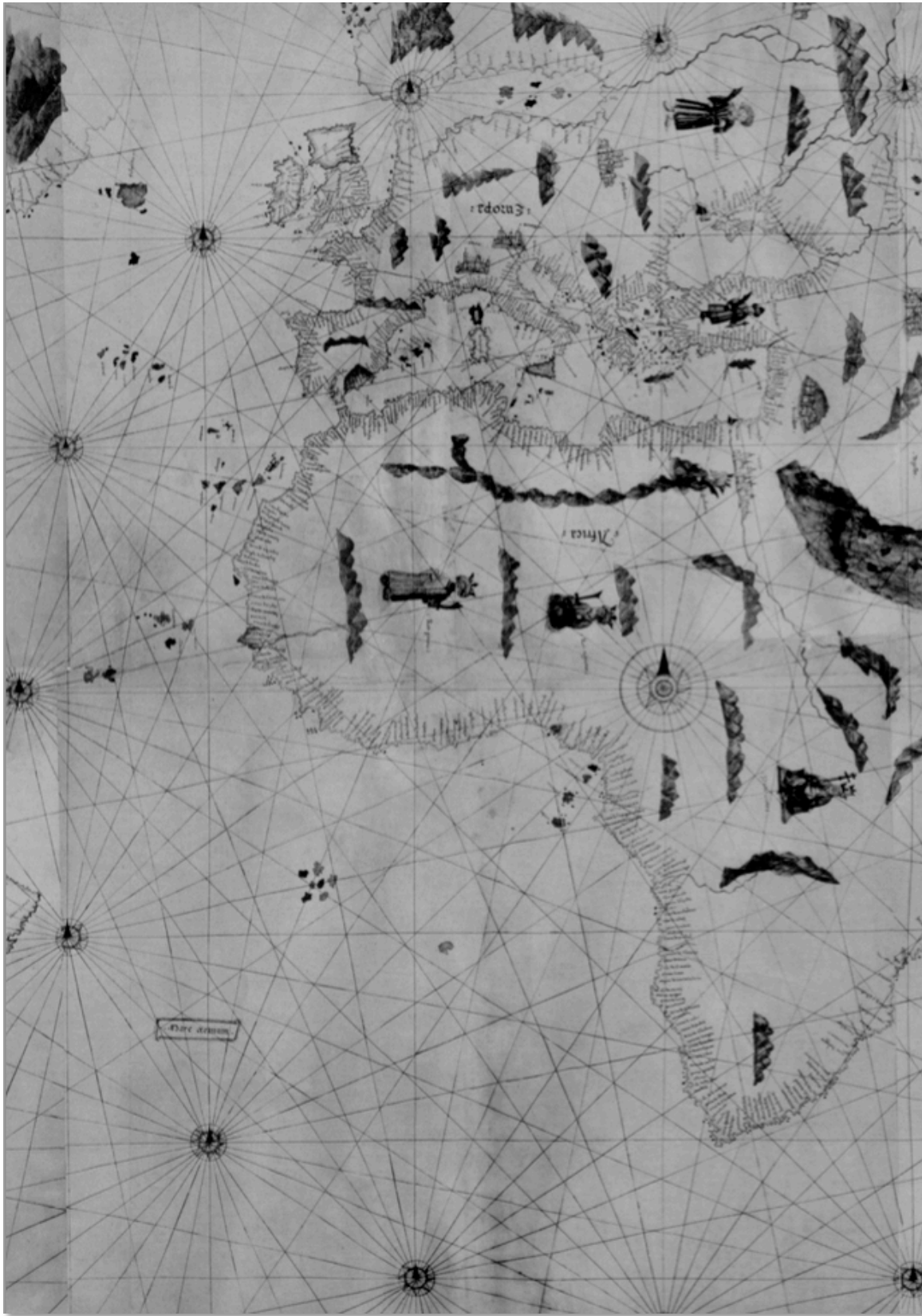
Skelton, R.A., *The Cabot Voyages and Bristol Discovery under Henry VII*, Routledge, 2017.

Stevenson, Edward L., "The Geographical Activities of the Casa de la Contratacion", *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 17: 2, June 1927, pages 39-59.

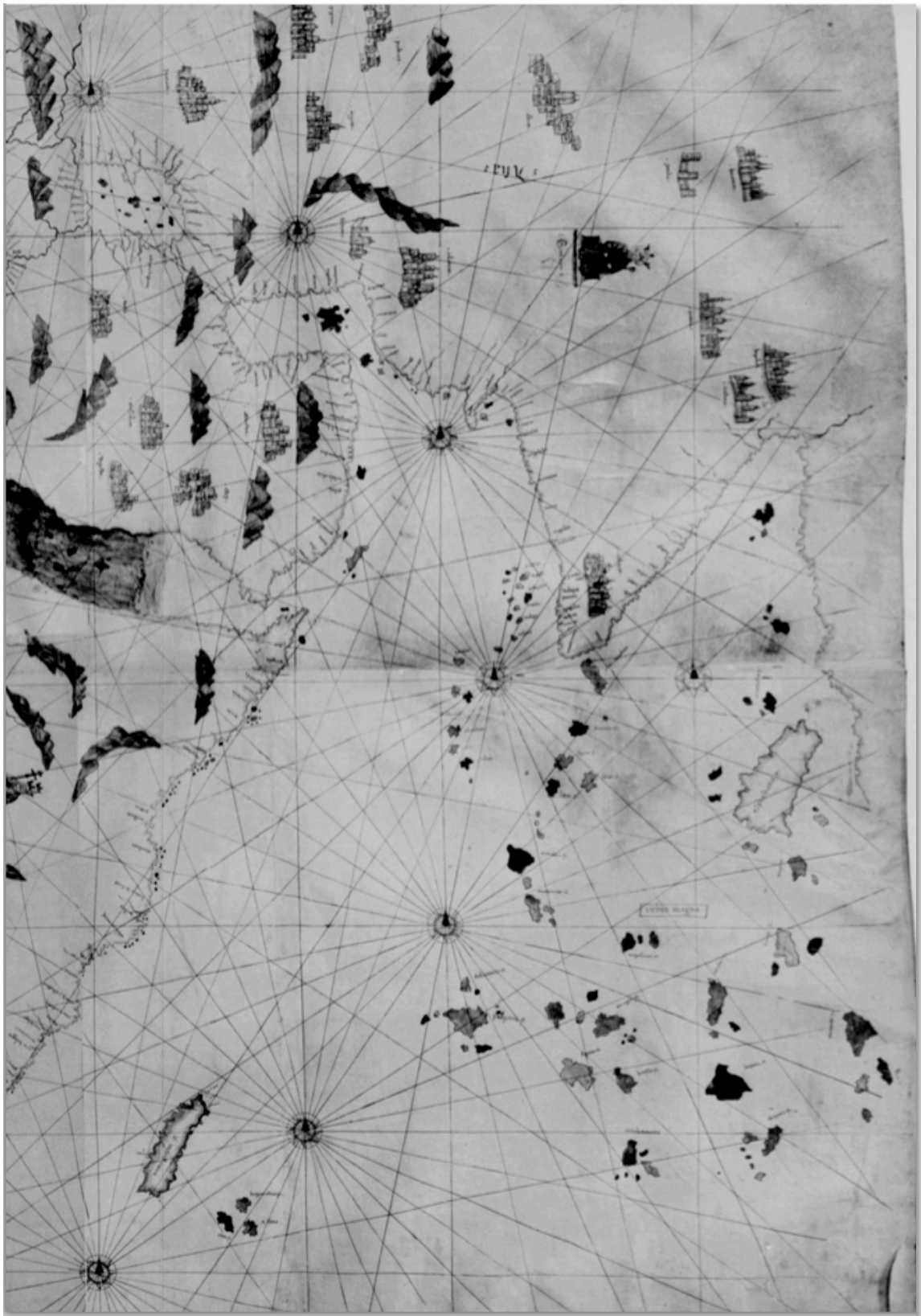


Detail: the Caribbean area

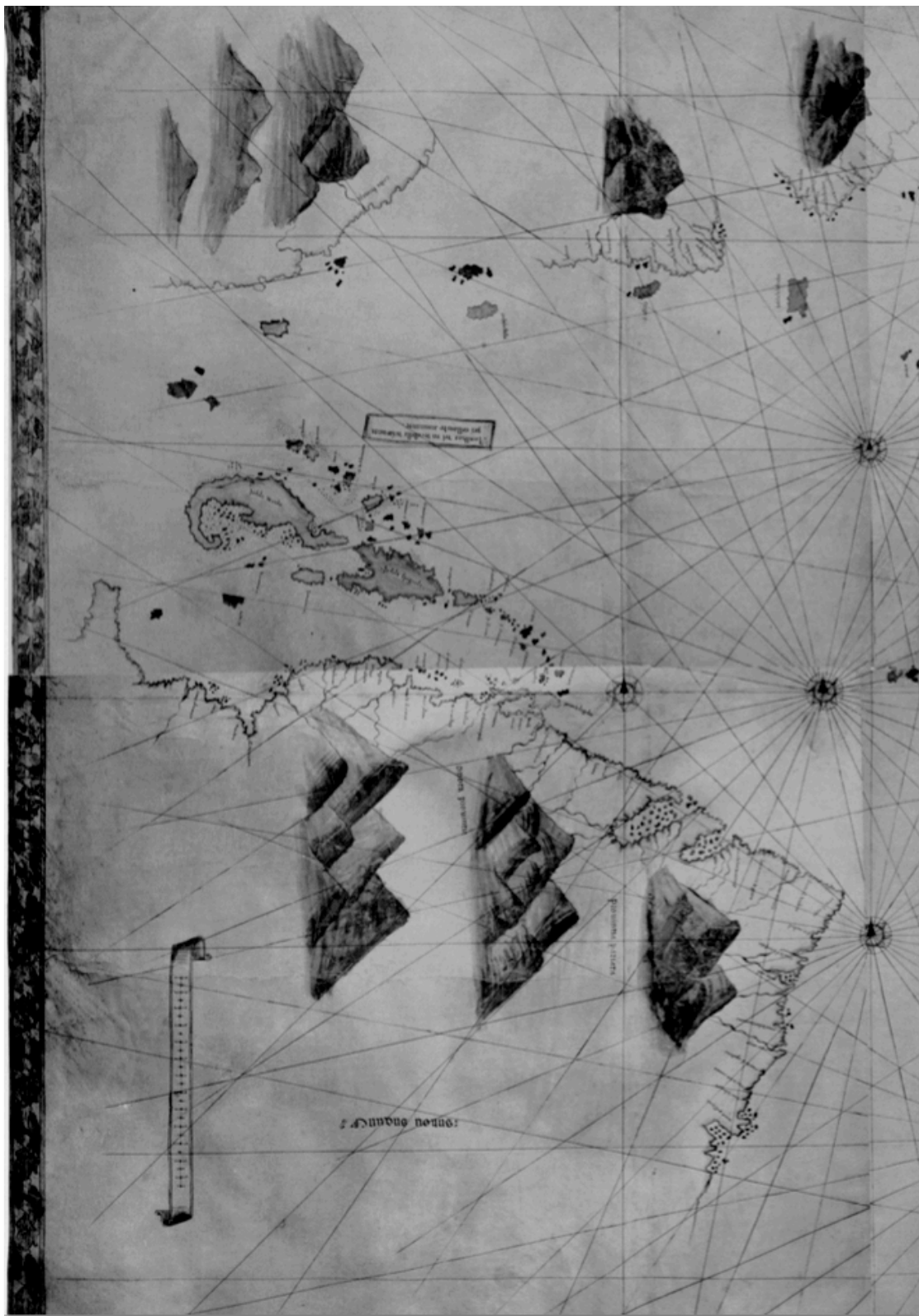
Note that Haiti appears in what might be considered the Bahama group, as in Cantino (#306), where it is also called 'Haiti'. 'Carsemom' bears some resemblance to Cantino's 'Cajeman'; 'Saruador' is San Salvador or Watling's Island; 'Abicos' is Great Abaco Island; and 'Ima' is evidently Yuma or Long Island. In the Antilles section of the map note the Italian forms 'Spagnola', 'Le Virgine' and 'La Trinita', where other maps have rather more Spanish forms. Many of the islands, however, can be closely paralleled with other contemporary maps, and a number of them with modern names.



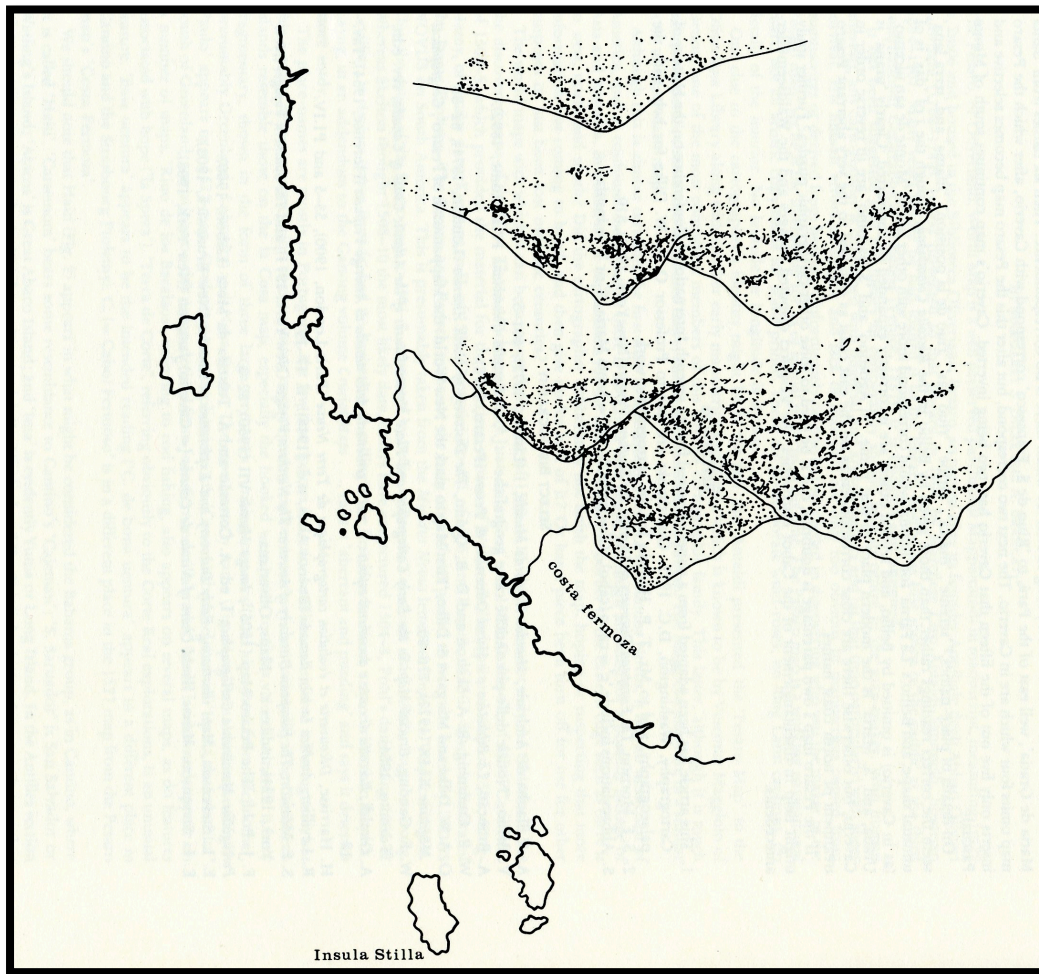
Detail: Africa and Europe



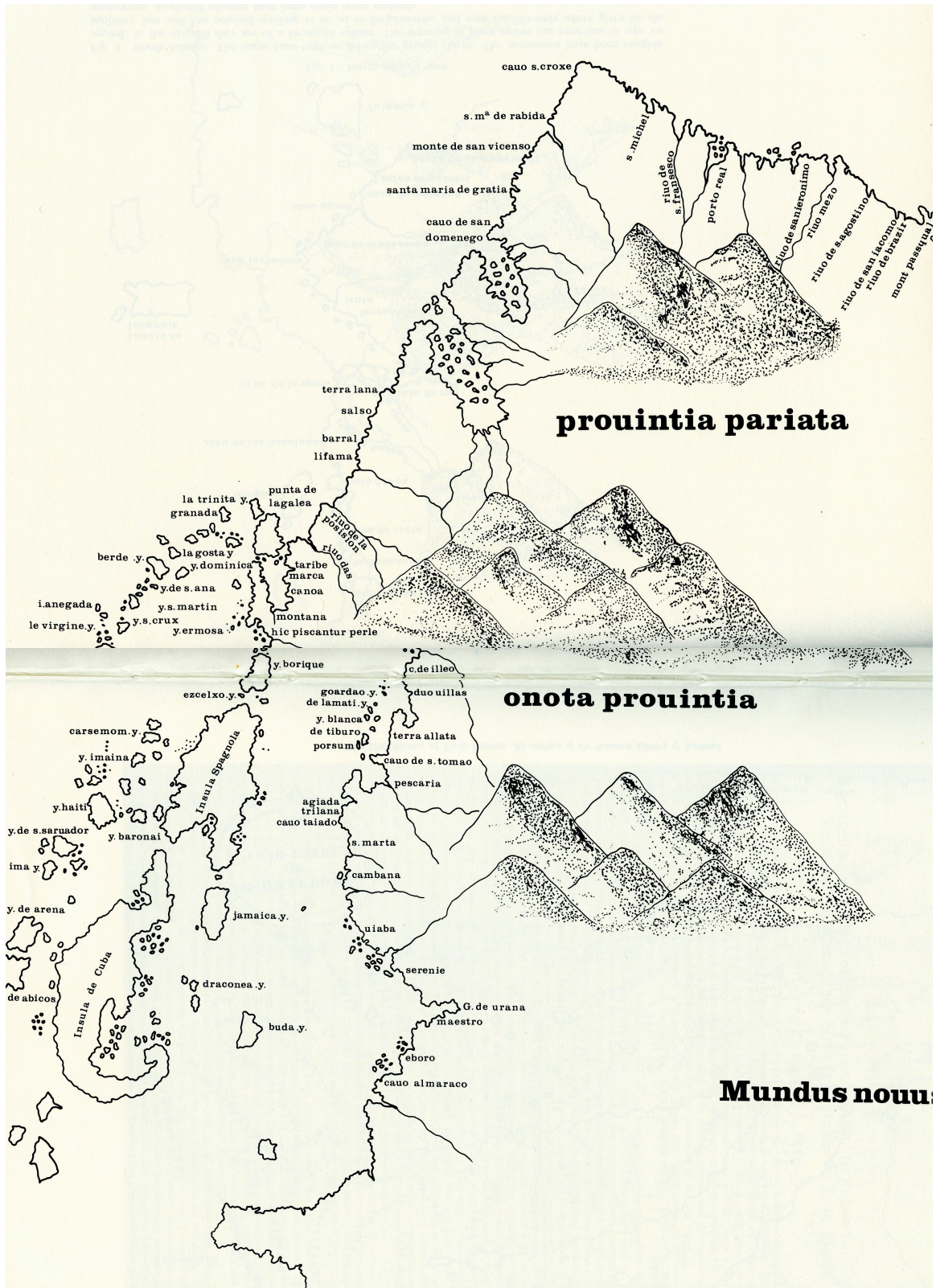
Detail: Indian Ocean



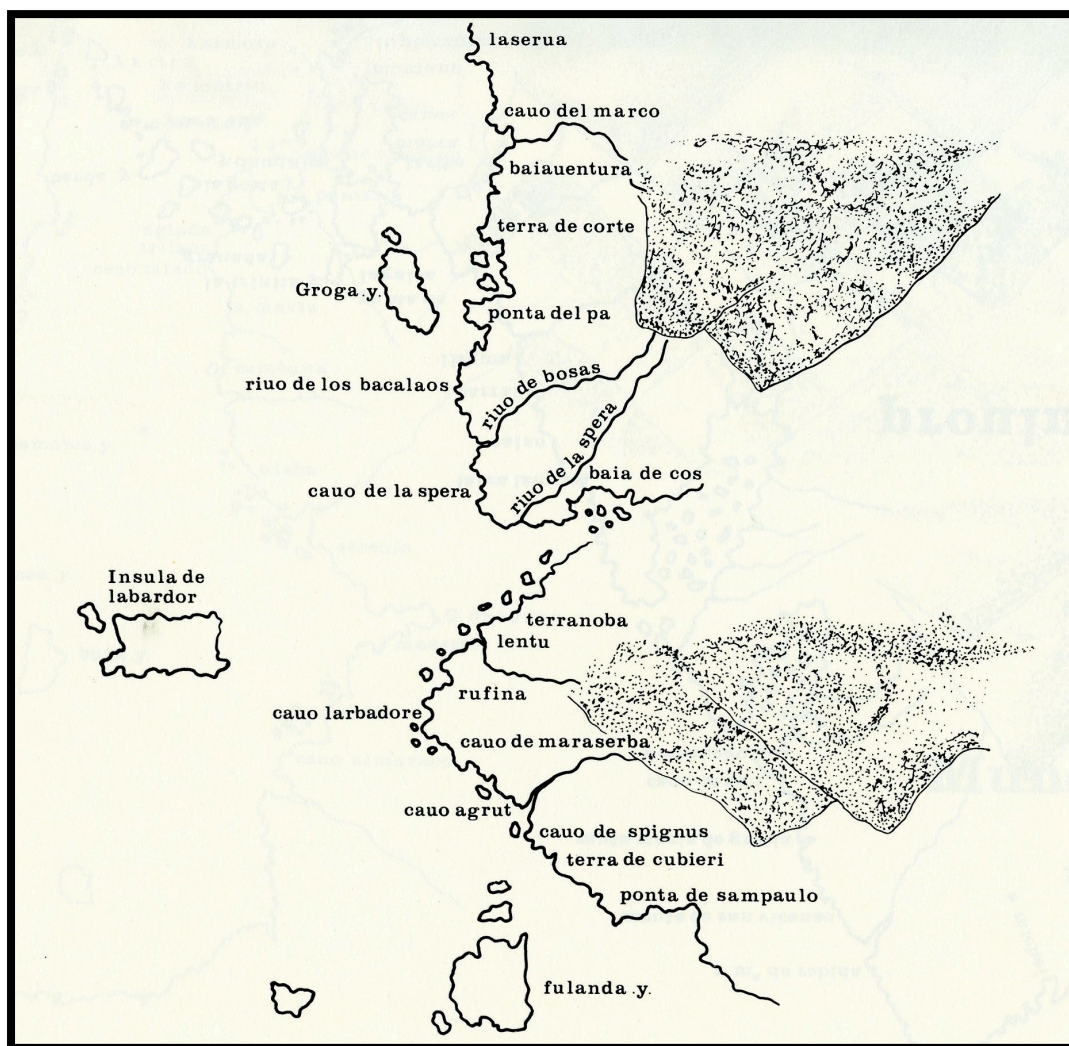
*Detail: The Caribbean area and South America and in the north:
Ponta de Sampaulo Greenland, Nova Scotia, Frislanda, Cavo Laboradore and Insula de
laboradore, Riuo de los Bacalaos, Terra de Corte, Costa Fermoza*



Detail: North Atlantic from Dilke's and Brancati's article



Detail: Caribbean and South America from Dilke's and Brancati's article



Detail: North Atlantic from Dilke's and Brancati's article

The maps are from Dilke's and Brancati's article and have been re-drawn for greater clarity. The mountains have been roughly copied; in the original they are of a brownish color. The lettering of place-names has been put in type for legibility, but with the original spelling as far as is decipherable, and with capitals only where given on the manuscript. Angles of printing have been made more uniform