

La Nouva Francia - Terra de Labrador

Description: Created by the Italian cartographer, Giacomo Gastaldi in 1565 and published by the Venetian editor Ramusio, this map is part of the report of Verrazzano's voyage of 1524 (#347). *La Nuova Francia* [The New France] depicts the North Atlantic coastline spanning from New York to Labrador. It is the first time New England is displayed in print and the first time it is named "New France". The French did not pursue further exploration for another 50 or so years and thus upon their return many things had evolved making the voyages of Verrazzano and Cartier an obsolete source of geographic information, yet a beautiful work of art.

This copy can be found in the *Terzo Volume Delle Navigationi et Viaggi (raccolto gia da M. Gio. Battista Ramusio)* [Third Volume of the Navigation and Voyages]. An intellectual man with a passion for geography is what led Giovanni Battista Ramusio to begin his travel writings. Known for this passion he was privy to the insightful, first-hand knowledge attained by explorers upon their return to Italy, such as Verrazzano and Cartier. Ramusio used his fluency in multiple languages to compile and translate an array of reports into an Italian book comprising the intimate stories of explorers' travels paired with images, such as Giacomo Gastaldi's map from 1548 (#376), *La Nuova Francia*.

The idea behind a book of this kind was unique and became very popular as can be seen through the multiple publications. This map is second state, which can be evidenced through the pagination and the addition of weeping willow trees. Due to a fire, the second manuscript was destroyed and thus the third volume was actually the second book printed in 1565.

The delineation of the New York area and lower New England was based on a letter written by Verrazano describing his voyage of 1524 rather than on another map.

The fact that much of the map was based on a written document in part accounts for its primitive quality. Appended to the Verrazano-based part of the map, in a seemingly arbitrary manner, is the Canadian cartography of Jacques Cartier. The long, speckled tail-like shape that runs along the coastline is a crude representation of the shallows of the Grand Banks fishing grounds. At bottom right is an illustration of Verrazano's flagship. With very little interior detail available, the map is filled in with charming representations of Indians and their customs as well as with flora and fauna. Many Indian figures as well as Europeans can be seen in the area around Narragansett Bay, which is where the Verazzano party spent the longest period of time ashore.

Mainly based on the voyages of Verazzano and Cartier to the Hudson and St. Lawrence rivers, this map shows an extremely primitive and unexplored land. Most of the identified places on this map have subsequently been conferred new names. For example: modern day New York Harbor was titled *Angoulesme*, Newport Bay was *Port Real*, Narragansett Bay was *Port du Refuge*, Long Island (which was then thought by Verrazzano to be a peninsula) was *Flora*, Nova Scotia (*c breton*) and Block Island was formerly *Brisa*.

Since Europeans were yet to explore the Lake Champlain corridor between the Hudson and St. Lawrence rivers the mapping was based on previous chartings produced by Native Americans. The Native Americans had marked their maps with waterways upon which they canoed as well as rivers and thus the Europeans mistakenly portrayed the St. Lawrence River and the Hudson River as being connected.

When mapping new lands, cartographers were faced with the challenge of mapping *terra incognita* [unknown lands]. They would use this space to portray further information about the geography of the land; such as, the vegetation, the animals, the indigenous people, the seas, etc., as can be seen here. This map was essential to the ease of subsequent exploration, mapping, and settlement of the region.

Author: Giovanni Battista Ramusio

Source / Publication: *Terzo Volume delle Navigazioni e Viaggi*. (edition 2)

Place of Publication: Florence

Date: 1565

Cartographer: Giacomo Gastaldi

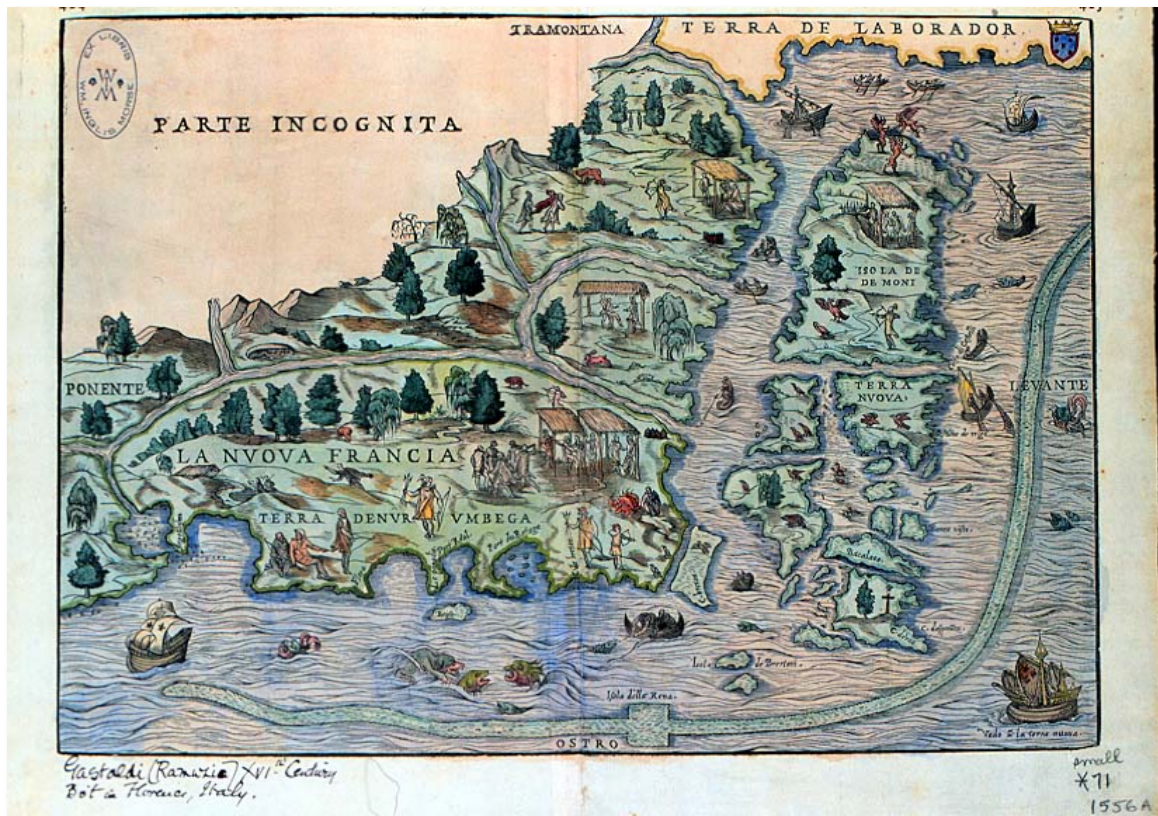
Size: 11 7/8 x 16 1/4 inches.

Medium: Woodcut

References:

*Brotton, Jerry, *Great Maps*, pp. 106-108

*Cumming, W.P., R.A. Skelton & D.B. Quinn, *The Discovery of North America*, no. 92.



For this edition a completely new wood-block was used, the changes most evident in the shape of the trees and the sea creatures at the bottom – Yale University Collection