

Illustri viro, domino Philippo Sidnaeo Michael Lok civis Londinensis hanc chartam dedicabat: 1582.

Description: This map was part of a propaganda publication intended to arouse English interest in overseas enterprise, including accounts of the products of America and the trade goods that would be suitable to the American Indians. This map is one of the last representations of the false *Sea of Verrazanno* (see #340, #347 and #382.1), it is also interesting for reflecting Martin Frobisher's exploration of Baffin Island in 1576. Michael Lok, a London merchant who was interested in discovering a Northwest Passage, invested heavily in Frobisher's first journey. Because of the secrecy imposed by the Privy Council, only four 16th century maps contained any mention of lands explored by Frobisher. This map, one of the four, was created to attract investors to Sir Humphrey Gilbert's plan to colonize Newfoundland and to encourage further search for the Northwest Passage. The most dramatic feature of the *Verrazzano* map (#347) is this vast nonexistent protuberance of the Pacific Ocean that appeared as the *Sea of Verrazzano* on maps and globes over the next sixty years. This now famous *western sea* that bisects present-day North America has no name or inscription actually on the *Verrazano* map itself, nor is it mentioned in Giovanni's letter to King Francis I. Sailing along North Carolina's Outer Banks in 1524, Verrazano saw the sound on the eastern side of the isthmus and postulated that it must be the Pacific. Opposite the believed narrow isthmus between *Mare Indicum* and *Mare Oceanum*, at 40° N, recorded by Verrazzano, is the legend:

... where was found an isthmus a mile in width and about 200 long, in which, from the ship, was seen the oriental sea between the west and north. Which is the one, without doubt, which goes about the extremity of India, China and Cathay. We navigated along the said isthmus with the continual hope of finding some strait or true promontory at which the land would end toward the north in order to be able to penetrate to those blessed shores of Cathay ...

This concept was taken up by various cartographers back in Europe and, subsequently, a great indentation along the western coast of America starting just north of California was a common characteristic of many early maps of the continent. Even in the 1670s, when John Lederer made his famous explorations of Virginia and North Carolina, most colonial settlers believed that the *Western Sea* was only about 10 or 15 days inland from the coast. On latter 16th century maps such as Michael Lok's in 1582, it is called *Mare de Verrazana* 1524. Few geographical errors so confused the minds of explorers and mapmakers for a century as this belief in the nearness of the *Western Sea* (see also #340, #351, #357, #367, #371, #373, #377, #418; maps by Maiollo, Sebastian Münster, Battista Agnes, the *Ulpus Globe*, the *Harleran*, *Bailly's Globe*, the *Wooden Globe*, the single cordiform *mappamundi* of Finæus, Jacques Le Moyne, Dr. John Dee, Judocus Hondius, and Capt John Smith).

Wishful thinking no doubt impelled Verrazzano to place this enormous waterway in the middle of North America, contained on the east by the narrow isthmus of the Carolina Outer Banks. It must have been the same motivation that caused European mapmakers to accept this delineation for many years. Richard Hakluyt, Elizabethan propagandist and promoter of British overseas enterprise, included a map based on Verrazzano's in his influential *Divers Voyage, Touching Discoverie of America* published in 1582. Sir Walter Raleigh's colony at Roanoke was established on an island in Pamlico Sound presumably because it would be a strategic location on the main route to *Cathay* when the passage was discovered.

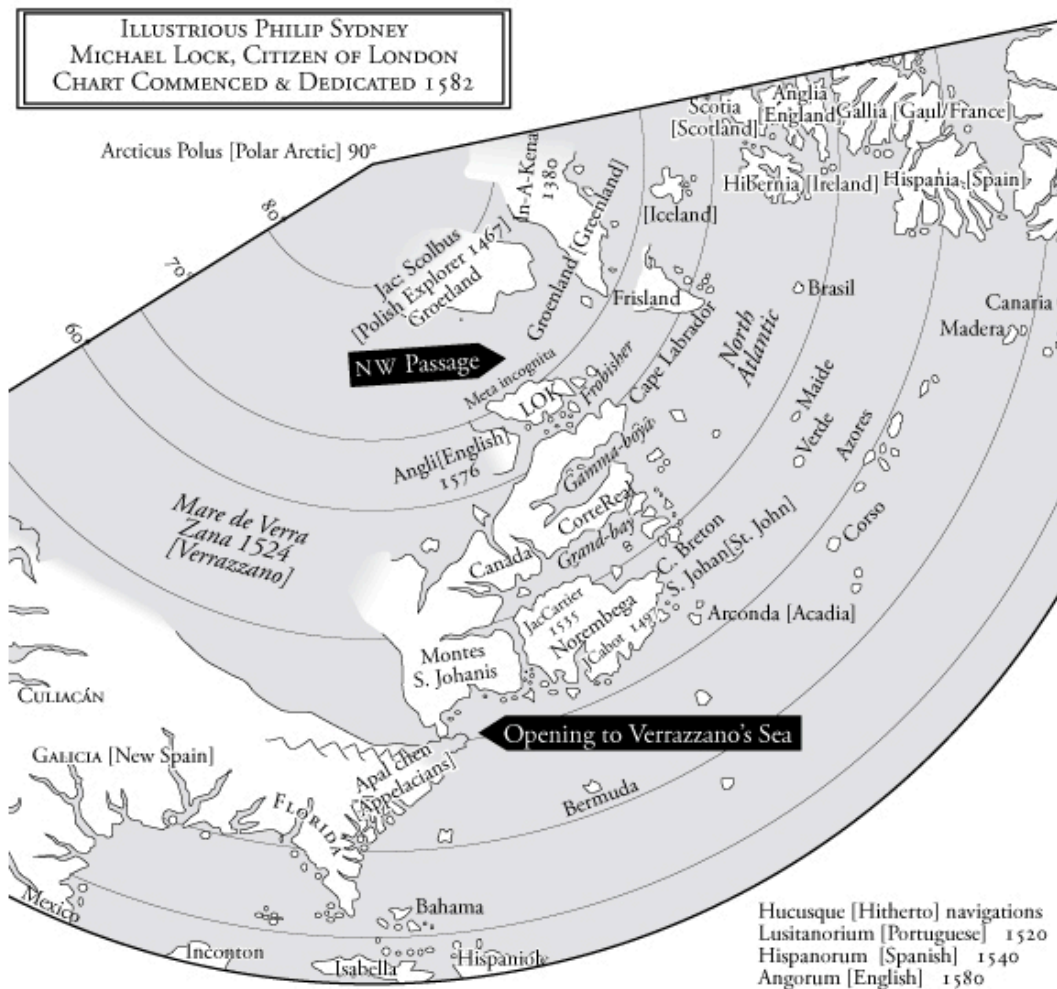
N. A. Zena placed on Greenland, and *Frisland* perpetuate the Zeno story, and *Jac. Seolbus* on a second Greenland, called *Groetland*, celebrates a Polish explorer, who skirted the coast of Labrador in 1476, according to a tale, which is not clearly accepted but is not improbable.

It has been argued that the inscription *J. Gabot* 1497 across the face of *Norombega* supplies an argument for the credibility of the location of *prima tierra vista* on the map of Sebastian Cabot of 1544 (#372). It might be expected that Lok would follow Verrazano in ascribing Cabot's landfall far to the north in Labrador near 60° north latitude, for, so Hakluyt declares, Lok drew his map "according to Verrazano's plat," an "olde excellent mappe, which he gave to king Henrie the eight and is yet in the custodie of master Locke," and Hakluyt uses Lok's map to preface his account of Verrazano in the *Divers Voyages*. But, notwithstanding these facts, Lok rejects Verrazano's location of the Cabot landfall in favor of that on the Cabot map of 1544. Obviously Lok's position in the matter is that of a loyal Englishman, devoted to the interests of his native country against the pretensions of France in the valley of the St. Lawrence.

New England as *Norombega* is common on the maps of the time. Less common is the *Mare de Verrazana* 1524, which Mercator pushes far into the interior. Lok puts the mythical sea farther in the north, in order to make place in the south for the lands explored by De Soto and Coronado.

Early Spanish voyages eastward from the Moluccas to Mexico are chronicled from the year 1518, or before Magellan set out. *Hucusque navigationes Lusitanorum* 1520 is a reference to the Portuguese Magellan, who sailed under the flag of Spain and never reached as far north in the Pacific as California. *Navigaciones Hispanorum* 1540 refers to the expedition of Cortes to Lower California in 1534, or to that of Ulloa in the Gulf of California in 1539, or possibly to that of Cabrillo along the coast of Upper California in 1542. *Navigaciones Anglorum* 1580 refers to Sir Francis Drake.





Map of the Western or Atlantic Ocean, showing the western coast of Europe and Africa, the eastern coast of North America, part of Mexico, and the Caribbean basin. Cartographic elements include degrees of latitude and longitude (based on a *Ferro* meridian). Includes *Norembega*, lands named for Queen Elizabeth, California shown as a peninsula, Sagunay, Hochelaga, and an island named *Lok*.

Size: 18.5 x 13 cm

Location: John Carter Brown Library, Brown University

References:

- *Fite, E. and Freeman, A., *A Book of Old Maps Delineating American History*, pp. 90-91, #25
- Winsor, J., *Narrative and Critical History of America*, III, 169.
- *Hakluyt, R., *Divers Voyages Touching the Discoverie of America*