

**Title:** *Universalior Cogniti Orbis Tabula, Ex recentibus confecta observationibus* [A more universal map of the known world, constructed by means of recent observations].

**Date:** 1507-1508

**Author:** Johannes Ruysch

**Description:** In 1507, the copper plates used for the 1490 Rome edition of Ptolemy's *Geographia* were reprinted, together with six new maps, either by the printer Bernard Venetus de Vitalibus or the editor Evangelista Tosinus. In addition to the new regional maps, this rare new map of the world by Johann Ruysch is sometimes found in advance of its normal appearance in the Ptolemy atlas the following year. It is not enumerated in the table of contents of the 1507 edition and it must be assumed that Ruysch's drawing came into the engraver's hands late in the year, just in time to be engraved and inserted into some of the copies then printed. An inscription on the map just off *Taprobana* refers to the voyages of the Portuguese to that area in the year 1507. This enlarged map of the known world constructed from recent discoveries, engraved on copper, is one of the earliest printed maps showing the discoveries in the new world. There had been many voyages of discovery immediately before Ruysch created his map, including:

- Dias' rounding of the horn of Africa in 1487,
- the European rediscovery of Newfoundland by John Cabot in 1497 (actually a "rediscovery", as the Norse had been to Newfoundland centuries before and settled there),
- Vasco da Gama's travel to India in 1499,
- the explorations of the Caribbean and South America by Columbus (1492-93, 1493-94, 1498, 1502-04) and
- visits to the Caribbean and South America by Vespucci (1499, 1501-02).

Although there had been maps created after these voyages, such as Juan de la Cosa's map of the world in 1500 (based on Columbus' second voyage, #305) and the *Cantino* world map (circa 1502, #306), because they were one-of-a-kind manuscript maps these maps were not widely known in Europe outside of the professional circles of mariners and government officials for up to fifteen years. Only a few copies of these maps survive not simply because they were manuscript rather than printed maps, but also because they were often regarded as state secrets. This situation changed drastically from 1506 to 1507 when three separate efforts to produce printed world maps were published. The *Contarini-Rosselli* map of 1506 (#308) and Martin Waldseemüller's map of the world and globe of 1507 (#310 and #311) were very influential, but not very widely published. There is only one original copy of each map in existence today, and both of these copies were discovered in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. By contrast, Johannes Ruysch's 1508 map of the world was much more widely published and many copies were produced and still exist. It therefore had a very large influence.

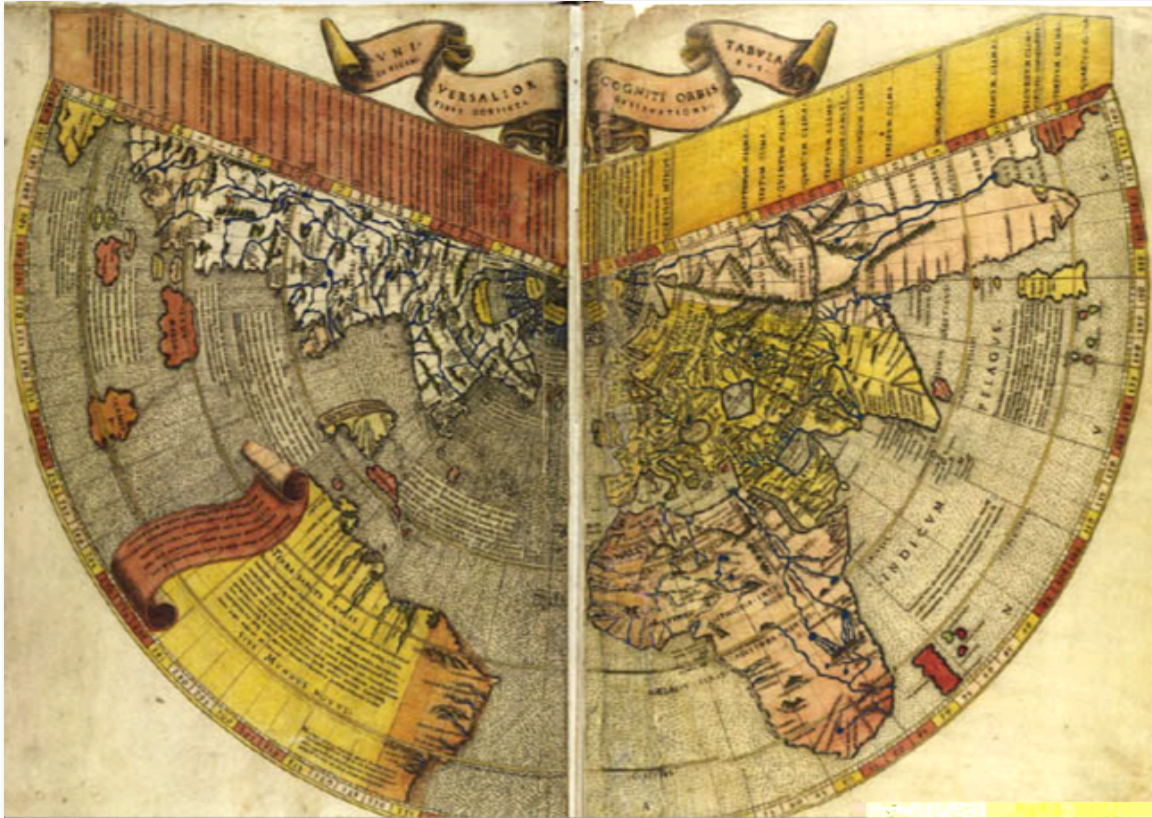
The oldest printed maps showing America (as opposed to one-of-a-kind "manuscript" or hand-drawn maps) are the world maps of Giovanni Matteo Contarini (#308), the one produced by Martin Waldseemüller (#310) and this map by Ruysch. While Contarini's and Waldseemüller's maps, printed as individual sheets, have fallen victim to the ravages of time, and only a single copy of each is known to have survived, a number of copies of Ruysch's map, which was printed as a single plate in an atlas, are preserved today. While the map is found in some copies of the 1507 edition of Ptolemy's *Geographia*, in such cases it is not mentioned on the title-page and it is therefore probable that it was bound into the volume at a later date (the title page of the 1508 edition does

announce the new world map; while the Harvard College Library has an original copy of the map, which shows no evidence of having been bound). This map represents the first “modern” variant of a map of the world in an edition of Ptolemy’s *Geographia* (*Cosmographia*). The fan-shaped conical projection, belonging to the first Ptolemaic projection (#119) suggests that the map may have been taken from Contarini (#308); however, the geographical details indicate a number of differences between the two.

This map by Ruysch first appeared as an addition to the issue of Ptolemy’s *Geographia*, originally published at Rome in 1507 and 1508, together with a commentary written by an Italian monk named Marcus Beneventanus, under the title of *Orbis nouo descriptio*. The treatise by Beneventanus is predicated upon the *mappamundi* of Ruysch. This must be noted, as it constrains us to limit our interpretation of the geographical configurations and legends to the map itself. Marcus adds nothing whatever as regards facts and data; instead, his treatise is less complete, considering that he fails to mention either Cuba or the continental land which the map exhibits between Newfoundland and South America. It is even doubtful whether the Celestinian monk, or any of the parties engaged in the publication of the Ptolemy of 1507-1508, had any personal intercourse with Ruysch. Otherwise we would certainly find in the elaborate description that Marcus Beneventanus gives of the transatlantic discoveries of the Spaniards and Portuguese, some statement or name that should have been omitted in the map. The few personal details given by the commentator and by Thomas Aucuparius in the preface were most probably conveyed by a letter accompanying the map when it was sent in manuscript from Germany to Rome. According to the historian Henry Harrisse, if Ruysch had supervised the engraving in person, the probability is that the nomenclature would have been entirely in Latin, or according to its original Portuguese form, instead of being so frequently Italianized, as is seen in the pronoun “do”, everywhere written “de”, and in the words *Terra secca*, *C. Glaciato* and *Capo formoso*, which certainly indicate a translation of Portuguese names, made not by a German, but by an Italian, without being errors of the engraver.

Excepting these excerpts, the *Orbis nova descriptio* of Marcus Beneventanus only contains an exhibition of learning, which is now quite worthless, but which was perhaps necessary, at that time, as an introduction for the new world to her older sisters: Asia, Europe, and Africa. It is at any rate a remarkable fact that every time Beneventanus deigns to descend from his pedestal of learning, he communicates a fact of great importance to the history of geographical discovery. He thus incidentally informs us that the author of this map, which from a geographical point of view marks an epoch in cartography more distinctly than any other that has ever been published in print, had joined in a voyage from England to America. We also learn that Beneventanus had been personally acquainted with “*Columbus Nepos*”. By this name he probably designates either the illegitimate son of Columbus, Ferdinand, who sojourned in Europe until his 19<sup>th</sup> year (1509), or rather the brother of Columbus, Bartholomew, who seems to have been an eminent cartographer. For there is an annotation on a copy of *Paesi nuovamente retrovaetc*, Vicentia 1507, at the library Magliabechi, stating that Bartholomew, when visiting Rome in 1505, wrote, for a canon of the church of San Giovanni di Laterano, a narrative of the first voyage across the ocean, to which a map of the new discoveries was appended. The canon presented the map to Alessandro Zorzi (#304). This may be a notice respecting the same map, that Marcus Beneventanus had seen with “*Columbus Nepos*,” and which appears to have been partly copied by Ruysch, whose map

consequently may be regarded as a direct illustration of the ideas prevailing in the family of Columbus as to the distribution of the continents and oceans of the globe.



Johannes Ruysch was born around the year 1460 in Utrecht, which is now located in the Netherlands. He died in the year 1533 at the St. Martin monastery. His name is alternatively spelled as Giovanni Ruisch or Johann Ruijsch. It is thought (*see the Beneventanus commentary below*) that he accompanied John Cabot on his expedition to North America in 1497 and 1498, or, considering the prevalence of Portuguese names on his 1507 map, a Portuguese ship leaving from Bristol. Therefore he may have drawn parts of his map from first-hand observation. His other sources include: Ptolemy; travel accounts, like those of Marco Polo; recent world maps and globes (including the *Contarini-Rosselli* map mentioned above and near-contemporary world maps such as Fra Mauro (1459, #249), Martellus (c.1490, #256), and possibly the globe of Martin Behaim (1492, #258); and a variety of early Spanish and Portuguese manuscript sources (including, probably, both reports and charts). He presumably made his world map in Rome in 1507. He is thought to be the "Fleming called John", a close friend of Raphael who at one point resided with him. It has been suggested that he assisted and advised Raphael on his 1509-1510 *Astronomia* and other frescoes in the Stanza della segnatura. Not long after, Ruysch went to work at the Portuguese court as cartographer and astronomer, presumably by recommendation of Julius II who was a friend of Manuel I of Portugal. Beneventanus, writing in his commentary on the map for the Ptolemy edition of 1508 says: "*Johannes Ruysch of Germany, in my judgment a most exact geographer, and a most painstaking one in delineating the globe, to whose aid in this little work I am indebted, has told me that he sailed from the South of England, and penetrated as far as the fifty-third degree of*

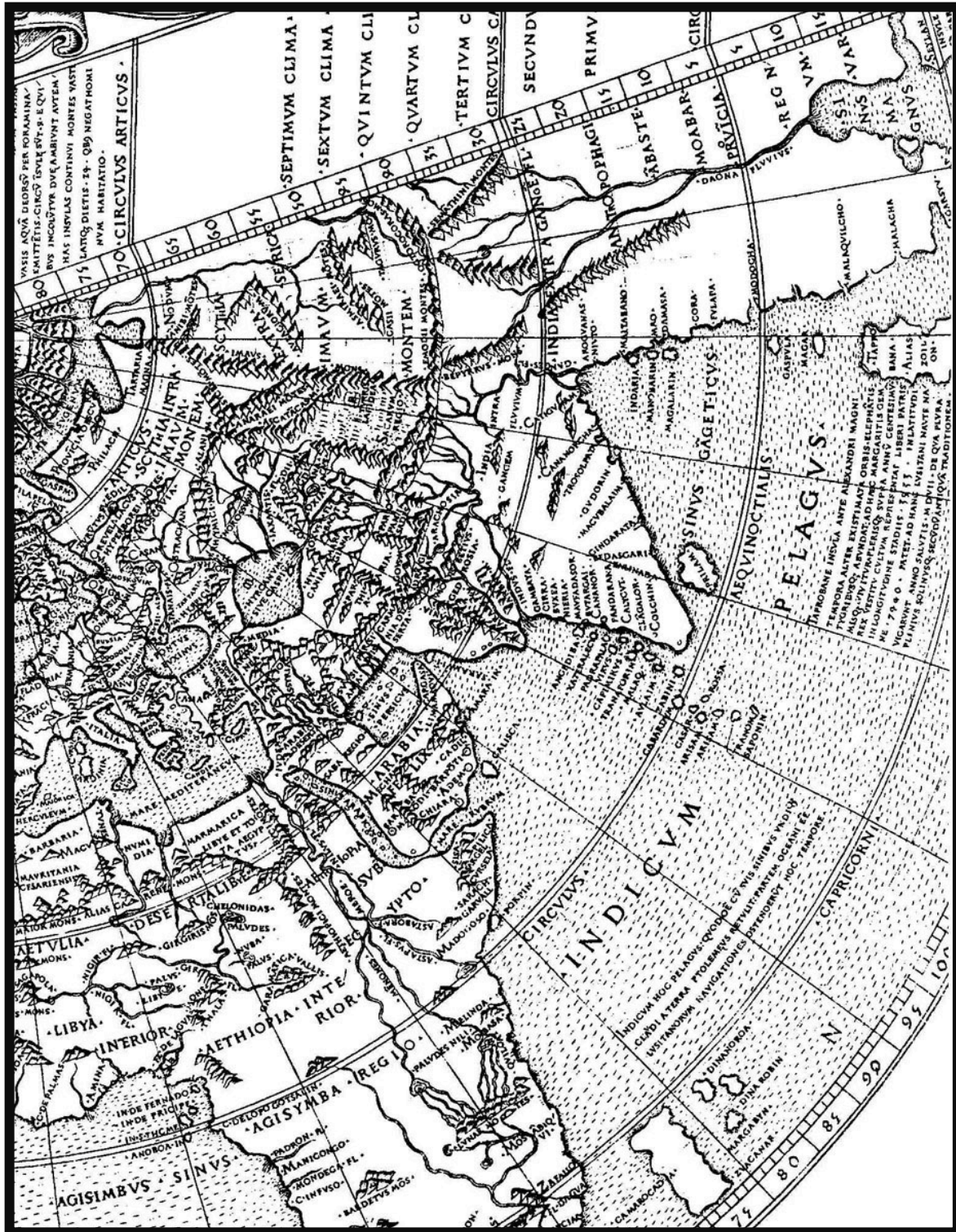
north latitude, and on that parallel he sailed west toward the shores of the East, bearing a little northward and observed many islands."

While Ruysch is believed by some historians to have been with John Cabot on his famous voyage of 1497, his map makes no direct mention of the Cabots. *Cape Race*, which appeared on La Cosa's map (#305) as *Cavo de Ynglaterra*, on Ruysch's map is called *C. De Portogesi*. There are other indications that Ruysch made use of Portuguese charts in making his map. The names on the coast of Venezuela are quite different from those on the *La Cosa* map. Ruysch adopts the Portuguese name, *Terra Sancte Crucis* [Land of the Holy Cross] for South America instead of *Tierra del Brazil*, the name used by the Spaniards. In his representation of India as a triangular peninsula, between the Ganges and Indus rivers; in his location of the islands of *Prilam* [Sri Lanka] and *Taprobana* [Sumatra]; and in his delineation of the coastline of Africa, Ruysch displays accurate and up-to-date information concerning the Portuguese discoveries. This appears also from the inscriptions in the Indian Ocean. The one inscription to the left of India states that this sea, which on the Ptolemaic maps was represented as landlocked (#119), was shown by the Portuguese to be connected with the ocean. On *Taprobane* (alias *Zoilon*), which almost corresponds to the immense island currently called Sumatra, there is a long legend, partly borrowed from Ptolemy, but with the interesting addition that Portuguese mariners arrived there in 1507. Another legend on the southeastern parts of Asia alludes to the existence of numerous islands in that part of the ocean, of which notices from Indian merchants seem to have already reached Europe. The news of this discovery must have been very recent when the map was made. This Portuguese influence may be due only to the fact that Portuguese charts, while kept in great secrecy, were more numerous than Spanish ones.

There are several advanced features of this map that are the work of a virtually unknown cartographer. Apart from the fact that Ruysch was from Utrecht and sojourned in Cologne, little is known of him. Ruysch may therefore have drawn on first-hand knowledge in producing a map that is independent of the *Contarini-Rosselli* map of 1506 (#308), although there are a number of similar characteristics. Both maps are on fan-shaped conical projections, engraved on copper in typical Italian style, and select features from a variety of Spanish, Portuguese, and earlier sources.

With the exception of some small maps based on the cosmographical speculations of the ancients, and inserted in the works of Macrobius, Sacrobosco and others (#201), along with the *Contarini* and *Waldseemüller* maps (#308 and #310), it is one of the first European printed maps representing Africa as a peninsula encompassed by the ocean (*Note: the Chinese had been displaying Africa in this manner for over 100 years prior to this map, see #227, #236*). The southern point of Africa moreover is here placed on a nearly correct latitude, thus giving a tolerably exact form to that part of the world. Ruysch also gives on his map a relatively correct location to the *Insule ae Azores*, *Insula de Madera*, *Ins. Canarias* and *Insulae de Capo Verde*. The African continent on the map is yet another cartographic advance as it breaks with the early tradition which held that there was a land-bridge between eastern African and the peninsula of Southeast Asia. It is also the first map that shows the Portuguese discoveries and landfalls along the southern and Cape coasts. His general accuracy in the eastern hemisphere is almost certainly due to contemporary information gained from Portuguese navigators and explorers.





Ruysch's map is the first map published in print on which India is drawn as a triangular peninsula projecting from the south coast of Asia and bordered on the north by the rivers Indus and Ganges. Even though it has not yet received its full extension as a peninsula, yet an important deviation from Ptolemy's geography is thus made on the map to a part of the world to which almost a *privilegium exclusivum* of knowledge was

attributed to the ancients. The Indian peninsula on the Ruysch map now has significantly more names on both the west and east coasts than the *Contarini-Rosselli* map and, further east, Ruysch recognizes that the old Ptolemaic coastline can no longer apply. Madagascar is properly reduced in size and located more precisely. Sri Lanka, under the name of *Prilam*, is also laid down by Ruysch with about its proper size, and correctly as regards the southern point of India. *Taprobana* is placed further towards the East Indian peninsula, in which position this geographical remnant from the time of Alexander the Great was retained, down to the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

*Zipangu* [Japan], which was shown prominently in mid-Pacific on the *Contarini-Rosselli* and Waldseemüller (1507) maps is omitted completely by Ruysch. He refers in an inscription to Marco Polo's account of *Zipangu* but admits he is puzzled as to its true position and concludes that *Spagnola* [Haiti/Dominican Republic] must be the island in question.

Ruysch has produced the first printed map on which the delineation of the interior and eastern parts of Asia is no longer based exclusively on the material collected by Marinus of Tyre and Ptolemy more than a millennium previously, but on more modern reports, especially those of Marco Polo. Various new names are here added in *Scytia intra Imaum*, such as *Tartaria Magna* and *Wolha* [Volga], and an immense, quite new territory, an *Asia extra Ptolemaeum*, or *Asia Alarci Pauli Veneti*, is added beyond the eastern limits of Ptolemy's *oikumene* [known world]. Here the Chinese river-system is given in a manner indicating other sources for the geography of eastern Asia than Marco Polo's written words. In its main features the delineation of eastern Asia, to the south of latitude 60 degrees north, on the map of Ruysch, so nearly resembles Behaim's globe (#258), that a common original might have served for both.

The exaggerated extension given by Ptolemy to the Mediterranean is much reduced here by Ruysch, from 62 to 53 degrees, the actual difference of longitude between Gibraltar and the western coast of Syria amounting to only 41 or 42 degrees. This correction had been made, centuries previously, on the *portolanos* [nautical charts, #250.1]. The first cartographer who adopted Ruysch's reduction, was the celebrated Gerard Mercator. On his famous map *ad usum Navigantium* of 1569 (#406), he gives the Mediterranean Sea a length of 52 degrees. Ruysch's map is also the first printed map on which, in conformity with the drawings on the *portolanos*, a tolerably correct direction is given to the northern coast of Africa, by attending to the considerable difference of latitude between the coastlines to the east and to the west of *Syrtis*, and by giving a proper form to that bay.

With regards to the British Isles, the map of Ruysch is the first map published in print that, following a correction made in the *portolanos* since the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, leaves out that excessive projection towards the east, which characterizes Ptolemy's map of the northern part of Scotland.

In Northern Europe, the church *Sancti Odulfi* shown on Ruysch's map, is not the church in Vardø, Finnmark, but the cathedral in Trondheim. It is placed exactly where Trondheim is supposed to be on the map. This cathedral is the Saint Olaf Cathedral, as it was built upon his grave. The church in Vardø was constructed in 1307 and was the first church in Finnmark. So, it was in place long before Ruysch made his map, and to be true, no one knows from what saint it was named. Neither is it any reason for thinking that the island above Norway is meant to be Svalbard. It has no remarkable similarity to Svalbard, and in fact there are four similar islands. Then it is more probable that this

feature of the map is inspired by the *Inventio Fortunatae*, or from the fact that the contemporary cartographers wanted the landmasses to be in balance.

Ruysch drew his map as a *planisphere* on a modified equidistant conical projection with its apex at the North Pole which is another remarkable feature. In its plane state the map appears as an opened fan with the curved, or southern edge, at the bottom. Some of the lettering is also unusual as it appears to have been made by a punch rather than the usual burin engraving tool. This suggests that the map was prepared for press in a hurry and the punch used as the quickest method of lettering the plate.

The map is full of cartographic innovation. Ruysch depicts the North Polar regions with some geographical basis for the first time and it is believed that Gerhard Mercator once again was influenced by the map when he prepared the circular inset of the Arctic on his great world map of 1569 (#407).

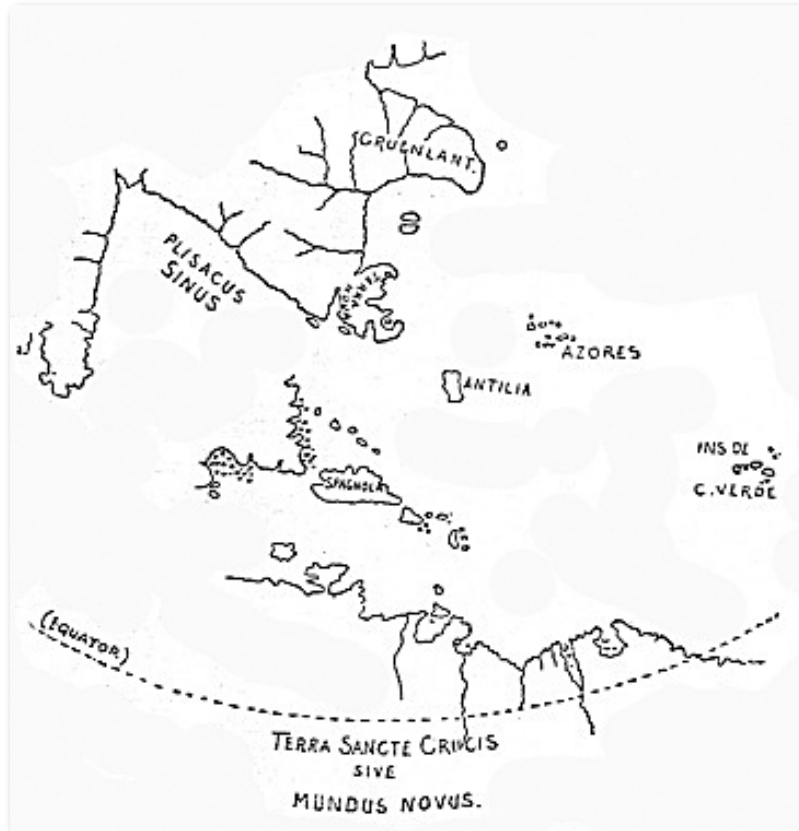
With respect to the New World, the most notable innovation in Ruysch's map is the representation of the western discoveries. It must be said that Ruysch's depiction of the New World further south in the present Caribbean is rather confusing but his delineation of present day South America represents a great advance bringing to the printed map an accurate depiction of the coasts of what are today Venezuela and Brazil. Even the famous *Admiral's map* in Martin Waldseemüller's 1513 edition of Ptolemy (#320) does not show so much detail of the Brazilian coast. However, his map is also a mixture of tradition, new information, and misleading conjecture. Ruysch's treatment of Greenland exemplifies the composite nature of his representation. Ruysch correctly draws *GRVENLANT* [Greenland], as separate from Europe, not connected with Europe by a vast polar continent as some earlier maps indicate. Instead of connected with Europe, he links Greenland with Asia through Newfoundland (*Terra Nova*). In addition, he shows the northern polar regions as a basin with a number of islands, thus prompting the long-held hope for a Northwest passage from Europe to Asia. Ruysch seems to have had no doubt that *Gruenlant* was a part of Asia and not of Europe as usually represented on maps of this period. Off the coast of *Gruenlant* is the location of an island that was totally consumed by fire in the year of our Lord, 1456. According to the historian A. E. Nordenskiöld, "*the sagas of Iceland mention a small island between Iceland and Greenland from which the coast mountains of both were visible, although no such island at present exists*".

Directly south of *Gruenlant* the following inscription gives warning of the dangers encountered by fishermen in that region: *It is said that those who came formerly in ships among these islands for fish and other food were so deceived by the demons that they could not go on land without danger*. An inscription describing nearby islands warns that sailors who had gone to them had been tricked by demons. Inland from North America, into Ruysch's "Asia" proper, the influence of the medieval imagination is found in the dreaded realm of *Gog* and *Magog* from which the Antichrist would spring at Armageddon. Originally a Biblical saga, the story of these two malevolent creatures developed a rich mythology through medieval lore. *Gog* and *Magog* were traditionally imprisoned behind the Caspian gates by Alexander the Great; belief in the menace was so great that the level-headed Roger Bacon hoped that the study of geography might predict when, and from what direction, their onslaught might come in the days of the Antichrist so as better to prepare to defend against them. This threat was quite real to Columbus, who figured himself prominently into the events, believed by him to be close at hand, leading to the end of the world. In the gulf formed by North America and the ominous land of *Gog* and *Magog* lies the Spanish Main, the Caribbean, which in Ruysch's mind was really the China Sea. Here the influence of Columbus is profound.



Another interesting, but almost illegible, inscription near *Gruenlant* reads: *Hic compassus navium non tenet nec naves quæ ferum tenent revertere valent*. [Here the ship's compass loses its property, and no vessel with iron on board is able to get away]. This belief probably arose from the variation of the compass needle, which was noticed by Cabot. This inscription doubtless refers to the experience of the second expedition of the Cabots, which it is believed Ruysch may have accompanied.

The Ruysch map is instructive concerning the location of Greenland on late 15<sup>th</sup> century maps and those of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. As shown below, according to Gunnar Thompson, on the Norwegian peninsula (N) we find *Ventelant* (V) near the Arctic Circle. This is an archaic placement for *Vinland*, which was thought to be north of Norway. In like manner, there is a second peninsula above Norway that usually represents

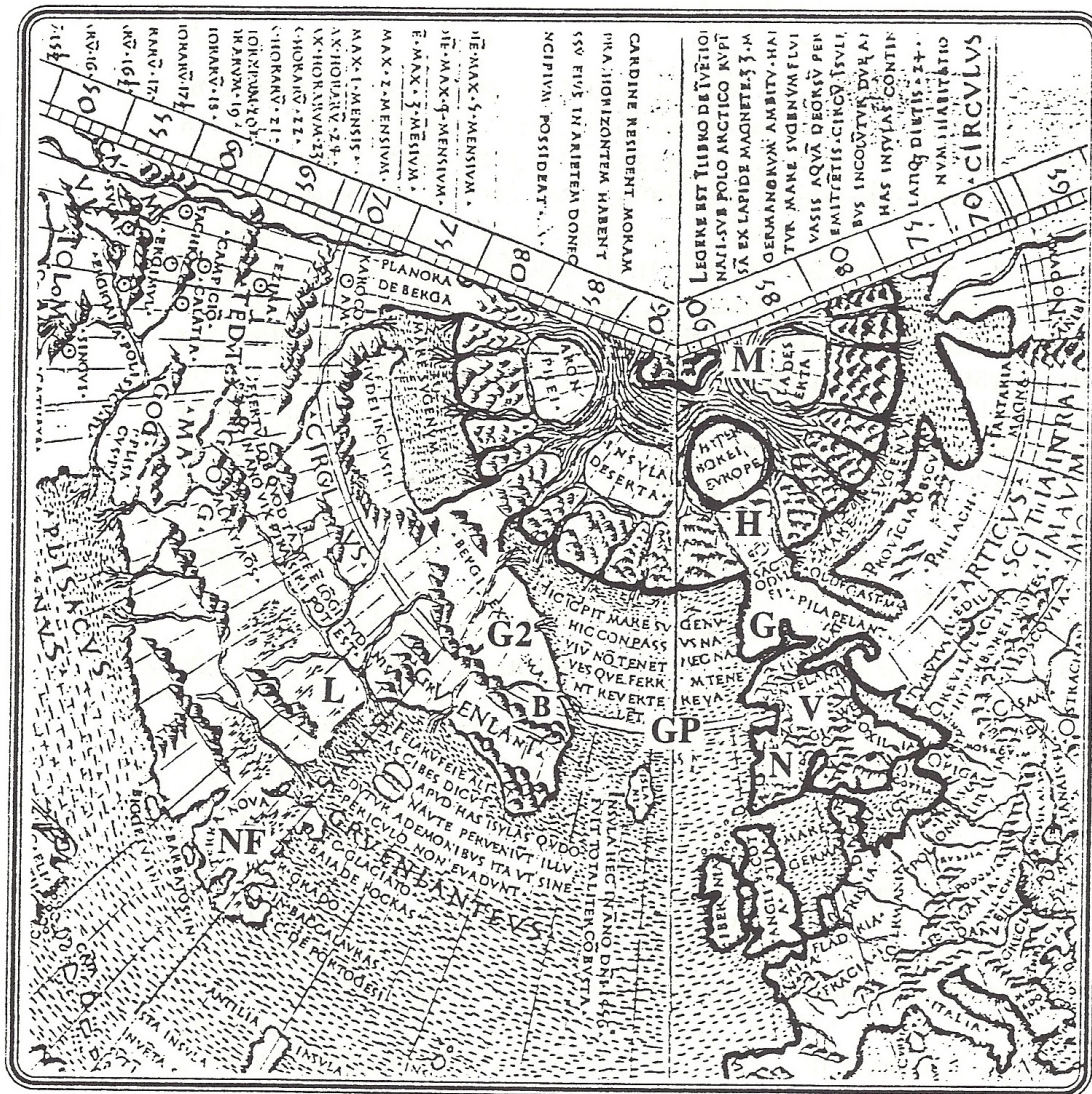


Greenland (G) on most maps of the period. Above this is *Hyperborea Europa* (H) which is a carryover from the *Norveca Europa* of the *de Virga* map of 1414 (#240) where it was presumed the *Hyperboreans* lived near the North Pole. Across the vertical ocean or *Ginnungagap* (GP) is a caption that cautions mariners not to rely upon compass bearings as the compass fails in this region. Usually, maps had this caption southwest of Greenland—thus one may be on good grounds for identifying the land here called *Gruenlant* as Labrador (L). Since most historians have assumed this is simply another frivolous naming—we can understand the controversy over whether the Spanish navigator Fernandez (*The Labrador*) actually discovered Greenland or Labrador. On the other hand, we know that several cartographers identified the North American mainland as “Greenland” so the label for Labrador on this map is not so unusual.

On the margin of the map, near the North Pole, is another interesting inscription referring to the magnetic pole, which it is said was first located by the English friar Nicolas de Linna, who made a voyage to the north in 1355 and presented to Edward III of England an account of his discovery, with the title, *Inventio fortunat*. From this report Mercator said he derived his idea of the four polar islands (#406 and #407). These islands are also seen on the map of Ruysch, who placed the magnetic pole on an island north of Greenland. The pole is now located in Prince Albert Island. The inscription mentioned above reads: “It is said in the book concerning the fortunate discovery that at the arctic pole

there is a high magnetic rock, thirty-three German miles in circumference. A surging sea surrounds this rock, as if the water were discharged downward from a vase through an opening. Around it are islands, two of which are inhabited." The legend of a huge magnetic mountain, dragging to it all vessels with iron aboard, was a long-standing myth of terror mentioned by Ptolemy and later elaborated by the Arabs.

This world map by Johannes Ruysch shows four islands around the North Pole; two (the one north of Greenland and its opposite across the Pole) are labeled *Insula Deserta*; the one north of Europe is that of the *Hyperboreans*; and the one north of America is labeled *Aronphei*. Ruysch labels the waters within the four islands as the *Mare Sugenum*, and speaks of a violent whirlpool that sucks the incoming waters down into the earth; in addition, his map shows a ring of small, very mountainous islands around the four islands, which numerous islands Ruysch says are uninhabited.



- |    |                        |    |               |
|----|------------------------|----|---------------|
| N  | Norway                 | H  | Hyperborea    |
| V  | Ventelant              | M  | Magnetic Mt.  |
| G  | Greenland (magnetic)   | GP | Ginnungagap   |
| G2 | Grvenlant (geographic) | B  | Baffin Island |
| L  | Labrador               | NF | Newfoundland  |



According to H. P. Biggar, the Cabots came upon the eastern coast of Greenland. This coast was called "*Labrador's Land*" as it was first sighted by the Portuguese, João Fernandes, the "*llabrador*" or laborer, whom John Cabot had brought with him from the Azores, where he had gone the previous summer to recruit skilled seamen for his crew. Turning north, "*they had,*" says Peter Martyr, "*in a manner continual daylight.*" The action of the compass in those high latitudes might well cause the alarm expressed in the above inscriptions. The evidence that the landfall of the Cabots was Greenland and not Labrador is cited by Biggar.

Some of Ruysch's inland Asian data was extrapolated from Polo's description of his trip from Peking to Bengal, which he says he made as an emissary for Kublai Khan. Ruysch judges Polo's *TOLMA[N]*, a region later reincarnated in the New World as part of the Northwest Coast, to lie just south of the realm of *Gog and Magog*. South of *TOLMA* lies the mountainous country of *TEBET* [Tibet, but actually in present-day Szech'wan and Yün-nan], which "*is terribly devastated, for it was ravaged in a campaign by Mongu Khan . . . many towns and villages and hamlets lying ruined and desolate.*" Polo did, however, "*renew his stock of provisions*" at a region with many populated hamlets, some of which are "*perched on precipitous crags.*" At these villages he observed such promiscuous social customs that "*obviously the country is a fine one to visit for a lad from sixteen to twenty-four.*"

As regards the continental regions south of Newfoundland, and discovered by the Spaniards and Portuguese, Ruysch was clearly of the opinion that they were entirely distinct from Newfoundland or the pseudo Asiatic country which he had visited and delineated; and that they constituted a new world, as yet imperfectly known, particularly regarding its west coast. This coast Ruysch could not admit to be connected in any manner with as he already depicts in detail the eastern Asiatic seaboard, from the point where they merge with his northern regions, to 39 degrees south latitude, which is the termination of the map.

Ruysch's map positions a large island in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean between latitude 37°N and 40°N. It is called *Antilia Insula*, and a long inscription on the map asserts that it had been searched for in vain, but that it had been discovered long ago by the Spaniards, whose last Gothic king, Roderik had taken refuge there from the invasion of the barbarians. The inscription depends on a myth, which has played a certain part in the history of geography, and from which is derived the present name of the islands between Florida and the northern coast of South America. The earliest delineations of an island, *Antilia*, in the Atlantic Ocean, are found on a *portolano* of 1425, belonging to the Library at Weimar, and on Andrea Bianco's map of 1436 (#241). On the globe of Behaim (#258) to the south of the Azores an island of the same name is also represented, provided with a long inscription, corresponding, but not identical with the legend of Ruysch.

Both Japan and *Antilia* were described by the influential Italian humanist Paolo Toscanelli in his famous letter of 1474 to King Philip of Portugal, a copy of which Columbus read. Ruysch places the island of *Antilia* tantalizingly close to the Azores, and accompanies it with an inscription summarizing its history:

*This island of Antilia was discovered by the Portuguese, and now when it is sought it is not found. In this island are people who speak the Spanish tongue, and who in the time of King Roderick are believed to have fled to this island from the barbarians who at that time invaded Spain. Here dwelt an archbishop with*

six other bishops, each one of whom had his own particular city. Wherefore this island is called by many "seven cities." This people lived most piously in the full enjoyment of all the riches of this time.

Later, not having been found in the Atlantic, the *Seven Cities* were sought on the American mainland, where they remained an elusive goal of riches-hungry Spanish explorers through much of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

While Ruysch undoubtedly believed that the lands seen by the Cabots and Corte-Reals were part of Asia, he thought that the coasts explored by Columbus, Vincente Pinzon, Cabral, and others belonged to a continent separated from Asia by a stretch of open sea. In the south, Ruysch shows the Caribbean basin as separate from Asia, but assumes (as indicted in an inscription in the western Pacific) that *Sipganus/Cipango/Zipangu* (Marco Polo's Japan) is identical with *Spagnola* (*Hispaniola*, modern Haiti and the Dominican Republic), thus reinforcing Columbus' belief that the West Indies were very close to Asia.

His representation of the West Indies is confusing. Near the island of *Spagnola* [Haiti] and south of the island of *Antilia* is an inscription that tells the story of that island as given on Behaim's globe (#258). What was intended by the land west of *Spagnola* is uncertain. The historian Varnhagen maintained that it was the land seen by Vespucci on his disputed voyage of 1497. Another historian, Kohl, thought it was meant to show that Cuba was a peninsula of a new land. Ruysch's knowledge of the New World, south of Newfoundland, appears to be derived exclusively from another *Lusitano-Germanic* maps, according to HARRISSE, who believed that the apparent omission of Cuba was an oversight on the part of Ruysch. The name *C. De Fundabril* on the peninsula extending toward *Spagnola* is suggestive of Cuba as that name was given by Columbus, on his second voyage, to a cape on the coast of Cuba which he left the on the 30<sup>th</sup> of April. On the scroll upon the west coast of this unnamed land is the inscription: *As far as this the ships of Ferdinand have come.* To the southwest of the supposed island of Cuba is this striking statement: *M. Polo says that 1500 miles to the east of the port of Zaiton there is a very large island called Sipango, whose inhabitants worship idols and have their own king and are tributary to none. They have a great abundance of gold and all kinds of gems. But as the islands discovered by the Spaniards occupy this spot, we do not dare to locate this island here, being of the opinion that what the Spaniards call Spagnola is really Sipango, since the things that are described as of Sipango are also found in Spagnola, besides the idolatry.* The considerable distance from the eastern coast of China adopted for *Zipangu* [Japan] by the geographers of the first part of the 16<sup>th</sup> century depends, according to Peschel, on the distance being given by Marco Polo in Chinese *Li* of which there are 250 per one degree of latitude. This Chinese *Li* was by the European cartographers confounded with the Italian mile (60 = 1 degree).

The unnamed northwestern continental land in Ruysch is also far less complete than we find it depicted in the *Caveri* map (#307); and it is certain, from its shape and position, that if Ruysch's prototype had presented a coast line extending, for instance, so far south as 10 degrees north latitude, he would not have cut it off at ten degrees. From the moment that we admit the existence of a map which exhibited the northwestern continental region as reaching only to the Tropic of Cancer, we are authorized to presume that there may also have been a map which represented that land ten degrees shorter still; in as much as such is, *prima facie* at least, its latitudinal area in the map of *Cantino* (#306). In the present state of the enquiry, the critic is bound, therefore, to accept,

as being within the meaning of the original cartographer, the configuration and extent of that continental land as we find them measured and depicted in the said map.

As mentioned, most of Ruysch's Asian data comes from Polo's description of his return to the West from China. Marco, Maffeo, and Niccolo Polo, long detained at the pleasure of Kublai Khan, were allowed to return to Europe when sent as the personal escorts of a bride for Arghun, khan of the *Levant* [Persia]. They departed China from *Zaiton*, seen as a coastal city on the Asian peninsula opposite Ruysch's "Cuba."

From *Zaiton* they travelled "1500 miles" across a gulf to a country called *Chamba*, which is plotted here slightly inland as *CIAMBA*. Ruysch designates its coast as *SILVA ALOE* [aloe forest] for the valuable plant that Polo said the king of Chamba offered as part of his annual tribute to the Kublai Khan. Groves of trees yielding a black wood, which Polo said was used for making chessmen and pen-cases, are noted by Ruysch as *SILVA EBANI* [ebony forest]. To the west of these forests lies *LOAC* [Thailand/Malaya]. Sailing seven hundred miles south-south-west from *Chamba* the traveler, says Polo, passes two uninhabited islands, Ruysch's *SODVR* and *CANDVR*. Among the Polean islands lying further to the south on Ruysch's map is *AGAMA*, which like *TOLMA* would later be transposed to the New World as a region of the Northwest Coast. Mixing Polean, Portuguese, and Ptolemaic data, Ruysch charts a *JAVA MAJOR* and *JAVA MINOR*, Polo's Java and Sumatra respectively. He creates a "modern" Sri Lanka [*PRILAM*] from Portuguese sources but exiles the old *TAPROBANA*, the Sri Lanka or Ceylon of Ptolemy, to the east, giving it both the old and new names (*TAPROBANA ALIAS ZOILON*), and mistakenly notes the 1507 Portuguese landfall in Sri Lanka by it rather than by *Prilam*. Further east is yet another Sri Lanka [*SEYLAN INSULAE*], spanning the edges of the map. South of *JAVA MINOR* [Sumatra] an inscription refers to an archipelago of precisely 7,448 islands reported by Polo, probably the Philippines but here suggesting Indonesia.



The basis of the entire Ruysch map, according to the historian Henry Harrisse, was a purely *Lusitanian planisphere*, similar to those of *Cantino* and *Caveri* (#306 and #307), but constructed after the former and before the latter; that is, between 1502 and 1504, as we have shown in a comparative description of the continental region which is north of Central America in Portuguese charts. However, these dates are obviously not correct given the notations on the map of the Portuguese discoveries of 1507.

There are in the section of the map delineating the New World, two very distinct parts, based upon data of similar origin, one of which, however, was modified in a most important respect. The first part is that which represents Newfoundland. Originally, the region was delineated nearly as we see it in *Cantino*, and in all the *Lusitano-Germanic* maps. This can be seen simply by comparing the eastern profile of the *Terra del Rey de portugall* (present-day Newfoundland) in *Cantino* and the *King-Hamy* (#307.1), with the profile of the *Terra Nova* of Ruysch, which is exactly the same region.

But as Ruysch had himself visited the northern part of Newfoundland on board an English vessel, and acquired from experience positive data concerning the situation of that peninsula, as he calls it: *qui peninsulae Terra Noua uocatae*, without having the same reasons as Gaspar Corte Real to place it in the middle of the Atlantic, within the Portuguese *Line of Demarcation*, Ruysch, following the charts used by his English companions, brought Newfoundland close to the western continent.

*Terra Nova*, one of the earliest uses of this term for the modern Newfoundland, appears as a large peninsula jutting out from the mainland of Asia, although on some copies of the map, because of wear or creases, it may appear to be depicted as an island. On all other maps of the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, even on the Cabot map of 1544, it is represented as a group of islands. The use of the name *Insula Baccalauras* on the coast of *Terra Nova* is one of the earliest instances of the appearance on any map of the American coast of that Romance word for codfish, *baccallaos*. There is no certain authority for the statement sometimes made that the term was first applied in the west by the Cabots nor for the assertion by Peter Martyr that the word was found by Europeans in use among the natives of *Terra Nova*. By 1506 Portuguese fishermen were hauling so much cod from northern American waters that their monarch sought tariffs on its import. In its demand for revenues, the Crown cited the land from which the fish came as *Terra Nova*, referring to the land explored by the two Azorian/Portuguese Corte Real brothers in 1501-02; the king of England used the same phrase ("New found land") for the land discovered by John Cabot. Ruysch uses the term to designate the entire peninsula of North America, and names its most southeasterly point as *C. DE PORTOGESI*, acknowledging Portuguese dominance there. Just north of that cape is *IN. BACCALAUROS* [codfish island], testifying to that fish's profound influence on early Atlantic exploration. This term, in its sundry Romance variations, soon became a major place-name associated with North America. To the north, at about 48°N latitude, is *R GRADO*. The editor of the atlas, Beneventanus, clarifies this ambiguous term as *Caput Grande*. This comment, as well as the river's latitude and its probable origin in the Corte-Real voyages, all suggest that this is the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The adjacent features also make sense in this interpretation; *C GLACIATO* (a reference to glacial waters) would be Newfoundland, *C DE PORTOGESI* would be Nova Scotia, and *IN BACCALAUROS* would be Cape Breton or Prince Edward Island.

In this northern portion of the map our theoretical Gulf of St. Lawrence is *BAIA DE ROCKAS* (possibly lower Strait of Belle Isle). The use of the letter "k" in this "Rocky Bay" is one of the map's scant traces of the British flag under which Ruysch is believed

to have sailed. An inscription far to the north states that: *Here begins the Sugenum Sea (i.e., "whirlpool" sea). Here the compasses of the ships lose their power, and it is not possible for ships which have iron on board to return.*

This is sometimes interpreted to be another element of British influence, as the variation of the compass orientation had been noted by Cabot on his second voyage. More likely, however, the legend originated in a medieval treatise, the same from which Ruysch configured his Arctic region. Along the Asian coast facing this whirlpool arctic is *IUDEI INCLUSI*, where the lost tribes of Israel were thought to dwell. In the Atlantic between Ireland and Greenland lies an island with an inscription stating *that this island in the year of our Lord 1456 was totally consumed by fire*. It is tempting to suggest that this is an epitaph for the fabulous island of *Brasil* from Irish legend.

Meanwhile, it behooves us to show the Portuguese origin of his geographical data, south of what Ruysch names *Terra Nova*, which, with him, does not mean the *New World*, or the country newly discovered, but present-day Newfoundland exclusively; in imitation of the English mariners with whom he visited that island. "*Qui peninsula Terra Nova vocatæ*," says his commentator, Marcus Beneventanus.

To that effect, HARRISSE compares the nomenclature of the region placed in Ruysch's *mappamundi*, south of his *Terra Nova*, with the names inscribed on the northwestern continental land in the *Cantino* and *Caveri* maps, both of which are of the *Lusitanian* map tradition, with no admixture of foreign geographical elements whatever. HARRISSE establishes a similar comparison between Ruysch's South America and the latter continent in all of the seven world charts, now known, which circulated in Europe when he constructed his *mappamundi*. One is Spanish, and the work of Juan de la Cosa (#305), who designed it in *Andalusia* before October, 1500. The other six originated in Portugal, and were delineated during the first few years of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. They are:

- |                        |                           |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Cantino (#308)      | 4. Kunstmann III (#309.1) |
| 2. Kunstmann II (#309) | 5. Kunstmann I (#307.2)   |
| 3. King (#307.1)       | 6. Caveri (#307)          |

In those maps, the American coastlines of the mainland bear distinctive names. For the north and south together, de la Cosa gives twenty-nine; *Kunstmann II*, forty-four; *Kunstmann III*, twenty-three; and *Caveri*, eighty-one. Only a few names are inscribed on the *King* and *Kunstmann I* maps.

Ruysch inscribes thirty-six names on his map, but not one of them is to be found either in the de la Cosa map or in any other Spanish map whatever; while thirty-one out of its whole number are duly set forth either in the *Cantino* (#306), or *Kunstmann II* (#309), or *Caveri* (#307) maps (not to speak of *Waldseemüller* (#310) and *Schöner* (#328), which are derivatives of Portuguese maps), as is shown in HARRISSE's two-page list of place-names showing the matches/lack of matches between the Ruysch map and the *Cantino*, *Caveri* and *Kunstmann II* maps. This historian believes that it is striking proof of the Portuguese origin, direct or indirect, of Ruysch's nomenclature. Of the thirty-six names inscribed by Ruysch, thirty-one, at least, figure on the *Lusitanian* charts. Moreover, if his *mappamundi* was based upon Spanish maps, the names which he inscribes on the sea-board of Brazil, for instance, would recall the nomenclature of Vicente Yanez Pinzon, or of Diego de Lepe, and not that of the Portuguese Pedro Alvarez Cabral. The famous Cape of the Holy Cross on which de la Cosa puts the legend: *This cape was discovered in the year 1499 [old style] for Castile, Vicente Yañez being the*



discoverer thereof, would not be called, on Ruysch's map: not *Caput S. Crocis*, but *Cabo de Santa Maria de la Consolacion* which is the name given to that cape by Pinzon on January 26, 1500, or *Rostro Hermoso*, as he also, if not de Lepe, named it.



Ruysch's delineations of the South American continent embrace likewise, the coasts of Venezuela and Honduras, which were discovered by Spanish navigators, who, of course, made maps of their discoveries. Yet it was not from these that he took his names and legends for that region. This is shown by the fact that none of his designations for the Honduras, Venezuela, and Guyana coasts are to be found among the fifty names inserted along those sea-boards by Juan de la Cosa, who was one of the discoverers; nor even in the nomenclature of the *Ribero* map (#346) and other official quantity of cosmographers, who must have followed, in that respect, though it was twenty-five years later, the traditions of the Spanish school.

Another decisive proof of the Portuguese origin of Ruysch's cartographical data is the legend which he has inscribed across the country bearing his twenty-eight South American names, viz.: *Terra Sancte Crucis*. No such designation as the "Land of the Holy Cross" was ever adopted in Spain for Brazil, or written on any map by the Spanish pilots or geographers of that time. It was originally given to those regions by Pedro Alvarez Cabral, when, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April, 1500, a landing was effected under the Portuguese flag on the coast of Brazil: "*En las octavas de la pascua siguiente llego a una tierra que nuevamente descubrio, a la cual puso nombre de Santa Cruz*," [In the eight days of Easter next I came to a land newly discovered, which he named Santa Cruz] or, rather, if we follow a Portuguese original text discovered in the State Archives at Venice: "*e nas outavas de Pascoa seguyente cheguou a una terra que novamente descobrio, a que pos nome Santa*", as King Manoel wrote to Ferdinand and Isabella, July 29, 1501. But the Spaniards always, and justly, claimed to have discovered that country, as Pinzon had sighted and actually

taken possession of the land situated by 8° 19'S latitude, three months before. They consequently never accepted its Lusitanian name, and invariably called that region *Tierra del Brasil*. The Portuguese, on the other hand, at once named it *Terra Sancta Crivis*, as is evidenced by the original documents above quoted, as well as by the *King Hamy* chart (#307.1), and particularly *Kunstmann II* (#309), where we read on a scroll: *Terra sancta crucis*, while, on the mainland, there is a legend which begins thus: *Ista terra q. inuenta sunt positum est nomen terra sac eo quod in die sancte crucis inuenta est* [This land the fact that the things are found in the day of the Holy Cross is the name of the land was found]. Popularly it was also called *La terra dagli Papaga* [Parrots' Land], on account of those large and beautiful birds that Gaspar de Lemos brought to Portugal. It was only at a later date that it was named *Brazil*, by reason of the large quantity of dye-wood found in that country.

*C. Glaciato* on the eastern coast suggests the work of the Italian editor and *Baia de Rockas* shows the influence of English associations.

The configuration of the continental land that corresponds with the northwestern region of the *Cantino* map (#306) is distorted in that map, but perfectly recognizable on Ruysch's. However, Ruysch exhibits a geographical peculiarity that must be noted and explained. He depicts no island, whether named "*Isabella*" or otherwise, between that northern continent and *Hispaniola*. Such an omission, if interpreted strictly, would make of that land nothing but Cuba. In reality, the absence of an island between the northwestern coast and *Hispaniola* must be ascribed either to an oversight, or to a late innovation introduced by that geographer upon his own responsibility.

More havoc besets the island just east of pseudo-Cuba. This island lies between 45° and 55° east of the coast of Asia, just above the Tropic of Cancer. Ruysch's problem was that two of his prime sources of data — the recent Spanish expeditions, and Marco Polo — both located an island at that spot. For Columbus it was the island of *Hispaniola* [modern-day Haiti and the Dominican Republic]. But according to Marco Polo, it was *Cipango* [Japan], which the Venetian merchant described as lying "far out to sea to the eastward [from China], some 1,500 miles from the mainland." Hence Ruysch charts *Hispaniola* but accompanies it with a disclaimer stating that the island must in fact be Japan:

*M Polo says that 1500 miles to the east of the port of Zaiton there is a very large island named Sipango . . . but as the islands discovered by the Spaniards occupy this spot, we do not dare to locate it here . . . being of the opinion that what the Spaniards call Spagnola is really Sipango.*

In a fascinating example of how a geographic misunderstanding can assume a life of its own, Donald McGuirk has demonstrated how Ruysch's hybrid *Hispaniola*-Japan was transformed into an atypical representation of Japan four years later by Bernard Sylvanus (#318). Columbus himself wrote in his log that he believed Cuba to be Japan (October 23, 1492).

In Ruysch's Caribbean there lies a strange triangular landmass, undefined on its western coast, in the position one would expect to find Cuba. But the name "Cuba" does not appear as such, and historians have long been puzzled by Ruysch's apparent omission of the island.

This was one of the first printed maps to show any part of the New World and may also be one of the first to include information on that continent from first-hand knowledge. It was, in short, a remarkable map for its time. In his scholarly work, *The*

*Continent of America*, John Boyd Thacher made this comment regarding the Ruysch map; "The mystery of this map — and every early map boasted its mystery — is the absence of the island of Cuba from its place in the Caribbean Sea". Indeed, many scholars of early New World cartography have debated the meaning of this oversight on Ruysch's part. Henry Harrisse, in his book, *The Discovery of North America*, states that as early as 1526 Franciscus Monachus (#337) criticized the Ruysch map for its depictions in the Caribbean Sea. "Thus did Franciscus prove once more, that, in the opinion of geographers, the said continental land was not the island of Cuba but formed part of the northwestern continent".

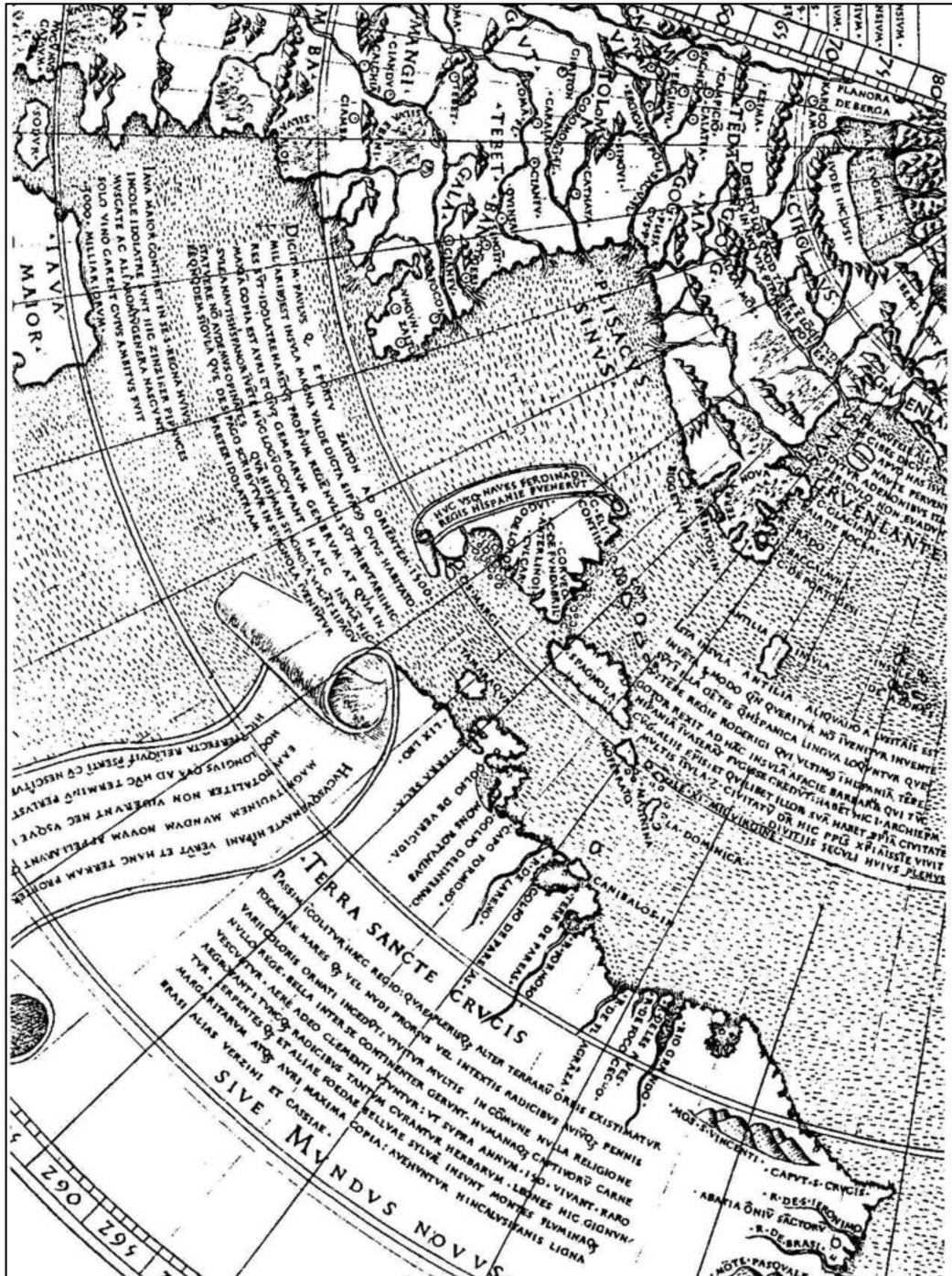
It appears the answer to this question has been hidden on the map itself since 1507. It has long been recognized that there were corrections to the plates of this map even before the earliest known example, state one - thus the importance of examining an early strike of the map, to better discern these changes. It is astonishing to think that a map that was published only once, over a period of one or two years, had so many revisions (at least six). Obviously the printers were taking great care to ensure that it was accurate and up to date. Apparently much soul-searching was done in the choosing of its delineations, especially in regard to the New World.



Recent research, however, has revealed plate erasures under the landmass to the northwest of *Spagnola* proving that Ruysch had in fact originally plotted a "true" Cuba, but that he subsequently altered the copperplate. The vestige of *DE CVBA* is still discernable, as is part of the coastline of its original (insular?) geography. Preceding *DE CVBA* was probably the word *Insula* or *Terra*. It can be surmised that Ruysch was confused by Columbus' insistence that Cuba was the eastern tip of a continental Asian promontory; Columbus, on his second voyage (1493-94), went so far as to force his

officers to make sworn statements that Cuba was such a peninsula, in effect the *Aurea Chersonesus* or *Cattigara* of Ptolemy. Ruysch neatly covers his indecision on the matter with a mapmaker's "fig-leaf," a neat ribbon hiding its open end with an inscription stating that *as far as this the ships of Ferdinand [i.e., Columbus and the Spanish expeditions] have come*. This became a popular device for mapmakers to avoid the unknown through the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

In the state that preceded "state one" there was a smaller island within this space and it was labeled *CVBA*. The stippled lines that represent ocean spill well into the current landmass, both in the north and south. Where these ocean lines stop, a faint outline of a smaller island can be found. This outline continues within the current landmass except to the northwest, where it extends into the ocean as a faint but obvious serpentine line. Within this smaller island, and to the left of the name *CORVEO* are found the faint letters *DE CV*. Under the small triangle preceding the name *CORVEO* is the letter *B* and under the following *C* the letter *A* is found. It is likely that the word *TERRA* or *INSULE* preceded these.





Rather than forgetting Cuba, it is obvious that Ruysch deliberated at great length as to how Cuba should be represented. After first choosing to represent it as a small island, he then changed his mind and used the outline of the “North American” continental landmass on Portuguese manuscript charts akin to the *Cantino* map (#306), only in smaller dimensions, to represent Cuba on his map. Whether this second configuration represents combined information from Columbus’ first two voyages, data gained from Amerigo Vespucci’s ‘first’ voyage, an early description of the Yucatan, or some other source has been, and will continue to be, a matter of great debate.

Below *Antilia* lies *LE XI MIL VIRGINE* [(Islands of) the Eleven Thousand Virgins], an early reference to the Virgin Islands named by Columbus for the story of St. Ursula. Another inherited tradition involving the “fairer sex” is found in the island of *MATININA* to the south.

As mentioned, South America appears as a large and distinct continent labeled *TERRA SANCTE CRUCIS*. This “Land of the Holy Cross” also contains the term *MUNDUS NOVUS*, one of the first references to a “New World” on a printed map. South America is mapped through the Gulf of Venezuela, with the Guahira peninsula shown as an island (*TAMARA QUA*). No trace of Columbus’ fourth voyage (1502-03), in which he stumbled across Central America, is found on Ruysch’s map.

On South America’s northern coast is the *GOLFO DE PAREAS* that Columbus believed lay at the foothills of *Paradise*. Columbus reached this fancy when attempting to explain the variation of the North Star, noted by him near the *Gulf of Paria*. Columbus’ association of *Paria* with *Paradise* was reinforced by the fact that there he encountered four rivers emptying into the gulf, corresponding to the number of rivers commonly believed to flow from *Paradise*. Pierre D’Ailly had declared that there was “*a fountain in the Terrestrial Paradise which waters the Garden of Delights and which flows out by four rivers,*” and Columbus himself annotated his copy of the *Imago Mundi* with “*Fons est in paradiso*” [a fountain is in Paradise]. And such is how he construed what Peter Martyr described as “*the outrageous streames of the freshe waters,*” being the Orinoco River’s discharge, “*whiche soo violentlye isshewe owtt of the sayde govlfes and shyne soo with the salte water, saule headlonge from the toppes of the sayde mountaynes.*”

Nearly blocking the entrance to Columbus’ fountainhead of *Paradise*, the *Gulf of Paria*, is *CANIBALOS IN* [Trinidad], introducing to maps the cannibalism that Columbus reported about the Carib islanders. It is interesting to note that on state 1 of the Ruysch map *Canibali* designated *LA DOMINICA* [the island of Dominica] instead, which was one of the islands Columbus said was inhabited by that reputedly fierce race. While at *Dominica* on the second voyage, a colleague of Columbus wrote that “*these islands are inhabited by Canabili, a wild, unconquered race which feeds on human flesh. I would be right to call them anthropophagi.*” That Ruysch, on the later states of his map chose to relocate the cannibalism reference close to South America may reflect early skepticism about Columbus’ reports of the Caribs’ supposed eating of human flesh. The influential Las Casas, for example, stated flatly that the Caribs were not cannibals. Cannibalism had, though, been reported independently by early mainland explorers, such as Vespucci, perhaps rendering the Trinidad association more plausible in Ruysch’s mind. On South America, a long inscription informs the viewer that this is the

*Land of the Holy Cross or the New World. This country, which is generally considered another continent, is inhabited in scattered settlements. The men and women go either entirely naked or adorned with interwoven fibers of wood [i.e., roots] and birds’ feathers of various colors. Many live in common: they have no*



*religion and no king: they wage war among themselves continually. They devour flesh that of captives in war: they breathe so mild an air that they live to be over 150 years: they are rarely sick, and then they are cured by roots or herbs only: lions are found here: serpents and other foul beasts. There are forests, mountains and rivers: there is the greatest abundance of pearls and gold. Brazilwood, otherwise called verzini, and cinnamon are exported hence by the Portuguese.*

In this long inscription in the interior of *Terra Sancte Crucis sive Mundus Novus* here for the first time, Ruysch describes the inhabitants and natural products of the country following the letters of Vespucci and other sources. South America is depicted as a large continent. The name “America” had been suggested only the previous year by Waldseemüller (#310), and it is possible that Ruysch had not heard of the suggestion when he made his map or for some reason he did not care to follow it. We here obtain notices regarding exploring-voyages undertaken before 1508, of which no other information is met with in the history of geographical discovery. Below this inscription is another:

*Portuguese navigators have inspected this part of this land, and have sailed as far as the fiftieth degree of south latitude without seeing the southern limit of it.*

On the east coast of South America is the interesting name *Abatia ñniu sactoru*, or All Saints Abbey. This form, as well as that used by Waldseemüller, *Omnium sanctorum abbatiam*, is a corruption of the Portuguese inscription on the *Cantino* map: *a baia de todos los sanctos*, or the Bay of All Saints. All maps made in northern Europe followed Ruysch in this error and all Spanish and Portuguese maps used the correct form and hence it has come about that the use of this name has become a means of classifying later maps. Harisse believed that this error took its origin in the Latin translation of the letters of Vespucci, who first saw and named this port. It is known today as *Abbadia*.

Then, where did Ruysch pick up the egregious mistake that transformed *A baia de todos Sanctos* [All-Saints Bay] into *Abatia omnium Sanctorum* [All Saints Abbey]? Not in Spanish charts, certainly, but in a *Lusitano-Germanic* map, manipulated by a northern cartographer who had read the Latin version of the four voyages of Vespucci, printed at St. Die in Lorraine, in May, 1507, and where we see *Omnium sanctorum abbatiam*, while all the Spanish maps properly inscribe, *Baya de todos sanctos* (Turin and Weimar charts).

In Ruysch’s map the eastern coast of South America is cut off at the border of the map, at around 37° S. Evidently it is envisaged that this land tends further south, but in what configuration it is not suggested. The western border to Ruysch’s South American mainland is even more ambiguous, having been foregone entirely – not surprising given Europeans had no information about this region – instead subordinated to a cartouche which obscures the 15° of longitude in which Ruysch otherwise would have had to provide a coast or shade the area as an unknown region.

Ruysch’s *CAPVT S. CRVCIS* is the Cape St. Vincent of Vespucci’s third voyage (1501-02), hence the name of the mountains shown just inland by Ruysch. Vespucci said this cape lies eight degrees south of the equator (modern-day Recife), and that thence sailing southwest along the coast they encountered friendly Indians “gazing in wonder at us and at the great size of our ships.” Vespucci remarked that a few of the Indians, taken “to teach us their tongue,” volunteered to return to Portugal with them. At the southern end of South America another inscription states that the Portuguese had sailed as far south

as 50° S latitude without seeing the southern limit of the land, possibly also a reference to Vespucci's third voyage. On that voyage he claimed to have sailed so far south that

*the South Pole rose fifty-two degrees above the horizon, and we could no longer see the stars of the Great or the Lesser Bear [and] on the 7<sup>th</sup> of April, when the sun was near the end of Aires, we found that the night was fifteen hours long.*

The western bounds of the continent remained entirely unknown. In 1507 the Pacific, still simply the "Oriental" or "China" Sea, had never been sighted from the American side and had only been cursorily approached from the Asian side. Ruysch places a ribbon over the west coast of South America with an inscription stating that

*Thus far the Spanish sailors have come, and because of its magnitude they call it a new world, for indeed they have not seen the whole of it nor at this time have they explored beyond this limit. Therefore this map is left incomplete for the present, since we do not know in which direction it trends.*

The Portuguese, of course, had also "come this far." Their discovery of Brazil in 1500 was significant because it was rich in trade potential and because it clearly lay on their side of the papal demarcation line.

According to the historian Gregory McIntosh, the depiction and nomenclature of the New World on the Ruysch map of 1508 were previously thought to be due to the influence of Waldseemüller's book and map productions of 1507. This belief, held by Harisse, Thacher, and others, was based upon a mistaken notion of the origin and transmission of the Abbey of All-Saints place-name in Brazil. *Badia*, *abatia*, and other similarly ambiguous variant spellings are found on maps with a King-type (#307.1) nomenclature in South America before Waldseemüller's 1507 map, and before he and Ringmann began working together in 1505. The Ruysch map, as originally designed and engraved, is found to be a map incorporating delineations and place-names for the Caribbean, Spanish Main, and Brazil from a map with a King-type design.

The Ruysch map is classified by the historian Henry Harisse as a *Type III* within the *Lusitano-Germanic Group* of new world maps (the only specimen that Harisse places in this Type, also known as the *Vespuccian configuration* and the *Cantino tradition*). The *Lusitano-Germanic* category of cartographic design and nomenclature displayed on early maps is characterized by a common heritage in a collection of associated features of a similar and distinctive Portuguese-based cartography for the New World, epitomized by the *Cantino* planisphere. These New World features include:

- Greenland is a large triangular peninsula somewhat similar to its actual shape and size.
- Newfoundland is a half-island unattached to any continental land, ultimately derived from the Corte Real voyages.
- Cuba is a large "dog-shaped" island named *Isabela* (never *Cuba*).
- Hispaniola is named *Espanola* (never *Isabela*).
- A large continental landmass is to the west of Cuba (herein referred to as the *Cantinean* landmass). The design of the landmass has also been called the *Florida configuration*, and the *Vespucci type*.
- South America is a continuous coastline from Venezuela to southern Brazil.
- The toponyms of Venezuela and the Guyanas are distinctive to the type.

- The toponyms of Brazil from Sam Roche to Rio do Cananor are commonly seen on many maps outside this design-type. After 1507, either the Bay of All Saints (*Baia de todos os santos*) or the Abbey of All-Saints (*badia di tuti e santi, Abbatia Omnium Sanctorum*) may appear in Brazil.

One of the “myths” that McGuirk discusses is that the continental landmass shown in the newly discovered west cannot be the coast of Asia (Columbus thought that Cuba was the coast of Asia) because then there would be two coastlines of Asia on the same map.

Obviously the cartographers of this time were having great difficulty in reconciling different and sometimes opposing information. The former beliefs about the Asiatic coast were not matching well with the Asiatic coast (i.e. Cuba) described by Columbus. Some cartographers chose not to represent the whole world on their maps, thus alleviating this double Asiatic coast problem. Others chose to make all the new world discoveries islands, thus having only one (i.e., the old) Asiatic cost (*Contarini/Rosselli*, #308). Some chose to show no Asiatic coast (world map of Bernard Sylvanus, #318). Finally, some chose to show two Asiatic coasts (*Cantino* #306 and *Canerio* #307). It was not uncommon in that time, when there was confusion about a particular area, to picture both theories on the same map. The most ingenious approach to this problem was taken by Alessandro Zorzi (#304). He pictured the world on three separate maps. Although the coast of Asia is entirely different on two of these views (one more traditional, the other a New World projection, closely resembling the triangular-shaped landmass), he puts the same place-names along both coasts.

This well-known New World design type is seen on the *Cantino* manuscript planisphere (#306), the *Caverio* manuscript planisphere (#307), and the Waldseemüller printed maps and derivatives (#310, #320 i.e., Fries, Stobnicza (#319, 1512), Schöner (#328), Apian #331), etc.

There are, both in the *Ruysch* and *Caveri* (#307) maps, geographical representations and names showing that their prototypes differed in important respects from *Cantino*. The Asiatic coasts are different; the nomenclature presents also a number of names that are in one and not in the other two, and vice versa. Madagascar, on Ruysch’s map, is evidently borrowed from a recently made Portuguese map, as is evidenced by the name *Sada* therein inscribed, and which is an abbreviation of *Comoro Sada*, which must have been derived from the account of Tristão D’Acuña, made known after his return in 1506. That Portuguese map, however, may have been limited to the Asiatic and African regions; or if it was a planisphere, may have exhibited more ancient configurations for the New World.

While one of the more widely circulated of all the printed maps from this period, none have exercised so little influence over the cartography of the New World as this *mappamundi*. We have never seen its configurations reproduced anywhere; and it is only mentioned twice in the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

As mentioned above, Ruysch’s world map more usually appears in the 1508 printing of the Rome Ptolemy. Minor amendments were made to both the right and left hand plates of which the map is comprised and in consequence a number of “states” are known. These have been classified sequentially as follows:

State	Left-hand Plate	Right-hand Plate
1	The island <i>La Dominica</i> is <i>Cannibali</i> instead.	Lacks inscriptions mentioned below
2	As stated in 1 above.	<i>Sinus Gageticus</i> in the Bay of Bengal

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 3 | La Dominica correctly labeled.                                      | and <i>Sinus Magnus</i> added further east.<br>As in State 2 above. |
| 4 | <i>Sinus Gruenlanteus</i> added between Greenland and Newfoundland. | As in State 3 above.  |
| 5 | As in State 4 above.  | <i>Pelagus Bone Speranze</i> added off the Cape of Good Hope.       |

As stated by Adolf Erik Nordenskiöld, it is evident, from what has already been said, that Ruysch deserves to be placed in the first rank among the reformers of cartography. His map is not a copy of the map of the world by Ptolemy, nor a learned masterpiece composed at the writing-table, but a revision of the old maps of the known world, made on a *Ptolemaic*, i.e., on a scientific basis, with the aid, on the one hand of great personal experience and geographical learning and, on the other, of extensive knowledge combined with a critical use of the traditions among practical seamen of different nations. The legends on this map are consequently of very high interest, and form a more important contribution to the history of geography than many a bulky volume.

This map represents the first cartographic support of Amerigo Vespucci's *Mundus Novus*, published in 1504, and indeed seems to have been directly informed by the pamphlet. So, in a sense, the Ruysch can be viewed as a cartographic endorsement of the honor conferred on Vespucci in the naming of the New World after him. While both the 1506 Contarini (the only, earlier printed map to show America) and the Ruysch apply Cabral's name for South America (*Terras Crucis* and *Terra Sancte Crucis* respectively), only Ruysch uses Vespucci's term, *Mundus Novus*. Hence, according to Thomas Suarez, this is the first reference to a 'new world' on a printed map.

In the Ruysch map, we witness the intellectual struggle of a talented geographer responding to the onrush of new information, attempting to integrate it into an imperfect template. Ruysch's mapping of newly discovered areas reveals that he wrestled with the question as to whether they were part of Asia or a new continent altogether. Very telling in this regard is a note near Hispaniola (*Spagnola*), in which Ruysch confesses that he does not know for sure where to locate Japan but concludes that *Spagnola* must be Japan (*Sipangu*), as described by Marco Polo. Also, Newfoundland (*Terra Nova*) is appended along with Greenland to the Asian continent. In this area is also *Injsulas Baccalauras*, one of the first references on a map to the cod fishing industry.

R.W. Shirley points out that "Ruusich's map is the first to show many parts of Asia in the light of the latest Portuguese discoveries." Ruysch even notes a Portuguese voyage to East India dated the very year of the map's publication. For the first time on a map, India approximates its actual shape, and both Madagascar and Sri Lanka have been adjusted to correspond more closely to reality. However, Ruysch compromised with tradition by still including *Taprobana*, the erstwhile, greatly inflated Sri Lanka, but moved it away from India.

A factor that speaks persuasively to the independence of Ruysch's sources is how different this map is from the Contarini-Rosselli map (#308). There are superficial similarities: Both mapmakers used Ptolemy's conic projection, and both showed significant open water between the Caribbean and North America. In struggling to reconcile Ptolemy's notion of the size of the globe with the evidence presented by the new discoveries in the Western Hemisphere, both mapmakers underestimate the distance between Europe's western shores and Asia's eastern reaches, to the point of conflating Newfoundland with Asia. Both maps reveal confusion with regard to the

location of Japan: as mentioned, Ruysch postulates that Marco Polo's *Sipangu* might be the island of Hispaniola, while Contarini puts Japan itself close to Cuba. But overall, Contarini's essentially Ptolemaic geography and Ruysch's reliance upon modern exploration result in very different maps.

The Ruysch map is of considerable and documented rarity. Donald McGuirk's census uncovered 63 examples of the map.

He estimated, however, the total number of extant examples is more likely in area of 100, still a relatively small number. Of the examples located by McGuirk, about three quarters of them were in institutional collections. Thus, only about 25 examples of the map are in private collections and could ever conceivably change hands.

This map appeared in some copies of the 1507 Rome edition of Ptolemy's *Geographia*, but it must have been a late addition to this edition, as it does not even appear in the table of contents. Most extant examples of the map appeared in the 1508 edition of the atlas. The map would not be re-published in any later works. Five states of the map have been identified. Sixty per cent of the examples surveyed by McGuirk were in the fifth state.

**Locations:** Harvard College Library;  
Library of Congress;  
Arthur Holzheimer Collection

**Size:** 40.5 x 53.5 cm

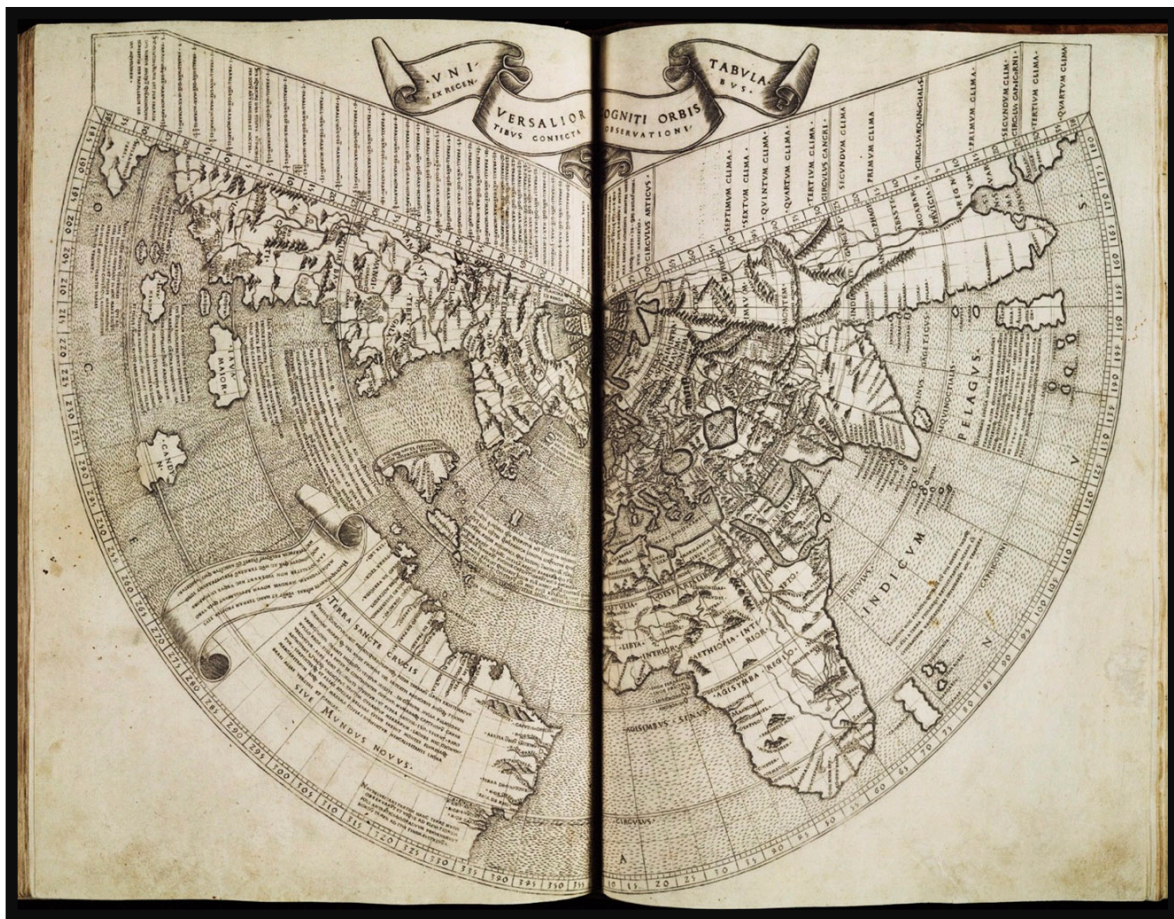
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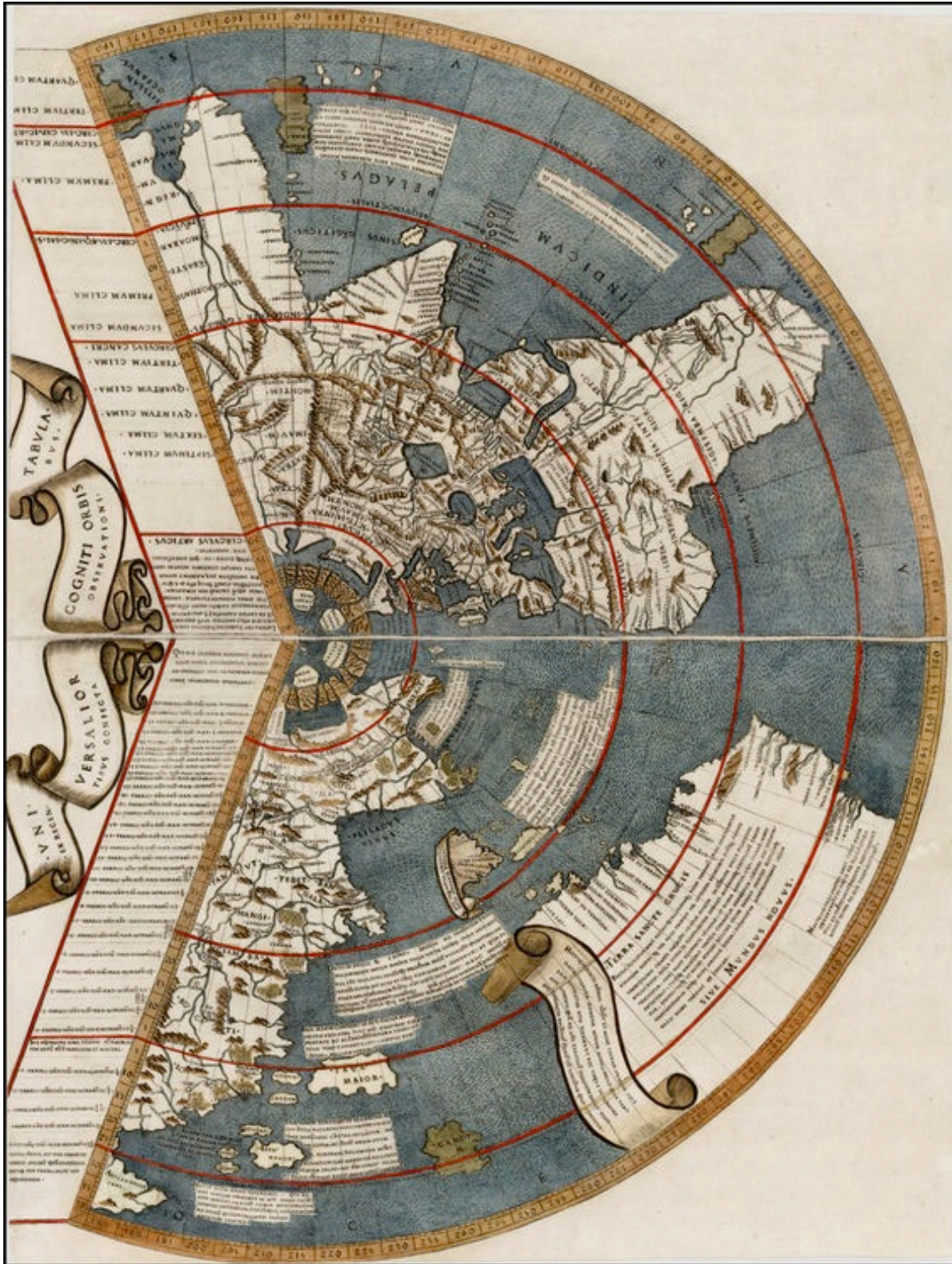


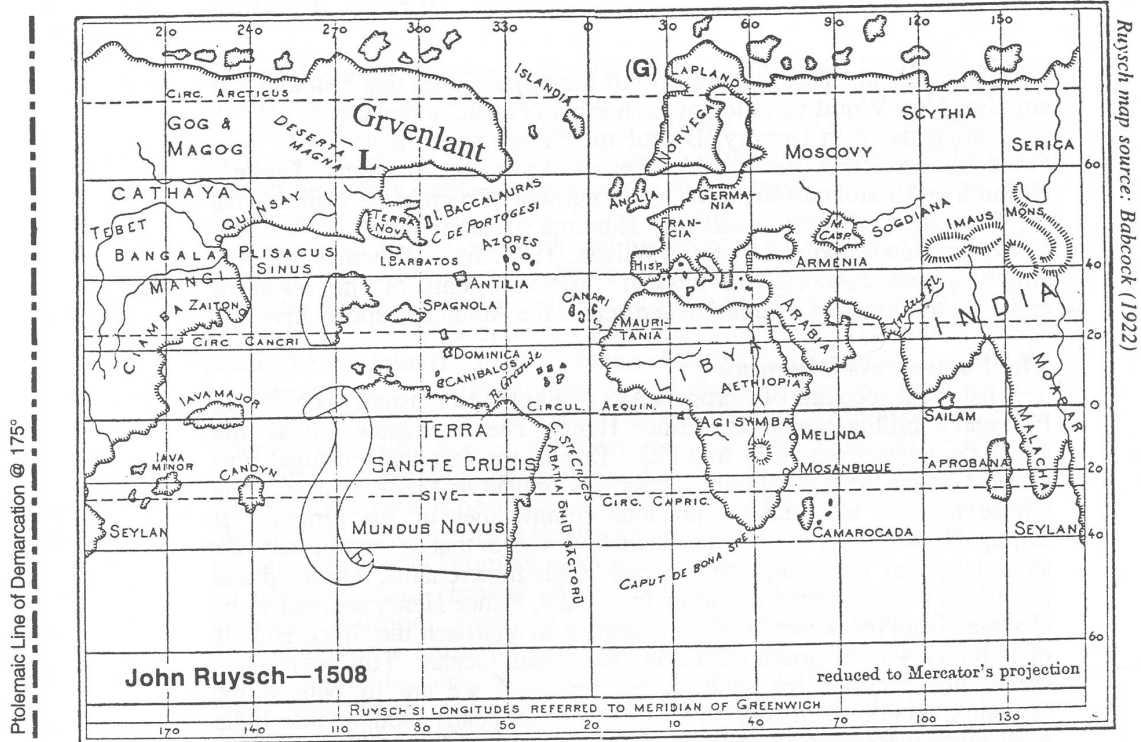












A re-drawing of Johan Ruysch's 1508 map (above) has *Grœnland* (L) as the title for several adjacent territories including Greenland Island, the southeastern region of Baffin Island, and Labrador. An archaic version of Greenland Island (G) can be seen on this map directly north of Norway where it is called *Lapland*, following a 15<sup>th</sup> century concept of the north.



