



Univrsalz, Giacomo Cosmographo In Vnẽtia MDCXXXVI

This large oval world map of Giacomo Gastaldi, the most influential Venetian map publisher of the 16th century, was first printed in 1546. It was the prototype of a series of later world maps, including Ortelius' work in his atlas of 1570. Gastaldi here still clings to the Amer-Asian concept which he later abandoned. Maps of Gastaldi can be found in the Italian atlases of the Lafreri school, all of them extremely rare.

This is the earliest of the series of world maps by Italian engravers found in Italian composite atlases of the later 16th century. It is one of Gastaldi's first works and a landmark in Italian cartographic production.

The map is a neatly-executed copper engraving on an oval projection partially surrounded by clouds. The sea is patterned by wavy lines. The general impression is of a rather overcrowded work, partly because the coastlines are not sharply defined and also because in all the continents except America mountain ranges take up most of the land area.

Here Gastaldi has reverted to earlier misconceptions assuming that North America and Asia were both part of one large mass of land. The Californian peninsula is shown but the east coast is relatively poorly drawn with no obvious marking of either the Hudson River or the Gulf of St. Lawrence. In South America the Amazon is prominently depicted, but flowing almost north-south.

In spite of its imperfections Gastaldi's map was an influential prototype. It was reduced and redrawn for the Ptolemy-Gastaldi Atlas of 1548, adapted in woodcut form by Matteo Pagano in 1550 and was the source for Gerard De Jode's first world map of 1555.

Throughout the 1560s a later generation of Italian engravers and publishers - Forlani, Camocio and Bertelli - produced a number of confusingly similar derivatives which have been preserved in composite atlases. Gastaldi's later influence can be very clearly traced in the miniature world map in Porcacchi's *L'Isole* which first appeared in 1572 and was then reprinted in various editions until the early 18th century.



The *Universale* is a foundation map of any collection, however, recently it has become apparently inaccessible in the antique market for its extreme rarity and shockingly high price (US \$ 246,455 at Sotheby's 1999 autumn auction).

The *Universale* [A map of the world] Venice, 1546. 20 ⁷/₈ x 14 ⁵/₈ in.; a copperplate engraving. It has been called one of the most important maps of the 16th century and is noteworthy, moreover, as a fine example of Italian engraving. Of interest to students of historical cartography is Gastaldi's delineation of the Northwest coast of America, the peninsula of California (which was later shown as an island) and the land bridge joining Asia and the continent of North America. With all its faults, this map served as a model of perfection for an entire generation.

This map formed the basis for a series of Italian maps published by Giacomo Gastaldi, a Piedmontese cartographer living and working in Venice, a city which at that time was perhaps the center of European civilization. Battista Agnese was working at the same place, and from his map or the original on which he drew, undoubtedly a Spanish map that may have been in Venice, Gastaldi obtained his names for the peninsula of California and the Sonora-Sinaloa coast. The only knowledge, apparently, that he had of the discoveries in the interior is shown by *La Sete Cite*, *Cipola*, and an immense river named the *Tontonteach* rising near the Arctic Circle and emptying into the Gulf of California. The continent is of Schöner type with Japan only some twenty degrees removed from the American coast. The point of junction between the two continents might be supposed to be at the turning' point of the land, which is in a little less than 40°. We thus see that already the point of connection had been removed farther to the north. Although there was nothing new in this theory the dissemination of Gastaldi's ideas in a series of modern maps executed for the Italian Ptolemy of 1548 was sufficient to make him the father of a school of cartography which had considerable vogue. His influence for a time overshadowed that of any other map maker. The Italians

were recognized as most skilled cartographers, and certainly their engraving work could not then be surpassed in Europe. The number of maps issued by successive publishers of Gastaldi's works must have been very large, judging from the known editions of them. A few of these were reproduced in Antwerp, probably pirated, but in the main, until the appearance of Ortelius' atlases in 1570, the Venetian publishers, had almost a monopoly of the business. Furthermore, they probably had a monopoly of the knowledge of the discoveries of the Spaniards and Portuguese, enabling them to put out more authoritative maps than could the publishers in the north.

Formerly in the collections of General von Hauslab and Prince Liechtenstein.



Dell'Universale world map Giacomo Gastaldi/Matteo Pagano, 1550, 51.5 x 77 cm



Detail of Gastaldi/Pagano map showing the integration of North America and Asia



Giacomo Gastaldi's Cosmographia universale et exactissima, 1569, below detail showing the Straits of Anian instead of the Amer-Asian integration



World map by Paolo Forlani, 1565,
which is strikingly similar to Gastaldi's early Amer-Asian integration

Date: 1546-71

Size: 36.5 x 53 cm / 75 x 42 cm

References:

*Nordenskiöld, *Facsimile Atlas*, p. 114, no. 42.

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Tooley, R.V., "Maps in Italian Atlases of the Sixteenth Century", *Imago Mundi III* (1939) pp. 12-47.

*Wagner, Henry R., *The Cartography of the Northwest Coast of America to the Year 1800*, pp. 26-27.

*Wolff, H., *America, Early Maps of the New World*, pp. 78-79, no. 97.

Wroth, *Cartography of the Pacific*, p. 250, no. 49; p. 156.

*illustrated