



## Newsletter N°13, May 2002

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Dear Map Friends,

This issue has a very pronounced Italian flavour – no less than four cartographic events, two exhibitions in Venice alone, a workshop in Florence and an exhibition in Milan. Wulf Bodenstern has detailed and delightfully annotated descriptions of these events. Please note that the 2<sup>nd</sup> exhibition in Venice – dealing with Chinese and Japanese maps transfers to Rome later this year, so you will have the opportunity to see it there. Later, from p.7, we have two extensive reviews of scholarly works on the development of cartography from distinguished Italian specialised publishers – one on early cartography – from Ptolemy to Mercator and the second focussing on pocket atlases.

Two later articles develop the background and history of the Hereford Map - whose continued existence and the fact that it remains within Europe is a minor miracle in itself. Ms Reed Kline, the first author, delves into the significance of circular maps, which is a topic unto itself; the second book, published by Brepols, the specialist Turnhout publisher, gives a full annotated analysis by Westrem of the Hereford Map, with the bonus of a reasonable reproduction of the map itself. It is worth mentioning that Jean Louis Renteux's article on the Vauban town models (p.13) indicates that there is a permanent exhibition in Lille's Museum of Fine Arts of some of these models.

Lest we forget, we have planned a visit to a private collection of maps, atlases and globes in Hasselt, on Saturday, 12 October 2002, so please do note the date in your diary. We will publish full details in our September Newsletter. Also nearer home, the Plantin Museum exhibition will continue until 21 July 2002 (cf p.19). For the devotees, we have IMCoS in June and the Nurnberg and IMCoS symposia, which follow each other, from 19 September to 3 October – quite a heavy calendar of events.

We wish to thank our diligent friends who completed the questionnaire attached to the January 2002 Newsletter; we are processing the replies and will report fully in our September issue. Finally, if you are in the Benelux region, the forthcoming June auctions in Henri Godts, the Romantic Agony, Van Gendt, Grommen, Van Stockum and Michel Lhomme are very appealing – details are on p.22.

Brendan Sinnott, *Editor*



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## Cartographic Impressions from Italy – three exhibitions and a workshop : Venice – Florence – Milan

by W. Bodenstein

### Venice

Whilst on a totally uncommitted tourist trip to this beautiful city in December last we were surprised to discover two exhibitions on cartography being held concurrently, in the prestigious historical buildings enclosing St Mark's square.

The first, entitled *Navigare e Descrivere*, had just been opened in the Correr Museum and was running till 1<sup>st</sup> April 2002. Seafaring was the prime factor Venice relied upon to gain and maintain control of the Mediterranean. This gave rise to a huge production of portolans and printed nautical charts which had become vital instruments for planning and conducting voyages along the coasts of the 'Mare Nostrum' and beyond. The exhibition started with illustrations from von Breydenbach's *Peregrinationes in terram sanctam*, led on to some beautiful specimens of portolans and progressed to the more technical representations of coast lines and layouts of harbours as found in the Isolari by Bartolomeo da li Sonetti, Benedetto Bordone, the famous Giovanni Francesco Camocio and Tommaso Porcacchi, to name only these. Dudley's *Dell' arcano del mare* was there, as was an isolario by Coronelli, better known perhaps for his globes of which three pairs (celestial and terrestrial) were also on display, curiously enough with only a sign 'Don't touch' for their sole protection.

A richly illustrated 160-page catalogue in Italian is available : *Navigare e Descrivere – Isolari e portolani del Museo Correr di Venezia, XV – XVIII secolo*, Marsilio Editori, Venice 2001, ISBN 88-317-7891-9. With over 200 entries it contains a very extensive bibliography.

The second exhibition was held from 16 November 2001 to 14 February 2002 in the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana : *Carte di Riso* (Rice Papers). This historical Library in its magnificently panelled halls hosted the display of about 50 Chinese and Japanese maps, a very small part of the collection of over 500 such maps kept by the Società Geografica

Italiana and exhibited to the public for the first time. Here we enter a completely different world : traditional maps in China for example were an aggregate of deeply interwoven graphics and text, of painting and poetry, and map making had political as well as religious and aesthetical functions (I quote from the catalogue). This latter point led to maps being produced on such diverse supports as silk, wood, stones, screens, porcelain dishes, and, of course, also on rice paper.

The contrast with our habitual vision of things is brought home when we come across Father F. Verbiest's map of the world in two hemispheres (produced in 1674 for Emperor Kang Hsih or Kanxi) which, in spite of the Chinese inscriptions, is a readily identifiable European product. The Japanese maps, possibly because of more recent manufacture, reflect a more sober approach to cartographical representation and seemed to be more austere in character.

The bi-lingual Italian/English catalogue of 220 pages contains, apart from a great number of colour illustrations, some excellent articles about oriental cartography, plus a useful bibliographical summary. The exhibition will be transferred to the Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale in Rome where it is to open this autumn or winter, details from [www.societageografica.it](http://www.societageografica.it). What is clear from the accompanying documentation is that the Italian Geographical Society is very keen on attracting attention to what is called one of the most interesting collections of Oriental geographic charts in the Western world. These few lines may perhaps help a little in that direction.

Catalogue edited in November 2001 by the Società Geografica Italiana, Via della Navicella 12, I-00184 ROMA ; Tel ++39-06-700.82.79, e-mail [geomail@tin.it](mailto:geomail@tin.it). (No ISBN)

### Florence

The Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale Firenze was the venue of an international workshop organized by the European University Institute – Vasco de Gama Chair (Florence),



with the theme *The Making of European Cartography*. Between 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> December 2001 four thematic cycles were covered in five half-day sessions under the expert chairmanship of Prof. Diogo Ramada Curto :

- Renaissance Cartography - Sebastiano Gentile and Francesc Relaño presented a new interpretation and re-definition of Ptolemy's cartographic work and of the Ptolemaic model, Angelo Cattaneo discussed Fra Mauro's Mappamundi in the context of 15<sup>th</sup> c. geographical knowledge, Plinio F. Gomes showed us early representations of America, and Rudolf Schmidt, former President of the International Coronelli Society, spoke about Men and Globes whilst Marica Milanese devoted her presentation to Coronelli's *Epitome Cosmografica*.
- European Cartography and Colonial Empires - David Buisseret and Matthew Edney had come over from the U.S. to talk about European cartography of the New World and the mapping of New England, whilst Lucy Chester from Yale University addressed the intricacies of the mapping of the Indo-Pakistani border. André Ferrand Almeida closed the cycle with a captivating insight into Jesuit cartography of the Amazon Basin.
- Cartography and Statecraft since the Enlightenment – Gilles Palsky reviewed the rôle of topographical and thematic maps in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Vladimiro Valerio presented Italian Military Cartography since the Enlightenment (with excellent slides), and Rui Miguel Branco and Francesc Nadal addressed cartographic policies in Portugal and large-scale topographical mapping of Spain respectively.
- Theoretical Frameworks and Research Perspectives, and Reading and Analysing Maps - here previous Speakers were joined by Emanuela Casti who contributed with a somewhat philosophical yet most captivating exposé to an animated discussion about map interpretation and analysis.

Although some foreign visitors could not always follow the presentations when these were in Italian, the linguistic performance of 9 of the 16

Speakers who talked in another than their mother tongue was remarkable. The proceedings are expected to be published later this year.

The Workshop was held in the beautiful Tribuna Dantesca rotunda of the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale in which an exhibition of maps had been mounted, all from the hosting Library's collections, with the following introduction (try your Italian) : *Le mappe scelte per questa mostra vogliono introdurre lo spettatore nella polifonia della cartografia europea*. This 'polyphonic' selection covered the whole range of European cartography and aptly illustrated the themes of the workshop, from portolans, Ptolemaic maps, mappae mundi, colonial, scientific, to administrative maps, which was complemented by an interesting array of ancient surveyors' instruments, on loan from the near-by Science History Museum.

#### Milan

Just before it closed on 3<sup>rd</sup> February, a special visit was paid to the exhibition *Segni e Sogni della Terra. Il disegno del mondo dal mito di Atlante alla geografia delle reti* (Signs and dreams of Earth. Drawing the world from the myth of Atlas to the geography of the Web). It had been organized on the occasion of the centenary of the Istituto Geografico De Agostini and was held in the Palazzo Reale.

The first section illustrated the vision of our world through the eyes of its inhabitants spread over the globe: maps carved in stone from Babylonia and Rome, maps made in India, China, Korea, and by Aztecs, painted or printed on fabric or paper. The next section was more revealing still since it presented a unique assemblage of medieval manuscript world maps. The oldest one was the Albi world map (8<sup>th</sup> c.), followed by Cosmas Indicopleustes' *Topographia Christiana* created in the 11<sup>th</sup> c. and two Beatus maps from about the same period. There was the zonal map of the world by Macrobius, the Vercelli map, the Anglo-Saxon or Cottonian map, and the Sawley world map also referred to as the Henry of Mainz map, all from before 1200. The Duchy of Cornwall, Evesham and Higden maps followed, and the series of original maps closed with a *Mapa Mundi. Figura Mundi* of 1448 and



a beautifully illuminated world map in T-O form on loan from the Royal Library in Brussels. Three of the most famous medieval world maps were present in facsimile, the Hereford, Ebstorf and Fra Mauro maps. Open any book on medieval maps, and you would find a significant portion assembled here – a breath-taking encounter !

The third section was headed *Maps and Power* and provided a good sample of maps and atlases (mostly from the private collection of T. Niewodniczanski) with which civil and military authorities established and documented their worldly strength. This covered the period from the first Ptolemaic maps to military reconnaissance around 1800, with Dutch, French and Italian mapping largely present in between.

A very rich section with maps of the age of discoveries followed. Highlights here were some portolans (many in facsimile though), and the world maps by Rosselli (1508) and Gastaldi (1546 and 1561). But these were topped by the immense (249 x 117 cm) manuscript Dauphin world map of 1547 and the wall maps of the world by Ortelius (1564), Mercator (1569) and Rosaccio (1647), hardly ever seen together. The largest book in the world, the Klencke atlas from the British Library, was also on display.

Section 5 covered mapping of provinces and towns and was naturally focussed on Italian geography. Then came a magnificent display of globes, mostly from the Schmidt and Wohlschläger collections in Vienna, showing the earth and the heavens as reconstructed by Islamic and Chinese globe makers, as well as by Blaeu, Coronelli, Cassini, Vaugondi and quite a few others. This part included some delightful globe-derivatives in the form of concave celestial spheres encasing the earth globe, and a few foldable ones in paper.

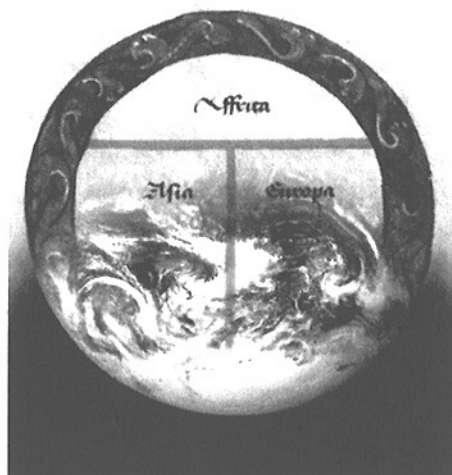
The science of topographical surveying and the instruments used since Roman times were the subject of the next section ; their evolution from Roman groma to modern instruments provided a link to the current satellite-based surveying techniques with which the exhibition closed .

The lavishly illustrated 286-page catalogue in Italian contains introductory chapters to each of the sections, with contributions by Peter Barber, Monique Pelletier, Marica Milanese, Rudolf Schmidt and others, who also wrote the

explanatory texts accompanying the illustrations. Umberto Eco contributed an article on *Dalla Terra piatta alla Terra cava* in which he traces the evolution of the earth's representation from disk to globe and beyond, casting an amused eye on the 'Hollow Earth' theories and their protagonists' effusions on the web. Those wishing to augment their Italian vocabulary by a few technical expressions may find the 11-page glossary of cartographical terms of interest.

This magnificent catalogue was on sale for 25.82 € and may be ordered from the publisher, Istituto Geografico De Agostini, Via Giovanni da Verrazzano 15, I-28100 Novara, [www.deagostini.it](http://www.deagostini.it), ISBN 88-415-9901-4.

SEGN E SOGNI DELLA  
**terra**  
il disegno del mondo  
dal mito di Atlante  
alla geografia delle reti



This ingenious combination of a medieval T-O map with a space image of our planet earth was the official poster of the exhibition, and served as the cover for the catalogue. Somewhat surprising though the choice of a T-O map with a geographical arrangement in sharp contrast to the classical distribution of continents, which usually has Asia (East) at top, and Europe below at left, Africa at right. This T-O map was not in the exhibition, although a few 'normal' ones were, nor could I find it explained in the catalogue. My search revealed that it does exist : it comes from the ms. *Description de la Confédération Helvétique* by Albert de Bonstetten , a 15<sup>th</sup> c. copy of which is held in the French Bibliothèque Nationale (lat. 5656, f° 5v°, diam. 10.5 cm), and this was on display in the 1998 exhibition « Couleurs de la Terre » at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris (cat. n° 17), and is reproduced in the companion book of the same title, on page 31. I have since been advised that the choice was intentional, to show how medieval copyists could and did err.

(WB)



## Pictures at an Exhibition

### The Netherlands put on the Map – a selection from the Atlas Van Stolk

The word « atlas » in a broader sense : a private collection of historical prints, drawings, maps, photographs etc., is applicable to the Atlas Van Stolk.

Abraham van Stolk (\* 1814), a Rotterdam timber merchant, collected all his life, from the moment when , as a 7-year old boy, he got his first print from an uncle, until his death in 1896. His aim : to bring together a collection of illustrations related to the history of the Netherlands from the earliest to his own time.

In the Historical Museum in Rotterdam, since 1967 responsible for administering and managing the Atlas Van Stolk Foundation, a small exhibition of maps went on show last year under the title *Nederland op de kaart gezet* (The Netherlands put on the map – a selection from the Atlas Van Stolk).

The exhibition, from June 29 to October 7 2001, deserved more press coverage and attention than it actually got in the heat of the summer and in the flood of publications around « Rotterdam 2001, cultural capital of Europe ». This is one of the reasons, in my opinion, why it went relatively unnoticed. Fortunately, as mentioned in last Newsletter's report on our Rotterdam excursion to the Maritime Museum on October 6 , a small group took the opportu-

nity to pay a brief visit to this exhibition.

Between an Ortelius map of the Netherlands in the days of the Romans and a map showing the location of McDonald's restaurants, quite a few gems were on display. What to say of six Leo Belgicus maps ! Erect, sitting or walking, the lion represents the Northern and Southern Netherlands in four of the maps on view (among which those by J. van Deutichum, 1650, and C.J. Visscher, 1609). Another lion map by N.J. Visscher, 1648, depicts the States of Holland only.

The Leo Belgicus (the Low Countries used to be called 'Belgica') was 'invented' by Michael Aitzinger who, in 1583, added a lion map for the first time to his book *De Leone Belgico*.

This detail, and other small, mostly well-known facts on Dutch cartography plus seven illustrations together with a listing of all 51 items exhibited are contained in a four-A4-page catalogue/folder. Readers of this Newsletter interested to receive a copy – either in Dutch or in English – may send a self-addressed un-stamped A4 or A5 envelope together with a 1-Euro coin to me at the following address : Willemskade 16 T, NL-3016 DL Rotterdam

*Please do not forget to indicate language desired.*

Aart van den Dool

## LOOKS AT BOOKS (I)

### Vladimiro Valerio, *Napoli dal Cielo* (Naples from the sky)

Voyage Pittoresque, October 2001 (limited edition of 1.000 numbered copies) ; 48 p. with 12 b/w illustrations ; Italian text, with an English translation by Giorgia Villa. 24 x 17 cm (no ISBN). This booklet accompanies the full-size reproductions of the four maps of the Gulf of Naples mentioned below ; orders from Voyage Pittoresque, Via Vittoria Colonna 15, I-80122 Napoli, Tel. ++39-081-407.309, e-mail [gregon@tin.it](mailto:gregon@tin.it) .

Here is an essay that reflects, beyond the evidence of historical fact, a Historian's endearing attachment to his home region, and to the beauty of maps depicting it. Valerio describes the beginnings of the 'Laboratorio Cartografico'

in Naples towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when foreigners still ruled the Kingdom. Giovanni Antonio Rizzi Zanoni had been called to Naples in 1781 and was soon joined by a number of other Italian and foreign mathematicians



and topographers with whom the Neapolitan 'Laboratorio' took shape. The history of the production of their first maps is related with much amusing detail, both with regard to the difficult operations in the bandit-infested terrain, where two Swiss Guards provided royal protection, and the laborious efforts to get maps drawn, engraved and printed in the face of financial problems, local strife and intrigue.

The author also presents us with a charming sonnet composed by the son of the Commissioner Saverio Mattei and dedicated to the Bourbon King, which pays tribute to the historical Bay of Naples as depicted in the famous *Littorale di Napoli* map (1794) and its beautiful

allegorical cartouche, another example of a personal approach to historical maps.

This essay also comprises a detailed cartographical description of four of the most outstanding maps of the Gulf of Naples prepared by the cartographers of the 'Laboratorio' during this period. Apart from the *Littorale* map, we read about the first correct maritime chart of the Bay, contained in the *Atlante Marittimo delle Due Sicilie*, as well as a plan of the city of Naples (« E' certamente la più bella pianta della città di Napoli ... ») and a map of its surroundings, all demonstrating the artistic and topographical quality of maps published by the Royal Geographer Rizzi Zandoni. (WB)

## LOOKS AT BOOKS (II)

*Alla Scoperta del Mondo – l'arte della cartografia da Tolomeo a Mercatore* (Discovering the World – The Art of Cartography from Ptolemy to Mercator). By Mauro Bini (ed.). Modena : Il Bulino edizione d'arte, 2001. ISBN 88-86251-33-5. 9<sup>th</sup> Vol. in the collection *Il giardino delle Esperidi*, 256 p. with 148 colour and 24 b/w illustrations (many double-page). Cloth-bound, 31 x 25 cm ; 72 €

Inquiries and orders : Il Bulino edizioni d'arte, via Bernardo Cervi 80, I-41100 Modena, Italy ; tel ++39-059-82.28.16, fax ++39-059-82.28.24, [www.ilbulino.com](http://www.ilbulino.com), e-mail : [ilbulino@ilbulino.com](mailto:ilbulino@ilbulino.com)

This magnificently edited book reviews the essential stages of the history of cartography : from the first manuscript documents to the birth of scientific geography. It takes us on a compelling journey through the representation of the world as envisioned by Ptolemy and Marco Polo, shows us nautical charts and maps by outstanding explorers and the first scientific cartographers, Mercator and Ortelius.

There is no lack, you might say, of specialized literature addressing these subjects. Some commemorative events in the recent past (Columbus 1992, Mercator 1994, Ortelius 1998, VOC this year), have generated an abundance of material in the domain of the history of cartography, not to mention the regular output of academic research programmes in Europe and the U.S.

But Modena had a good reason for coming forward onto the international cartographic scene. The publication of this book, and the organiza-

tion of an exhibition of the same title, were motivated by the recent acquisition by the Italian State of the Castiglioni Planisphere (1525) and its integration into the already very important collections of the Biblioteca Estense Universitaria in Modena. At the same time this was to provide an opportunity of presenting the treasures of these collections to a wider public and to promote awareness of the national cartographic heritage.

In the chapter entitled *From classical cosmography to 15<sup>th</sup> century cartography*, Mauro Bini covers the evolution of medieval nautical charts before presenting an analysis of the *Mappamondo Catalano Estense*, a circular (113 cm diameter) worldmap of ca. 1460, one of the gems of the collection. There follow descriptions of an illuminated copy of Ptolemy's *Cosmographia*, of printed editions of same, of an *Isolario* by Bartolomeo dalli Sonetti, and of Schedel's Nuremberg Chronicle, all from the



Library's collections, with many excellent illustrations. Mention is also made of the so-called Columbus Chart, and of the extensive discussions surrounding its origin.

Ernesto Milano, Director of the Estense Library, in the next chapter talks about *The great geographic discoveries and their cartographic images*. This covers a large range of manuscript world maps illustrating the chronological account of world exploration, from Juan de la Cosa via Piri Reis and many others to Giovanni da Verrazzano.



Obviously the Library's Cantino world map (1502) is mentioned,<sup>1)</sup> as is the Castiglioni world map of 1525, the focal point of the exhibition. Measuring an impressive 81.5 x 214 cm and attributed to Diego Ribeiro, this chart is considered one of the most accurate representations of the world as known at that time, supposedly offered by Charles V to Baldassare Castiglioni, the then Nuncio at the Spanish court. As the commentary is somewhat abbreviated here, the interested reader should be referred to an original-size facsimile edition of this

map, produced with a commentary booklet (in Italian) by Il Bulino.<sup>2)</sup>

With Annalisa Battini's *Atlases of the 16<sup>th</sup> century – Mercator and modern cartography*, we enter a realm probably more familiar to our readers. Ptolemy, the ever-present concealer of cartographic schemata, is given good coverage, as are Münster and Gastaldi, but Mercator and Ortelius get the lion's share, with beautiful reproductions in colour of the Library's copies.

The last chapter, by Laura Federzoni, is entitled *Maps of the State of Este by Marco Antonio Pasi*. It presents a south-oriented manuscript map in 8 sheets of the region, drawn in 1580 and measuring 312 x 176 cm, with the fortified cities of Ferrara and Modena focalizing the evident local interest in this unique document.

Apart from the end-notes, each chapter is followed by a bibliography (some 9 pages in all), with nominal and location indices placed at the end of the book. Once again one may regret that this remarkably well produced work of reference is available in Italian only, but the receptive and motivated student of cartography should enjoy uncovering the wealth of do-

documentation found here – and for the others there may be hope of seeing a translation appear one day.

Wulf Bodenstein

1) See also *La Carta del Cantino* by the same author and the same editor, Modena 1991

2) *Carta del navigare – Plinisfero Castiglioni, 1525*, original-size facsimile edition in special presentation box with commentary volume by Ernesto Milano, containing transcriptions of all toponyms. Il Bulino, Modena 2001; inquiries and ordering address as above; ISBN88-86251-46-7. BIMCC Members should enquire for rates.