

# MAPS IN HISTORY



JANUARY 2022  
Newsletter No

72

**The History of Belgium in 100 maps**

**Italian Cartography in the Napoleonic Age**

**Town plan of Brussels and the Bombardment of the city in 1695**

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### Cover image

(see page 31)



In 2012 Jan de Graeve (Brussels Map Circle - member) started collecting books known to form part of Gerard Mercator's own collection: books that Mercator used for his own learning.

Jan now has 235 such books.

He presented an overview of Mercator's collection to date. He was pleased to see his books mounted in exhibition format, as they are normally stored in different places and rarely seen together.

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## Intro

Dear Readers,

I'm writing these lines in the final days of 2021, a year that for me has been bittersweet. The Circle did manage to organise the IMCoS International Symposium in Brussels – a detailed report of which forms the core of this issue of Maps in History – but many of the Circle's and IMCoS' overseas members were prevented from attending due to Covid-19 restrictions. The year also saw several remarkable exhibitions take place and several impactful books published. One such book, very important for us native and adoptive Belgians, is described in these pages as well. At the same time, other events had to be delayed or cancelled; among them our yearly Map Afternoon. Hopefully 2022 will be better in this respect.

I would like to take advantage of this intro to explain a small anomaly. Several readers reported that the September issue of Maps in History reached them only in October. The January and May issues had similarly arrived one month late, at least to subscribers outside Belgium. These delays were caused by some computer problems affecting the Editorial Committee in 2020, which were compounded by pandemic-related mailjams.

In 2021 we have carried over the roughly one-month delay from issue to issue without managing to shorten it. I therefore expect many of you will read this only in February 2022. Please accept my apologies.

Finally, let me say thank you to all the authors who have contributed articles to Maps in History in 2021; to the members of the Editorial Committee for their careful reviews, and to Paul De Candt for his masterly layout and his patience.

A happy 2022 to all!

Luis A. Robles Macías  
editor@bimcc.org



# Desenhando a Porta do Pacífico

[Drawing the Gateway to the Pacific]

(in French, with extracts and abstracts in English)

by Henrique Leitão and José María Moreno Madrid

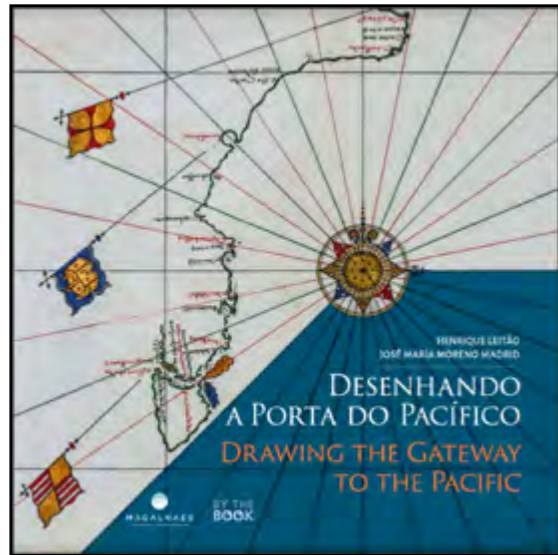
- Lisbon: By the Book, 2021.
- 272 pages, numerous colour illustrations, hard cover, 29 × 30 cm.
- ISBN 978-989-53-0936-8. EUR 35.00

This bilingual Portuguese-English publication retells the story of how the Strait of Magellan and its surrounding region were graphically depicted by early modern Europeans. The authors are two researchers from the University of Lisbon. Henrique Leitão is the head of the Department of History and Philosophy of Science, and principal investigator of the European Research Council research project Rutter, which aims to ‘write a narrative of the scaling up of a scientific description of the earth in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, from the lived experience of travelling and observing the earth in long-distance sea voyages.’ José María Moreno is a PhD candidate who contributes to the same research project.

The new book complements one published last year by the same authors, entitled *Atravessando a Porta do Pacífico* [Crossing the Gateway to the Pacific]<sup>1</sup>. The two books focus on the waterways that connect the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans at the southernmost tip of the American continent. While *Atravessando...* studied textual accounts and descriptions, *Desenhando...* moves the spotlight to maps.

It would have been impractical

<sup>1</sup> José María Moreno Madrid and Henrique Leitão, *Atravessando a Porta do Pacífico: Roteiros e relatos da travessia do Estreito de Magalhães, 1520-1620* (Lisbon: By the Book, 2020). Portuguese text only.



—perhaps impossible— to study every single early modern map on which the Strait of Magellan is depicted, so the authors have selected what they call ‘just a small sample’. To be precise, the book brings together 66 maps drawn or published between 1520 and 1671. Each of them is reproduced in full colour and commented over two to four pages.

Rather than producing a comprehensive cartobibliography for specialists, Leitão and Moreno aim at ‘telling a story’ to ‘a wider audience’. To achieve this, the book also includes a solid historical introduction and a practical chronology where every expedition to the Strait is listed along with the maps related to it. The authors’ comment on each map is a brief but original study, nothing like the mere repetition of known facts that unfortunately characterise certain publications of similar format.

Bibliographic details have been wisely assembled in a few pages at the end of the book.

The word ‘map’ is used in this book in its broadest sense, spanning types as diverse as nautical charts, printed hemispheres, architectural plans, and globes. Some of them are fine examples of luxury craftsmanship whereas others are rough, utilitarian sketches. The reader can thus discover, along with well-known planispheres and prints, rare plans of fortifications that were to be built on the Strait (Fig. 1) and hand-drawn

illustrations of first-hand accounts of little-known expeditions, such as those by João Afonso or by Diego Ramírez de Arellano (Fig. 2A/2B).

The diversity of selected works is one of the strongest points of this book as, together with the introduction, their studies provide a taste of the numerous forces that shaped the depiction of the Strait on early modern European maps: nautical exploration for sure, but also myths, geopolitics, artistic fashions and, often, mere conventions.

It is also remarkable how up to date the book is. The authors have strived to consult the latest scholarship and have included a few maps that have been brought to light only in the last few decades. For example, Diego Ramírez de Arellano’s map was first published in 2011 and, to my knowledge, had not yet been discussed in English.

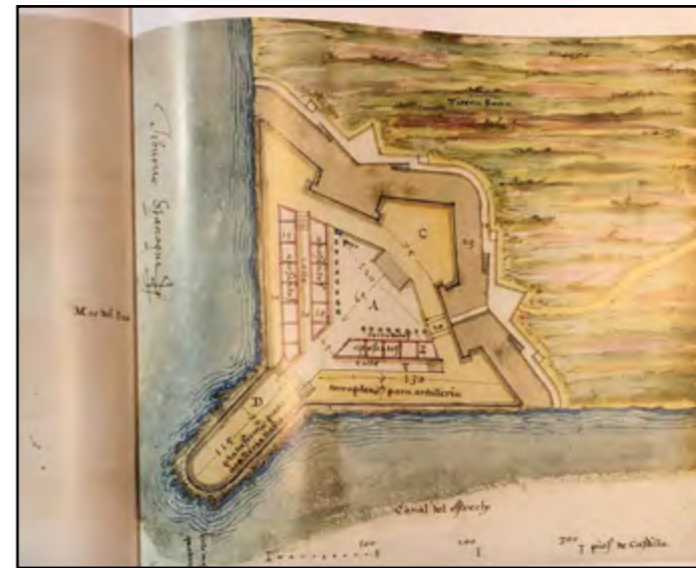


Fig. 1. Plan of fortress for the Strait of Magellan by Siennese engineer Tiburcio Spanoqui (Tiburzio Spanocchi), ca 1591. Museo Naval de Madrid.

The material aspect of the book can only be rated as excellent. The authors of the layout have done superb work in combining vivid high-resolution images with elegantly arranged text, all on high-quality paper. My only suggestion for future editions would be to double-check the English text in order to weed out a few typos.

One objection that might be raised regarding the maps selected by the authors is that there are none made by the region’s indigenous inhabitants. The most likely reason is that no such map has been preserved, but it might be worthwhile clarifying this in the introduction.

Overall, this book is a valuable resource for anyone interested in the history of the Strait of Magellan and its depiction on maps. It provides a rich view of the complex interplay between navigation, mapmaking, politics, and art in early modern Europe. It is accessible to a general audience while meeting high scholarly standards: a pleasure to the eye as well as a reliable reference.



Fig. 2A. Map included in the manuscript account by Captain Diego Ramírez de Arellano of the expedition to the Strait and Tierra del Fuego led by the Nodal brothers in 1619. Reconocimiento de los estrechos de Magallanes y San Vicente, con algunas cosas curiosas de navegación. Biblioteca Nacional de España, Mss/3190.



Fig. 2B. Detail of Diego Ramírez’s map showing the islands named in his honour. The ships’ itinerary is indicated by a dotted line. This trip set a record of furthest south navigation that lasted for a century and a half.

# De geschiedenis van België in 100 oude kaarten – L’histoire de la Belgique en 100 cartes anciennes.

[The history of Belgium in 100 old maps]

(Separate books in Dutch and in French published simultaneously)

by Philippe De Maeyer, Michèle Galand, Bram Vannieuwenhuyze and Guy Vanthemsche,

- Tielt, Lannoo and Bruxelles, Racine, 2021.
- 408 pages, all maps and illustrations in full colour, hardcover, 29 × 35 cm, 3.37 kg
- ISBN 978-94-014-7312-6 and 978-23-902-5173-6. EUR 59.00/EUR 79.00 from 2022 on
- Currently in reprint for the end of March 2022

## IT’S COMPLICATED

‘There are no facts, only interpretations’ is a famous quote by Friedrich Nietzsche.

So, when writing a book that spans the entire history of a region in Europe that would only become a state called Belgium in 1830, you need to comment on some two thousand years of history and pick the events you think best reflect that long history. Events that in this particular case are particularly suited to being accompanied and even told by maps.

Of course, the four main authors of this book have selected what they consider to be the topics that best picture (quite literally) the history of Belgium. As always a choice, an interpretation, opening a very difficult debate: what do you select or omit? It reminds us of the heated debates in Flanders on a Canon of its history, in the footsteps of The Netherlands in 2006<sup>1</sup>. No doubt each of the authors had to kill some of his/her darlings. But in the specific case of Belgium, it’s even more complicated.

<sup>1</sup> Wikipedia on ‘Canon of Dutch History’ defines this as ‘an overview of what everyone ought to know, at the very least, about the history and culture of The Netherlands’



First of all, a factor to reckon with is that contrary to just writing a comment on a certain topic, where the constraint is only the number of words (something historians are used to when they publish), showing the topic on a map is quite another. The scale of the map has to allow you to reproduce it in the desired format and still be readable. I think this certainly was also a parameter for selection and an unusual one for some historians. In this respect, it’s a good thing Belgium is so small. This enables printing of just about any map in the format of the pages of this book.

Second, the complexity of the history of this tiny country is inversely proportional to its size. Sitting on two tectonic plates, the Roman and German cultures, strategically situated between major powerful European nations, with a relatively flat plain between two rivers, the Meuse and the Scheldt, ‘it’ (not yet called Belgium) has for centuries been the ideal ground for nations to ‘battle it out’. Wars, ever changing greedy rulers, plunder and destruction, emigration, resistance and collaboration have left painful scars. Not that ‘Belgians’ always needed foreigners to do the job, being themselves very good at creating conflicts too. But fortunately, all this misery was counterbalanced by wealth, trade and culture, science and universities, arts and ingenuity, inventions and world exploration. And beer, of course, that would have deserved a more prominent place than the tiny pint and barrels on map 76. But that’s just me.

In fact, the history of Belgium ‘before Belgium’ is so vast and complicated, the authors needed more than half of the book to get to 1830, date of the creation of this new state. No doubt this was in itself a difficult choice: the length of the before and the after 1830.



Map 76: A meagre tribute to one of Belgium’s greatest gastronomical achievements: beer, featuring on UNESCO’s Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity list.

## WHERE ANGELS FEAR TO THREAD

What makes the history of this country even more difficult to tell, is the Belgian obsession with balance, equilibrium between the language communities, which is of course much more than just about language. It’s a minefield. It’s no coincidence the authors themselves reflect this sensitivity, coming from different universities and from both language communities.

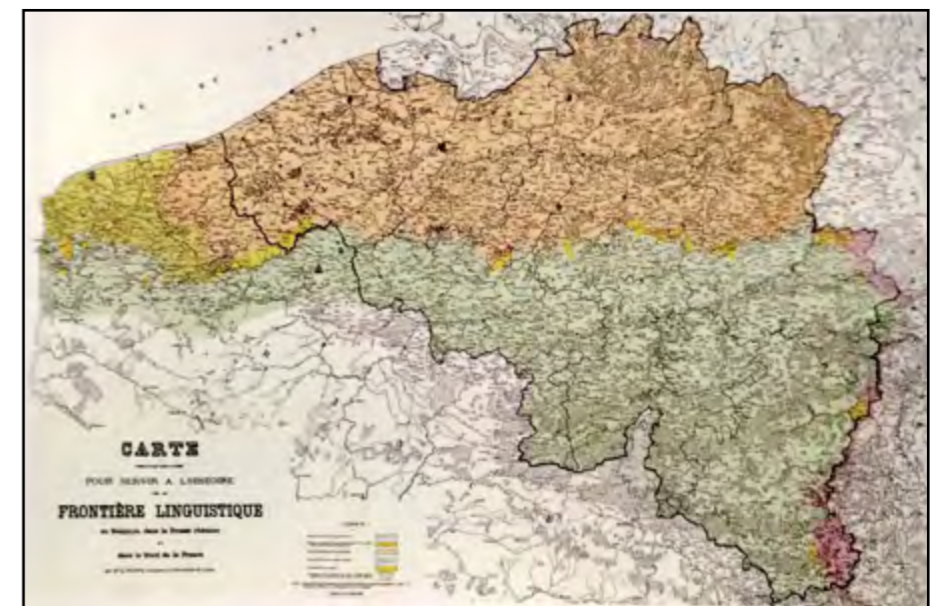
To sum all of this up: the authors were confronted with a truly Herculean task. And in my opinion, they have performed brilliantly. But it has to be said: with 25 other academics on board (six of whom are members of the Brussels Map Circle), it would have been embarrassing if the result had been poor. It is, on the contrary, multifaceted, multidisciplinary, surprising, informative and visually appealing.

Let’s have a look at how they went about their task.

## MODUS OPERANDI

It’s all very logical and transparent. The order of the chosen subjects is chronological, always mentioning the date at the beginning of each lemma. At the front of the book there is a handy and aesthetically pleasing timeline. ‘Point zero’ is not surprisingly the Peutinger map. The end point however is maybe less

obvious at first sight: a 1964 of Belgium (map 3) showing the linguistic areas of the country, with the borders between them. Now, this is where the above-mentioned minefield starts: 1970 was the beginning of the real transformation of the unitarian state into a federal one. This process in itself has (so far!) been extremely complicated, causing six (yes, that is 6) changes to the Constitution in less



Map 3: Right from the start, the ominous Belgian linguistic border is pictured.

than 50 years. So, it's understandable that the authors saw 1970 as a good point to end here the history of a country that has sometimes been on the brink of disappearing altogether since.

Although the book claims not to be a history of cartography, in the introduction by Bram Vannieuwenhuyze there is a kind of absolute beginners' crash course on the history of cartography in the Low Countries: a very good idea indeed.

Each article is preceded by the map in question, printed mostly over a double page, allowing the reader to study its details (this is where the aforementioned small size of Belgium comes in handy). The article itself starts with the classic technical specifications of this map. A very welcome detail for map lovers is the mentioning of a digital specimen to consult, if there is one.

Within each article, again, the order is logical: first an explanation of the chosen historical subject and then a comment on the map. This is again illustrated with pictures of (mostly) other maps, with an effort to make these also readable if necessary.

The book ends with two indices: one with names of persons and one with names of places; indispensable for finding your way around such a hefty tome.

There is also an overview of all themes and maps at the end, with a small bibliography per item. The perfect icing on the cake for this truly amazing book.

### HISTORY OR CARTOGRAPHY?

It's clear the focus of the book is not in the first place on the big history: important events, their dates and their actors. This is for the most part expected to be 'known' by the reader. This is certainly the case as far

as the above-mentioned before 1830 is concerned. Yes, the Battle of the Golden Spurs from 1302 is mentioned, thank you very much. And so are the Burgundian dukes, the Habsburgs and the wars of religion, the wars with Louis XIV, the annexation by the French revolutionary troops, Napoleon (Waterloo!), the merging with the Northern Netherlands into a new kingdom and finally the Belgian Revolution of 1830. So, all historical boxes are ticked ... but in a concise way in the text.

The focus clearly shifts more and more after 1830 to moving cartography to first place. Here cartography is predominantly the starting point for a more thematic approach. So, not the official curriculum with topics every Belgian learns in school, such as establishing Benelux, the 'battles on education', the 'eenheidswet / loi unique' (Unitary Law), the so-called Royal Question, to name just a few, but themes such as poverty, industrial growth, railways etc. (see below).

### THE CARTOGRAPHIC HEROES

Most highlights of 'Belgian' cartography figure in this book: the Liber Floridus, the Dampierre map, the Cronache, the Leo Belgicus, Guicciardini's *Descrittione*, the *Flandria Illustrata*, the Ferraris map, the Vandermaelen atlas and many, many more.

But what makes this 'history book' different, and will delight any map lover, is the attention to many cartographers who lived and worked in this part of the world.

Of course, there is the unavoidable Mercator, whose effigy used to adorn the thousand Belgian francs banknotes. Also, names like Ortelius, van Langren, Popp, Sanderus, Vandermaelen, Frisius, Beautemps-Beaupré, de Bouge, van Deventer, Ferraris, Fricx, Gérard, Horenbault, Pourbus, Sgrooten, Surhon, de Jode



Map 21: Abraham Ortelius, one of the many 'Belgian' cartographers, featuring in the book.

and many more figure in this book, some more prominently (with feature maps) than others whose maps are only shown as illustrations to the text and some who are only mentioned.

In my opinion Jodocus Hondius gets a rather bad deal, since he is (merely) cited as 'less known' alongside Cornelis Claesz., Pieter van den Keere and Petrus Plancius. This might hurt feelings here of true Belgian map lovers (and collectors!), with Jodocus Hondius Sr. (1563–1612) *The Christian knight map* (some 8 known copies) being sold for a mere 400 000 EUR this year. Less known?

The authors must have had their reasons for picking the (Dutch) map of Willem Jacob Hofdijk et al. to illustrate the tenth-century Carolingian empire (map 4), but I feel the map by Léon van der Essen (Antwerp 1883 – Leuven 1963) would certainly have deserved this place. Granted, he is mentioned in the text, but his monumental *Atlas de géographie historique de la Belgique* got quite some press when it was published in 1919–1920, although it was only partial and never finished. His excellent and beautiful map *Le Duché de Lothier et le Marquisat de Flandre en 1095* would have deserved to be here.

I was delighted to meet an old friend in the book: Jean-Baptiste Nothomb

(1805–1881), one of the leading figures of the Belgian Revolution and great map lover, as is made clear in the comment on maps 63 and 65. During the negotiations in London on the creation of this new state called Belgium, he was received by the British Prime Minister, Lord Grey. Thanks to his excellent geographical knowledge, he was able to convince Grey with the help of an atlas, of the point of view of the Belgian revolutionaries their claims to several territories and thus saved the day. He was then 25.

One of Nothomb's quotes goes: 'Wie viele Fehler würden in der Politik vermieden, wenn die Diplomaten die Geographie kennten!' [How many mistakes would be avoided, if diplomats only knew geography!] The above-mentioned saying is in a way true for map 87, made in 1919, where an über-zealous, Belgian-ultra-nationalist political committee wanted to claim certain parts of surrounding countries. The irony is that one of the members of the group was a Nothomb, a grandnephew of Jean-Baptiste.

### NOT JUST MAPS!

One of the most pleasant surprises in the book for me is the attention given to globes and 'plans-reliefs'.

Scarce, as there are not so many globes left, and downright quirky such as the plans-reliefs, these items are often overlooked but certainly deserve a place here.

Moreover, the two globes that are discussed here couldn't be more prestigious: the 1541 and 1551 terrestrial and celestial globes by Mercator.

Let's hope this book encourages more people to go and see these items in the Mercator Museum in Sint-Niklaas, as well as the museums of 'plan-reliefs' in Lille and Paris.



Map 15: Mercator's terrestrial globe from 1541 is shown, alongside its twin, the celestial one

### THEMES GALORE: FROM COMICS TO EDDY MERCKX

Of course, there are the usual suspects you will find in any history book in any country, wars and economic development being the most important. It's no different here. So, if you like maps of famous battles, sieges, fortress building, bombardments and the like: you will find quite a few.

A further recurrent theme is urban development, offering a rich picking of city plans with Brussels one of the most featured. Again, a not so unusual theme for maps.

But where the book gets much more idiosyncratic, is when themes are explored that look beyond the formal history agenda. Poverty is one that gets treated twice, highlighting one of the country's most famous nineteenth-century scientists, Adolphe Quetelet, in the process (map 66). Freemasonry and the battle between Catholics and Liberals (in the Belgian sense of the word) are also mentioned.

A very prominent place is reserved for Belgian railways. And rightly so. Indeed, Belgium was the first country on the European continent to import this English invention in 1835. By the end of the century the network was the densest in the world, even twice as dense as that of Great Britain itself.

A pleasant surprise is the addition of a map made by a female Belgian cartographer, Marguerite Lefèvre, although we needed to wait until 1964 for such a thing to be possible. Moreover, I did notice on some occasions that the women behind the scenes of the cartography business (mostly family of the cartographer) were mentioned. Knowing how many wives 'ran the shop' for their cartographer-husbands and the widows who continued the business after the death of their husbands, this is only right.

Then there are 'maps and taxes,' tourism, voyages of discovery, the operetta state Moresnet, gastronomy and sports. By the way: even that other national hero, cycling champion Eddy Merckx, managed to sneak into one of the articles – but I hasten to add he didn't make it as far as Belgian banknotes!

### THORNY THEMES

Inevitably, there are themes that go under the above-mentioned description 'minefield.' The authors didn't avoid them.

There is of course the risky business of describing language-related topics. Map 86 is such a map, dealing with the Flamenpolitik the Germans employed vis-à-vis the Flemish during the First World War, playing on the tensions between French and Dutch (= Flemish) speaking and the domination of French. The map is printed on one page, right opposite what could be called its antipode: map 87, aforementioned. No coincidence, I'm sure.

Another such thorny subject is colonisation, represented by four maps, two of the Congo, one of Santo Tomas in Guatemala and one of a concession in China.



Map 80: The rocambolesk history of Moresnet is truly unbelievable: 344 hectares in size, self-declared world capital of Esperanto, with its (aborted) attempts to release its own stamps and with a leading political figure behind a lot of this, called... Molly.

**DIFFICULT THEMES**

The authors equally didn't avoid less 'sexy' themes, as map 55 shows, demonstrating how the French revolutionaries, having annexed 'Belgium', tried very hard to install a fairer taxation system compared to the one used during the Ancien Régime.

Map 61 even aims at real cartography fans, who are willing to delve a little deeper into scales, projections, rendering of reliefs etc. The reward they get is the explanation on how the reference point for height measurements in Belgium is determined. And how the Bonne projection (giving equal-area maps) was inadequate for long distance artillery fire during the First World War since such firing required conformal maps. Something to use in a (difficult) quiz, perhaps?

**AND THE AWARD FOR THE MOST ORIGINAL MAP GOES TO...**

As always, this is a matter of debate: there is the cover, to start with. Any map lover is acquainted with the Leo Belgicus. But not with the ... Equus Belgicus!

Then there is map 84, depicting a completely imaginary Cité Mondiale in ... Tervuren, a village near Brussels, aiming at making it the cultural capital of the world. Right.

Finally, my personal preference goes to map 72: when redecorating your house, try this.

Curious? Read the book!



Caroline De Candt  
carolinedecandt@gmail.com

# La cartografia italiana in età Napoleonica (1796 – 1815). Mappe atlanti e manuali per il disegno del territorio

## [Italian Cartography in the Napoleonic Age. Maps, atlases and manuals for drawing the Territory]

- Exhibition catalogue privately issued by the Associazione Roberto Almagià under the scientific coordination of Prof. Vladimiro Valerio
- 216 pages, soft cover, 24.4 × 24.4 cm

**INTRODUCTION**

To mark the 200 th anniversary of the death of Napoleon Bonaparte (1769–1821), the Associazione Culturale Roberto Almagià – Associazione Italiana Collezionisti di Cartografia Antica organised a conference and a very interesting exhibition of maps and manuscripts: first in Civitella del Lago (Umbria) in September, and then at Casa Manzoni in Milan in October 2021. This was the very first time that an exhibition took place in Italy of major developments in cartography instigated by Napoleon during his reign over the Italian peninsula and islands during a fascinating period in European history. After much research Almagià members produced a very detailed and well documented exhibition catalogue in colour on glossy paper, very richly illustrated with over one hundred maps and manuscripts, all taken from their private collections.

This catalogue is organised systematically in different sections. In the introductions the Almagià President, Emilio Moreschi, gives a general overview of the impact of Napoleon on Italian cartography; Virgilio Ilari, of the Società Italiana di Storia Militare (Italian Society for Military History), illustrates in detailed chronological order the historical events in cartography over the Napoleonic period. Vladimiro Valerio of the University



of Venice enters more deeply into the relationship between the impact of space in its different approaches and the spirit of the Revolution. Alessandra Fiocca and Elisa Patergnani of the University of Ferrara cover more detailed aspects of the major work carried out by the Corps of Engineers in this relatively short period. The catalogue gives a very useful chronological overview by year and date of all major events during Napoleon's military campaigns and subsequent reign over Italy. In addition it adds an extensive bibliography and indexes.

At the outset the editorial team of Almagià did not fully realise the extent of the tremendous impact of Napoleon on Italian life in general and the significant improvement he made to its cartography. Almagià members were also surprised to find out how many very interesting and historically unique maps were in their own collections.

What was the main impact of Napoleon and his staff during this period of only nineteen years of occupation – sometimes partial, sometimes entire – of Italy and how did they proceed? Emilio Moreschi explains this very well in his introduction: 'Napoleon opened the way to the emergence of modern cartography with decimal scales, the metre, descriptive geometry, the birth of a modern school system, polytechnic universities and the teaching of topography and surveying in military and public schools.'

During his military campaigns Napoleon witnessed first-hand in the field that good geographical maps could make the difference between victory and defeat. He was not at all satisfied with the quality of the available maps. To remedy this unacceptable situation he surrounded himself with the most capable scientists of his time, trying to reach perfection in the development of maps, techniques and instruments. The French National Assembly assigned the Academy of Sciences to start work on this vast task. Earlier, in 1791, a commission of several scientists had already made a revolutionary recommendation: to fundamentally change the measurement system, linking it to the size of the Earth. This resulted in the 'birth' of the unit 'metre' and the decimal system, which was also applied to weights and volumes shortly thereafter.

Implementation started on a small scale in France in 1792 and was subsequently prescribed as mandatory everywhere in France and in all French occupied territories in Europe in 1795. After the end of the reign of Napoleon in 1815 there were some hesitations, but the metric system was finally adopted in France in 1840 and did not change thereafter. It later became the basis for the International System of Units adopted worldwide.

Despite the relatively short period of time during which Napoleon governed the different regions of Italy, there were rapid changes to a whole range of aspects of daily life which made a huge impact. He applied to Italy the same principles as in France: abolishing the independent states, unifying the country, reorganising the territory in up to 81 'departments' each with its own efficient administration, plus a strong emphasis on and new approaches to

fields such as science, education, the judiciary, economy and taxation.

When Napoleon's troops entered northern Italy in Piedmont in 1796, the population received them as liberators and not as enemies, as they chased out the unpopular Austrians who had ruled them for many years. Scholars and scientists of many disciplines were eager to participate in the different initiatives being taken by the French Army and the Administration. Two very influential French scholars, highly respected by Napoleon, should be mentioned for their significant impact on the improvement of cartography in Italy: Gaspard Monge (1746 - 1818), a professor of mathematics, who had been very influential in the foundation of the École Polytechnique and military and public colleges in France, a brilliant scientist and eminent member of the Academy of Sciences; and General Louis-Albert-Guilain

Bacler d'Albe (1761-1824), a military cartographer. Both spent several years in Italy, travelling widely. Gaspard Monge wrote two books which were highly significant for the development of sciences and improvement in cartography: *Géometrie Descriptive* in 1799 and *Mémorial Topographique*. He gave lectures throughout Italy and was instrumental in the founding of its Polytechnic schools. His principle applied to cartography was 'maps need to represent nature by adopting the same shapes and colours, but reduced to the dimensions of the scale'. In 1796 the Italian peninsula was composed of several autonomous states, which then had substantially different approaches to cartography with maps of rather poor quality and different scales, measurements, topography, design, colouring, lettering etc. Immediately after his victorious battles Napoleon started to completely change the



Map 1. Repubblica Cisalpina e Parte delli Stati Limitrofi [The Cisalpine Republic and Part of Adjacent States] 1798. Designed by Francesco Prato, also its publisher. Copperplate engraving by Pierre Amati, 348 x 455 mm



Map 2. Carte Générale Du Théâtre de la Guerre en Italie et dans les Alpes Depuis le Passage du Var...avec les limites et divisions des Nouvelles Républiques [General Map of the Theatre of War in Italy and the Alps From the Passage of the Var...with the limits and divisions of the New Republics]

Designed by Louis Bacler d'Albe, head of the topographical office of General Napoleon. Copperplate engravings by Gaudenzio and Benedetto Bordiga. Published in 1798 by the Dépôt de la Guerre (Bureau of War) in Milan. Produced on 30 separate sheets. Size each 510 x 650 mm. Scale 1:260 000

administration of the conquered territories and organised them in line with those already implemented in mainland France. New departments and provinces were named. Given that he was continuing to conquer additional territories in central and southern Italy, the changes were made hurriedly, requiring several corrections and subsequent changes. This made it extremely difficult for geographers to keep abreast of the new developments and for timely update of the maps, so that the atlases often showed a mix of the new and outdated. The reader notes that frequently the text of the maps was in French.

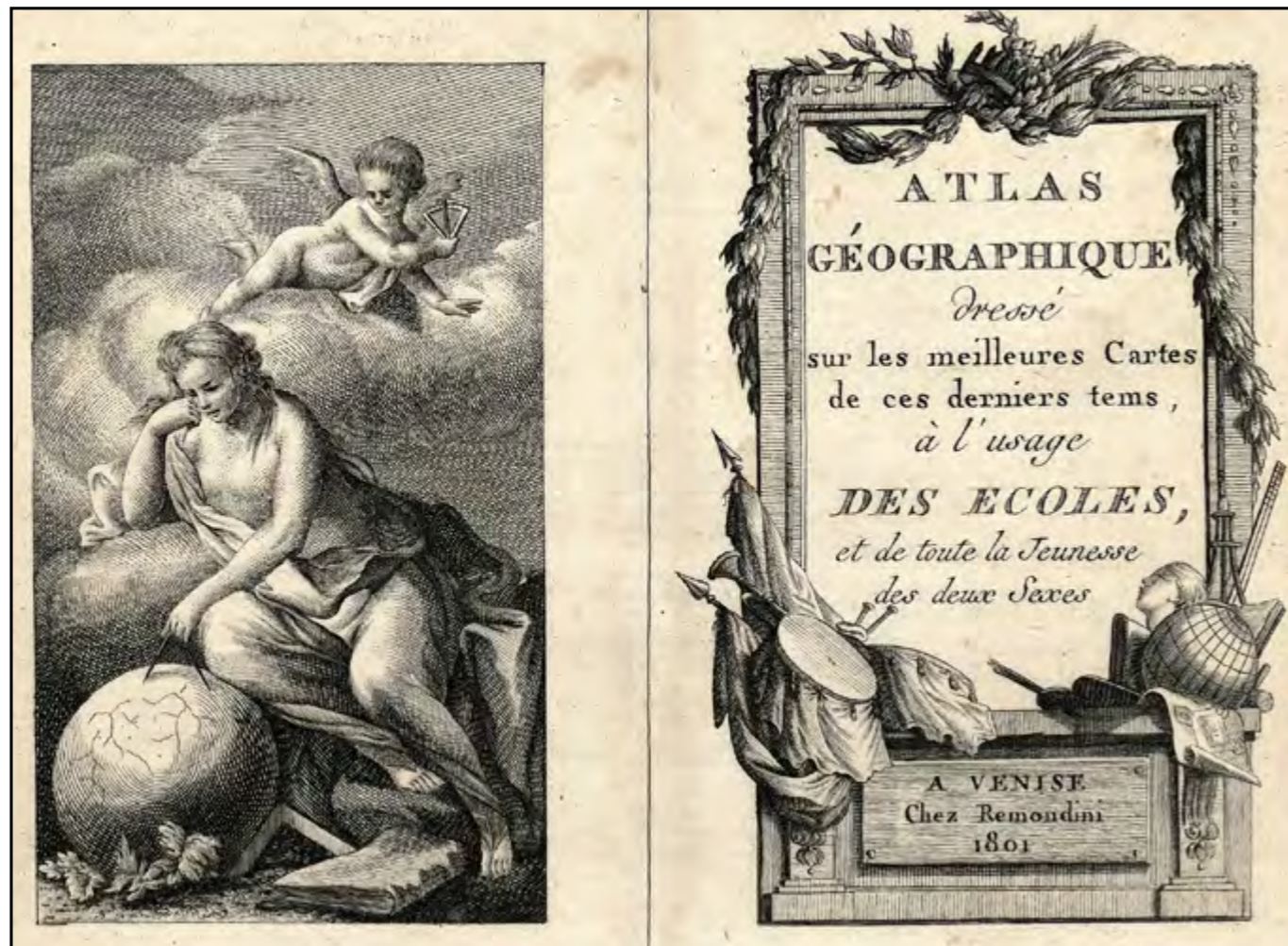
**MAP 1**  
*Repubblica Cisalpina e Parte delli Stati Limitrofi [The Cisalpine Republic and Part of Adjacent States] 1798.*

The creation of the Cisalpine Republic was declared by Napoleon mid-1797 after the peace treaty of Campoformio with Austria; it covered northern Italy, bordered by Tuscany in the south and the Republic of Venice in the east. Initially the number of its 'departments' was increased from 11 to 20, but a year later, a different configuration again reduced them to 11. This Republic ceased to exist only two years later, when Austrian and Russian troops reconquered Milan temporarily in 1799. This map is very detailed for its size and still shows nine

abolished 'departments'. The Republic of Venice (top right) and the coastal area of Liguria (mid left), are shown in a lighter colour, as not being part of this Republic

**MAP 2**  
*Carte Générale Du Théâtre de la Guerre en Italie et dans les Alpes Depuis le Passage du Var... avec les limites et divisions des Nouvelles Républiques [General Map of the Theatre of War in Italy and the Alps From the Passage of the Var... with the limits and divisions of the New Republics]*

This monumental map is shown in Map 2. It is most likely the result of the work of the newly constituted



Map 3. Atlas Géographique dressé sur les meilleures Cartes de ces derniers tems, à l'usage des Ecoles, et de toute la jeunesse des deux Sexes [Geographical Atlas with the best recent maps to be used in Schools, for the youth of the two Sexes]

Venice, published by Giuseppe Remondini in 1802, 60 leaves

topographical office of the Corps of Geographical Engineers under the direction of General Victor Léopold Berthier (1770–1807). The project for this map was presented for funding to the Military Command in Paris in 1798 but was rejected as being far too expensive. Bacler d'Albe did not give up on his project and decided to organise at his own cost a public subscription in Milan; this initiative immediately met with great success. Napoleon also contributed privately (as a general). The work could get started at once and by the following year was already completed.

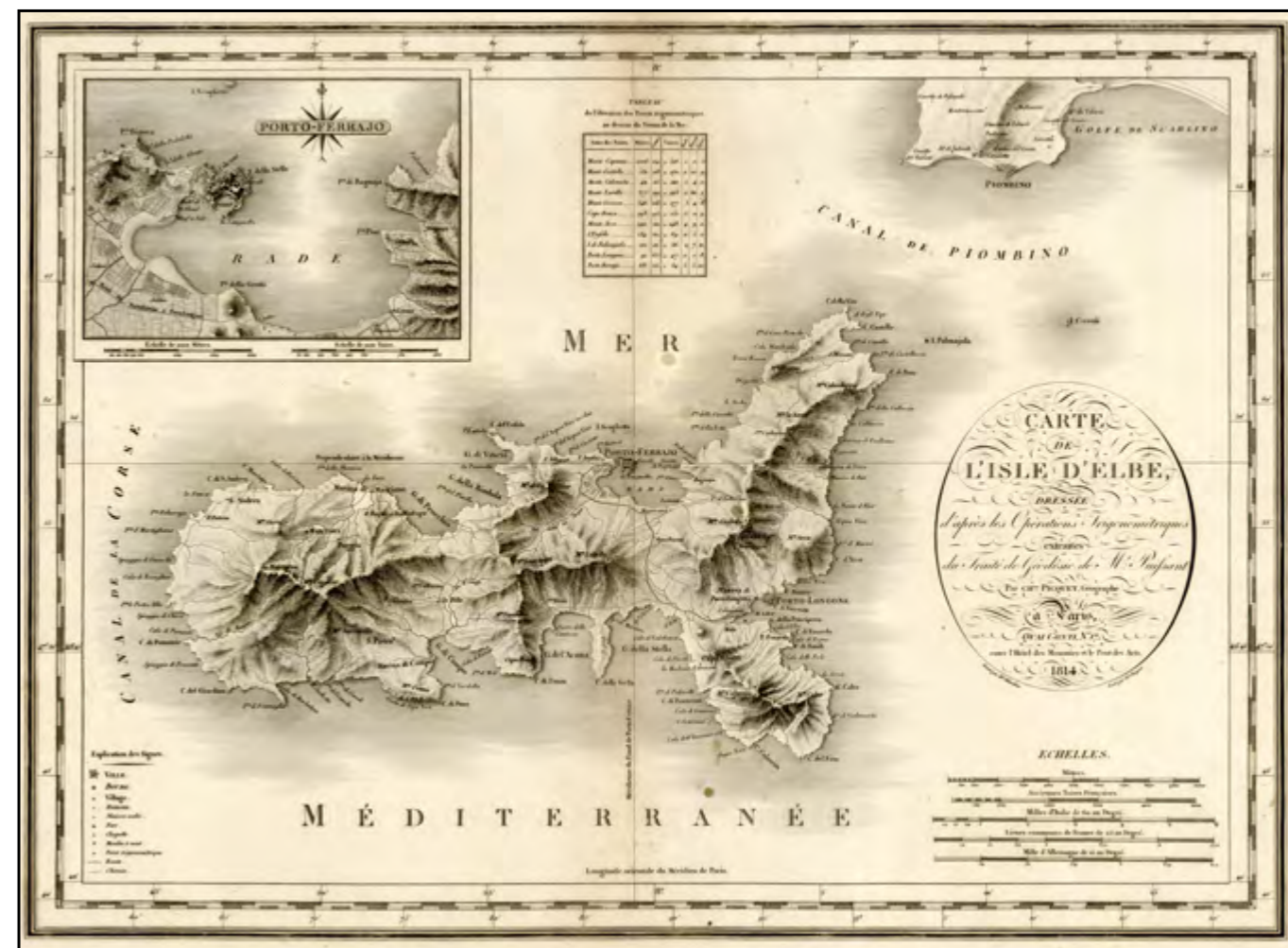
On the first sheet, in the table under Notes Géographiques, are listed the 15 regional maps with their authors, and also the private maps used as a basis; as stated 'to provide a much higher degree of exactness'. In the Notes Explicatives there is a detailed list of

battle fields, French and Austrian army positions and geographical details, such as roads and bridges. In April 1799 the Austrian–Russian armies conducted a successful counter-offensive and the French were abruptly obliged to leave northern Italy. On his departure, Bacler d'Albe tried to take along his cartographic material, but he could keep only his original manuscripts. Part of the seized material ended up in Vienna but, incredibly, Bacler d'Albe was able to repurchase part of it from a book seller. Meantime he had returned to Paris, where his Italian assistants could complete the map of the southern part of Italy and the Islands and make engravings on new plates. Finally this map of the entire peninsula was printed.

### MAP 3

*Atlas Géographique dressé sur les meilleures Cartes de ces derniers tems, à l'usage des Ecoles, et de toute la jeunesse des deux Sexes [Geographical Atlas with the best recent maps to be used in Schools, for the youth of the two Sexes]*

In 1760 the publisher J.H. Schneider in Amsterdam issued for the first time a specific atlas for children, which was published with great success in many languages. Given that Napoleon was very interested in introducing the disciplines of mathematics and geography into education across the board – these subjects not being taught up to then in Italy – an updated version of a small pocket atlas was produced and widely used. It was based on a publication of Giovanni Rizzi Zanoni (1736–1814) in 1762, adding a combination of maps engraved just before the arrival of the French together with new maps, such



Map 4. Carte de l'île d'Elbe dressée d'après des Opérations Trigonométriques [Map of the Island of Elba, prepared after Trigonometric Measurements]

Designed by Charles Picquet (1771–1827). Copperplate engraving by Alexandre Blondeau in Paris. 378 × 508 mm, scale 1:100 000.

as the one of the entire Italian peninsula with the name 'Republic of Venice' replaced by 'Etat de Venise' and the 'Etat de l'Eglise' (State of the Church) reduced in size and shown without the Romagna and Bologna regions. The Remondini family was very dynamic and emerged as one of the major map printing shops in Europe. They even acquired a foundry to produce their own letter types and opened an engraving school.

### MAP 4

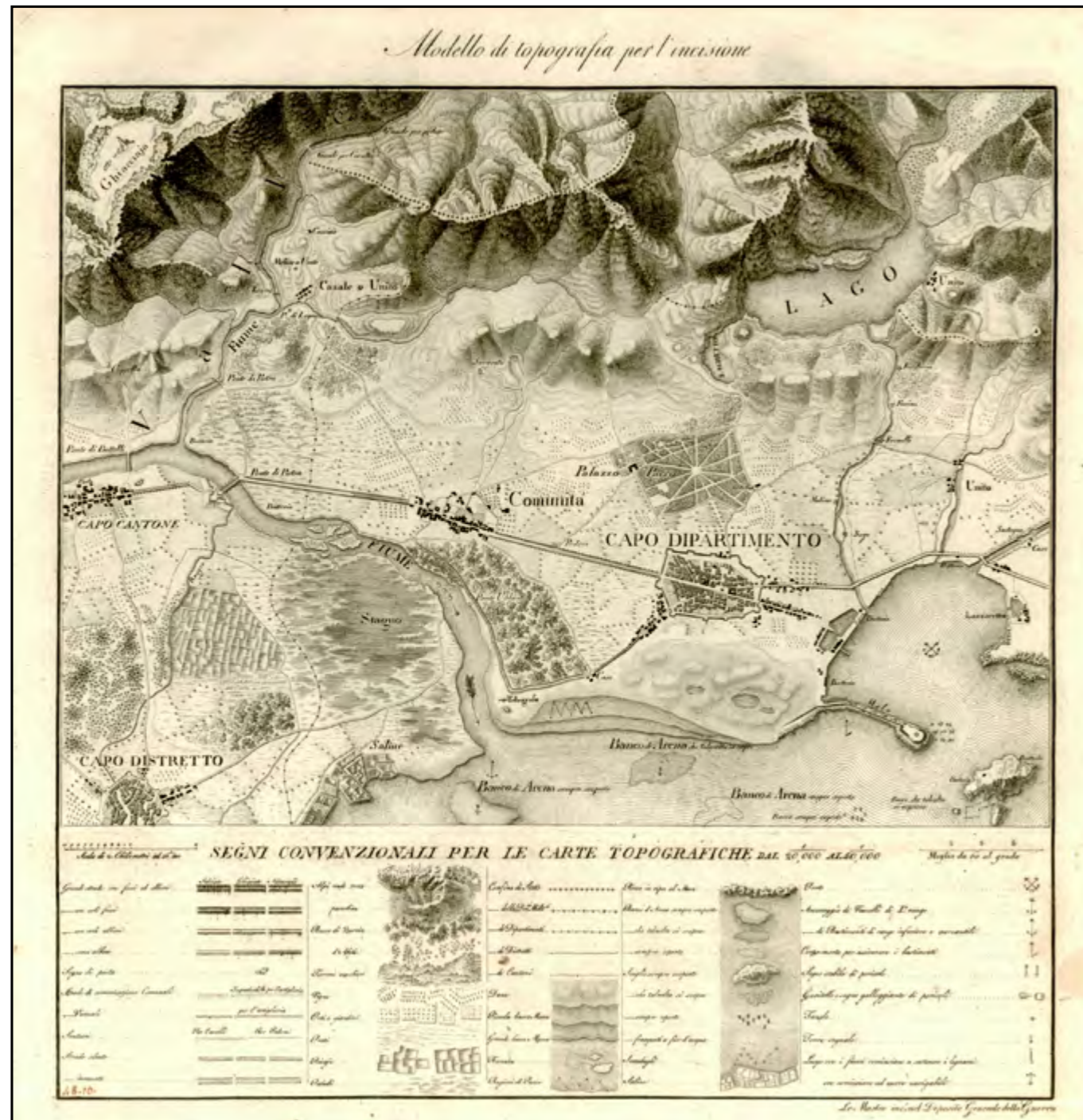
*Carte de l'île d'Elbe dressée d'après des Opérations Trigonométriques [Map of the Island of Elba, prepared after Trigonometric Measurements]*

In 1802 the Dépôt de la Guerre (Bureau of War) was ordered by the Premier Consul to improve the topographic map of the island of Elba and to verify the exactness of the recently completed triangulations, particularly between Porto-Ferrajo (Portoferraio) and Monte Capanne (1 019 m). The topography of the bay of Portoferraio is pictured in the upper left with, next to it, a table with the altitudes versus sea level of the trigonometric points. When Napoleon was forced into exile on Elba in 1814, the island was, for a very short period, transformed into a Principality covering Elba and the archipelago

of Tuscany, subsequently reduced in size and renamed the Principality of Piombino.

A vivid illustration of Napoleon's high appreciation for cartography is that, when he left for Elba, he tried to carry a large quantity of maps in his luggage, which was partially confiscated. And when he dictated his last will on the island of Saint Helena, he stipulated that after his death the maps of Bacler d'Albe should be used to educate his son, Napoleon II, in cartography.





Map 5. Modello di topografia per l'incisione [Topographic model for engraving] 1816. Engraver Tommaso Lo Mastro (1783 – 1837). Copperplate size 288 × 288 mm

**MAP 5**

*Modello di topografia per l'incisione [Topographic model for engraving] 1816. Engraver Tommaso Lo Mastro (1783 – 1837). Copperplate size 288 × 288 mm*

In 1814 Joachim Murat, King of Naples, installed a *Dépot de la Guerre et Marine* (General Bureau of War and Marine), similar to that in Paris, with the request to make a new topographical-military map of his kingdom. He never saw the result of this initiative,

as he had to abdicate and was executed in 1815. He was replaced at the helm of the Kingdom of Naples by Ferdinand of Bourbon (1751–1825), who decided to finalise this project, which combined the best contemporary work available together with a skilled team of scientists. Tommaso Lo Mastro completed this engraving model in 1816 in two sections: an upper imaginary section with all possible natural and artificial details, size 210 × 288 mm, and the lower part with a listing of conventional

markings for topographical maps in scales from 1:20 000 to 1:50 000. This picture of the upper section shows the fine detail of the engraving and guide-lines for lettering.



Sala Brizzi, a vaulted medieval hall in Civitella del Lago, during the conference with a spectacular full wall display in two sections of a map of Italy in 30 pages, described under Map 2.

**SUMMARY**

Since its founding in 2008 the Associazione Almagià has succeeded every year in organising an exhibition on various aspects of the cartography of Italy and in issuing interesting catalogues written entirely by its members. This represents their main annual activity, which continued even during the pandemic.

This interesting catalogue, available only in Italian, is no exception.


A few copies should still be available at a cost of EUR 30.00 (plus postage) by contacting the secretary Franca Tegliucci at [f.tegliucci@hotmail.com](mailto:f.tegliucci@hotmail.com)

**Making Maps in History**

This issue of Maps in History was coordinated and edited by Luis Robles. Paul De Candt did the layout, based on an initial design by David Raes. Contents have been checked by the Editorial Committee comprising Jean-Louis Renteux, Nicola Boothby, Wouter Bracke, Francis Herbert, Pierre Parmentier and Luis Robles.




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## Town plan of Brussels from 1649 by Joan Blaeu and the Bombardment of the city in 1695<sup>1</sup>



Blaeu's townbook of 1650

The town plan of Brussels (1649) was part of Joan Blaeu's Townbook or *Toonneel der Steden van de Vereenighde Nederlanden* published in 1650. The town plan represents the layout of the city after a number of fortifications around the city were finished.

### Joan Blaeu (1596 - 1673)

Joan Blaeu had overtaken his father's business, when Willem Janszoon Blaeu died in 1638. That same year Joan was appointed head of the Hydrographic Office of the V.O.C. (Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie) succeeding his father in this important function. Joan Blaeu made his map-publishing house the most important of that era.

On 23 February 1672 a fire ruined the printing business. One year later, Joan Blaeu died. The fire of 1672 and the passing away of Joan gave rise to a complete sale of the stock of the Blaeu House. Five public auctions dispersed

the remaining books, atlases, copperplates, globes, etc., among many other map dealers and publishers in Amsterdam.

### Brussels

By that time, Brussels had become the capital city of the Habsburg Netherlands with major functions associated to this. Brussels enjoyed a period of great economic prosperity. However, already in 1581 a war that would last 80 years started against the Habsburg rulers in the Netherlands.

This ultimately resulted in the independence of the Northern Netherlands in 1648 (Treaty of Munster).

### The Palace of Coudenberg...

The Coudenberg - literally "cold mountain" - is a small hill in central Brussels where the Palace of Coudenberg was built.

For nearly 700 years, the Castle and then Palace of Coudenberg was the seat of government of the Counts, Dukes, Kings, Emperors and Governors, who from the eleventh century until its destruction in 1731, exerted their sovereignty over the Netherlands.

After 1430, when Brabant was annexed by inheritance to Burgundy, Philip the Good ordered the building of new wings for the palace, embellishments to the park, and the building of the Aula Magna, a gigantic room for royal receptions and other pageantry.

The first regular meetings of the States-General, composed of delegates from the middle class, clergy and nobility of the Burgundian Netherlands, were held there in 1465.



The Palace of Coudenberg by Jan Brueghel the Younger, c. 1627

<sup>1</sup> A copy of the map was offered to all participants of the 38th IMCoS International Symposium in Brussels

## Antiquariat Peter Kiefer

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The total fee is EUR 150 a year for an eighth of a page (63 mm x 86 mm), EUR 300 for a quarter of a page, EUR 500 for half a page or EUR 900 for a full page; the back cover costs EUR 1000.

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Interested? Contact: [editor@bimcc.org](mailto:editor@bimcc.org)



This beautiful coloured map of the city of Brussels shows the extent of the city in 1649.

It was published shortly before a number of catastrophic events disrupted the life of the city in 1695. (Private Collection)

It was also in this same room that Charles V abdicated in favour of his son, King Philip II of Spain.

In the seventeenth century, under their reign as the sovereigns of the Spanish Netherlands, the Archducal couple Albert VII and Isabella established their court on the Coudenberg. They restored the facade of the palace, transformed the buildings and refitted the apartments and gardens.

For the protection of the Archduchess Isabella, as she made her way to her daily devotions in the cathedral (this being at the height of the 80 years wars of Religion), the street which skirts the Aula Magna and the chapel was extended almost as far as the Cathedral of St. Michael and St. Gudula, and renamed Rue Isabelle/ Isabellastraat (Isabella Street).

Being art lovers, Albert and Isabella brought to their court the best artists of the time. Among them, Jan Brueghel and Rubens, to decorate the palace with their works.

On the night of 3 February 1731, a fire broke out and quickly engulfed the entire palace.

The freezing conditions made it difficult to deliver any water and the means of firefighting were utterly insufficient. In the morning, the palace was in ruins with many of the works of art destroyed along with the governmental archives. Only the chapel was saved. The court moved elsewhere. Funds were not available for rebuilding, so for more than 40 years, the ruins of the palace remained.

It was only in 1774 that Charles Alexander of Lorraine proposed replacing the ruins with a Royal Square. Because of the architectural clash between the Gothic chapel and the surrounding neoclassical buildings, the chapel was pulled down.

Many remains, however, were



Abdication of Charles V in the Aula Magna in 1555. He was succeeded by his son Philip II of Spain (kneeled). By Louis Gallet - Wikimedia commons

still intact and disappeared ... underground.

Now it is an enchanting archaeological site, a network of vaulted corridors, halls and hidden rooms. When you visit, you will discover the main buildings of the palace and stroll through Isabella Street, which is now underground! In the Coudenberg museum, which is housed in the above-ground Hof van Hoogstraeten, you can admire the most beautiful archaeological objects discovered during the various excavations on the Coudenberg site.

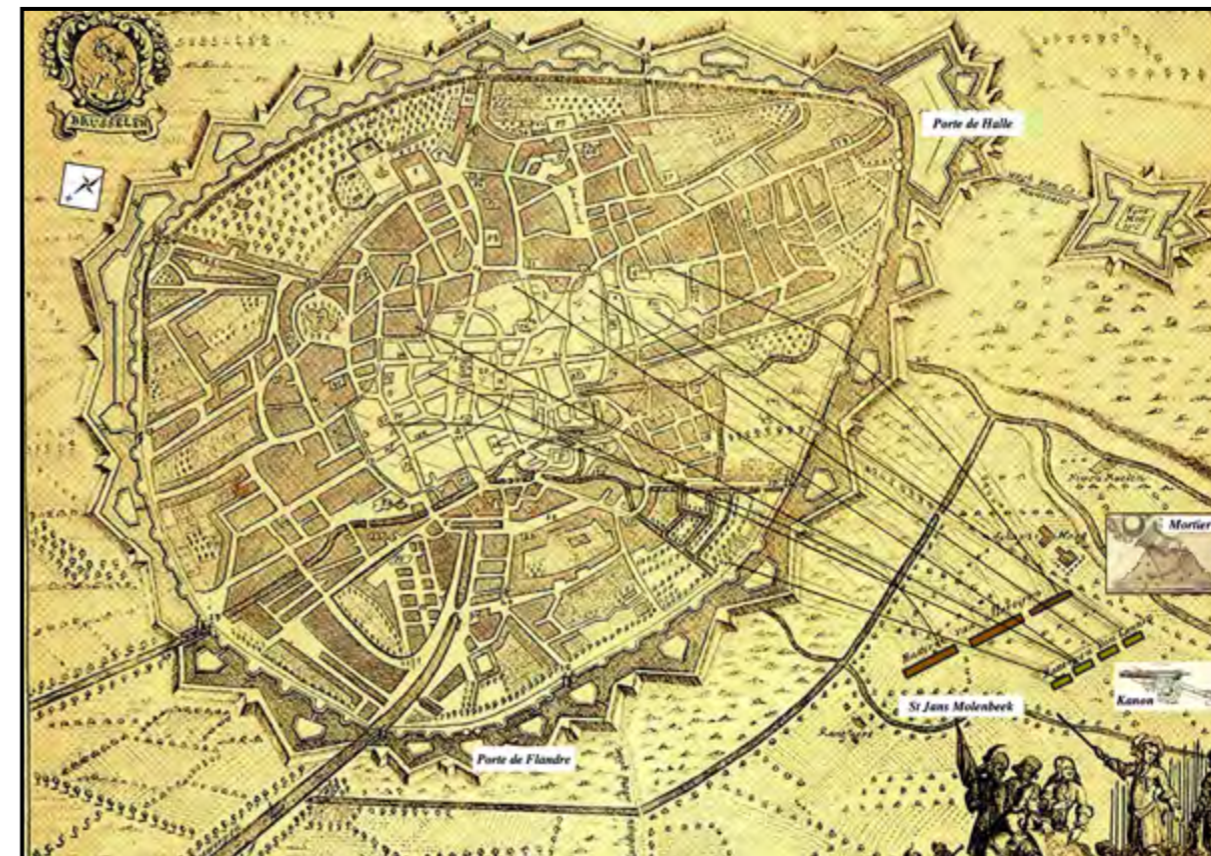


In 1695 the Grand Place in Brussels falls victim to an apocalyptic fire. The flames lay waste everything in their path and the sky was obscured by black smoke. The City Hall, which is seen on the left, and the King's House opposite are being consumed by flames from within. Source: Anonymous painting at the Museum of the City of Brussels

### The bombardment of the Grand Place in 1695

The Nine Years' War (1688–1697), often called the War of the Grand Alliance or the War of the League of Augsburg, was a conflict between France and a European coalition which mainly included the Holy Roman Empire, the Dutch Republic, England, Spain, Savoy and Portugal.

In 1695 French armies suffered major setbacks: first was the death of Louis XIV's greatest general of the period, Marshal Luxembourg (to be succeeded by the Duke of Villeroy); the second was the loss of the city of Namur on 4 August.



The citadel, still occupied by French troops, was now besieged by Allied forces and William III of Orange's Dutch troops. Namur was crucial for the control of the Meuse Valley and Louis XIV demanded decisive action from his Marshal Villeroy.

In an attempt to withdraw allied forces from Namur, Villeroy choose to "attack" another major city... His action was a form of revenge or retaliation.

On 13, 14 and 15 August 1695, French troops bombarded the city of Brussels and set fire to the centre. The bombing of Brussels was the most devastating disaster in the history of the city. Attacking a civilian target with no military significance was already a disgrace at that time.

The material and cultural damage to Brussels was enormous.

In addition to numerous buildings, paintings by Rogier van der Weyden, Rubens, Antoon van Dyck, Bernard van Orley and many others were also destroyed.

48 hours of bombardments started in the evening of 13 August 1695. More than 70000 troupes, 12 canons, 25 mortars, 4000 grenades and 5000 "bombes incendières" were launched over the city centre. Most were aimed at the tower of the City Hall.

Map : Cabinet des estampes of the Royal Library of Brussels, Belgium

### Immediately people thought of rebuilding the city

The reconstruction of the Grand Place and its surroundings (the political and economic heart of the city) received special attention. The Town Hall was restored to its former glory thanks to funds from the sale of other houses and land.




The Grand Place of Brussels today... a unique architectural marvel, admired by people coming from all over the world (courtesy Wikipedia).

The guilds and crafts went deep into debt to bestow even more splendour on their houses.

Five years after the disaster, Brussels had literally risen from its ashes. The result was a Grand Place with a unique architectural beauty.

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### DISLOCATIONS: MAPS, CLASSICAL TRADITION, AND SPATIAL PLAY IN THE EUROPEAN MIDDLE AGES

Alfred Hiatt

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## Rare early map of the Caribbean stolen in Spain!

*Spanish newspaper El País reports that one of very few extant copies of the earliest printed map of the Caribbean has been stolen.\**

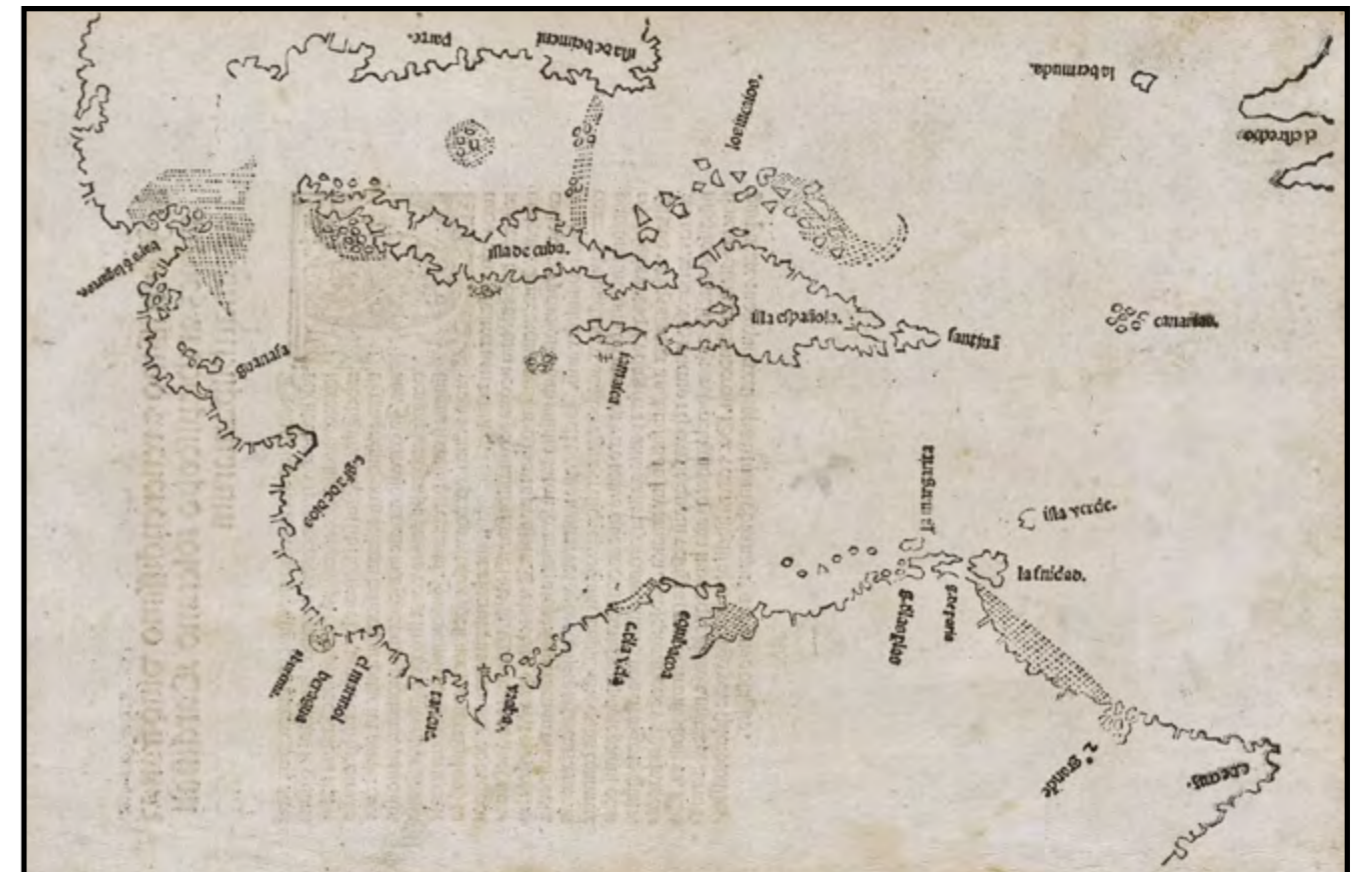


Fig. 1. Map in the exemplar of Peter Martyr's *Legatio Babylonica* at the Osher Map Library.

The map, shown in Fig. 1, was part of an exemplar of Peter Martyr's *Legatio Babylonica* kept at the cathedral of the small city of Palencia, in northern Spain. It is a woodcut that measures 20 x 28 cm and shows the Caribbean Sea plus some of the surrounding American continent. Further east, Bermuda (discovered in 1505), the Canaries and the Iberian Peninsula are drawn at locations that are geometrically inconsistent with the rest of the map. The Lesser Antilles, on the other hand, are not represented so as not to confuse the reader, according to the dedication printed on the verso.

Only a few other exemplars of Martyr's book contain the map. Those of which I am aware are preserved at the University of Salamanca, the Osher Map Library (University of Southern Maine), the Newberry Library (Chicago) and the

University Library of Bologna. The only difference between these copies is that the one at Maine is the most complete whereas the others are slightly trimmed along the eastern edge.

The *Legatio Babylonica* was first published in Seville in 1511<sup>1</sup>, so this has traditionally been assumed to be the year the map was made too. The authorship of the unsigned woodcut has been attributed to Peter Martyr [Pietro Martire d'Anghiera] (1457-1526) himself<sup>2</sup> or to Andrés de Morales

1 The book was an unauthorised edition of several works by Peter Martyr, including a chronicle of the New World. *P. Martyris Angli Mediolanensis Opera : Legatio Babylonica ; Oceani decas ; Poemata ; Epigrammata (Hispani: Jacobu[m] Corumberger Alemanu[m]), 1511).*

2 Douglas T. Peck, 'The 1511 Peter Martyr Map Revisited', *The Portolan*, Issue 56 (Spring 2003): 34-39.

\*Vicente G. Olaya, 'El misterioso robo y falsificación del primer mapa del Caribe', *El País*, 26 October 2021.

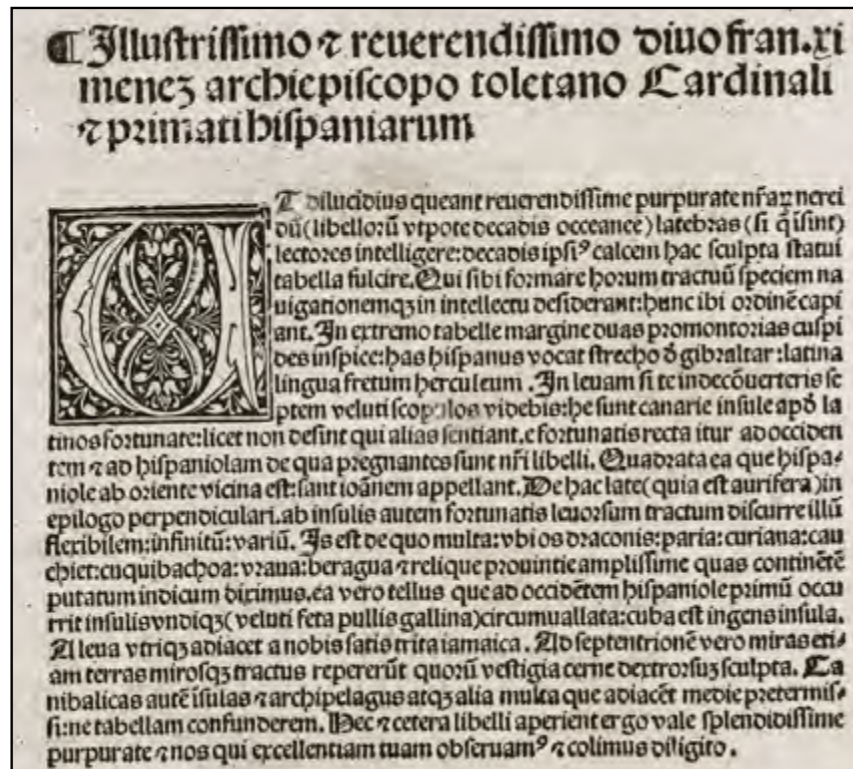


Fig. 2. Dedication to Cardinal Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros (1436-1517) printed on the map's verso.

pored over several maps of the Indies and measured distances on them. Varela concluded that the manuscript original of the woodcut map was prepared in that meeting between the two courtiers. This dating would mean that all the exemplars of the Legatio Babylonica that contain the map correspond to a later edition of the work.

The robbery was detected in October 2019, when Palencia cathedral loaned Martyr's book to the exhibition *Burgos, legua cero del viaje de Magallanes-Elcano*. The curator of that exhibition, Adelaida Segarra, was horrified to discover that the original of the map had been replaced by a forgery – or by an authentic map of the River Plate according to later reports<sup>5</sup>. She promptly reported the facts to the police but the ensuing investigation was fruitless. The case was kept secret because it was feared the thieves would destroy the map if they knew they were being tracked. Among the few clues that have been discussed in the media, it seems that the map had been removed before the book left Palencia: photographs taken by Ángel de la Torre, the cathedral's archivist, show the River Plate map already in its place<sup>6</sup>.

la Torre, the cathedral's archivist, show the River Plate map already in its place<sup>6</sup>.

Now, as *El País* reports, it is known that the prosecutor's office has declined to file charges because neither the perpetrator nor the date of the robbery have been established. This means that the case is effectively closed until new evidence emerges.

However, map collectors may remember that a copy of the map in question was sold online not long ago. It was a stand-alone version of the map, i.e. not bound within a book. Although a coincidence is possible, it might be worthwhile for the Spanish police to investigate that sale.

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<sup>5</sup> AFP, 'El misterio del robo del primer mapa del Caribe', *La Razón*, 27 October 2021.

<sup>6</sup> EFE, 'Investigan la misteriosa desaparición del primer mapa del Caribe', RTVE.es, 28 October 2021.

(1477-1517)<sup>3</sup>, a mapmaker who was appointed royal pilot at the Casa de la Contratación of Seville in 1516. Morales is known to have worked for Bishop Juan Rodríguez de Fonseca (1451-1524), a powerful courtier who, among other responsibilities, was placed in charge of the exploration and settlement of the New World during much of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

More recently, Jesús Varela has formulated the hypothesis that the map was in fact authored after 1513 because, until that year, the existence of Florida – depicted in the map as *isla de beimeni parte* – was unknown in Spain<sup>4</sup>. Varela also interpreted the inclusion of the Canaries and Iberia as a political decision that aimed to show the American space conquered by Castile as a geographical continuation of the metropolis. This in turn led him to attribute the map to a politician, Bishop Fonseca himself, in collaboration with Peter Martyr. A letter written by Martyr on 4 December 1514 narrates a meeting with Fonseca in which they had

<sup>3</sup> Kenneth Nebenzahl, *Atlas of Columbus and the Great Discoveries* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1990), 60-61. The map has also been separately discussed in English by Felipe Fernández-Armesto and by David Buisseret in Volume 3, Part 1 of *The History of Cartography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

<sup>4</sup> Jesús Varela Marcos, 'Las costas mexicanas en el primer mapa impreso de América', *Revista de Humanidades: Tecnológico de Monterrey*, no. 19 (Autumn 2005): 145-66.



# The Brussels Map Circle Annual General Meeting 17 June 2021

For over two and a half years now, we have not been able to meet for a live Annual General Meeting because of the COVID-19 restrictions. In June 2020, then President Caroline De Candt improvised a virtual meeting with electronic voting, hoping it would be 'one of a kind'. Unfortunately, the 2021 AGM was virtual again, taking the form of a Zoom on-line meeting – the new norm for many organisations.

On 11 May 2021, Prof. Wouter Bracke, President of the Brussels Map Circle, sent an invitation to the 26 Active Members, with the Agenda, the Financial report and the Activity report of 2020. Twelve Active Members actually connected on 17 June, and six more gave proxies.

## 1. Activity report

The report, which was brief as most activities had had to be cancelled, was approved as submitted (see Maps in History No 71).

## 2. Presentation and approval of the 2020 accounts

Our Treasurer, Jean-Christophe Staelens, reported a satisfactory situation: despite the COVID-19 situation, all members and all sponsors stayed on board. As there was no MAPAF, excursion or conference, expenses were limited and our assets increased! The accounts, which had been checked by the auditors (Alex Smit, Paul De Candt and Jan De Graeve) were unanimously approved.

## 3. Presentation and approval of the budget for 2021

The draft budget, presented on-line, was also approved, with some minor changes requested by participants regarding its presentation.

## 4. Discharge of Executive Committee members

The discharge was approved.

## 5. Members Executive Committee – Appointment

The current Executive Committee is composed of eight members (maximum 12 members). No change this year. Re-election will have to be put on the agenda of the 2022 AGM for several EC members.

## 6. Active Members

There are currently 26 'Active Members'. The number may not exceed thirty. Following the President's proposal, the AGM accepted a new Active Member, Dr. Soetkin Vervust who is a scientific researcher at the Vrij Universiteit Brussel and serves also as executive secretary of the International Cartographic Association's Commission on the History of Cartography.

## 7. A.O.B.

7.1 Proposal to abbreviate the name of the Brussels Map Circle

Some members having suggested changing the Circle's URL to 'bmc.org', there was a discussion on the pros and cons, and it was decided to keep 'bimcc.org' for practical reasons.

7.2 Proposal to transfer the Circle's headquarters to the KBR

As the link between the KBR Map Room and the Map Circle is strong, and the use of the meeting rooms is also currently offered, a status quo was decided in favour of keeping the headquarters at Arenberg Auctions'.

7.3 38th IMCoS International Symposium

Vice-President Jean-Louis Renteux announced the good results of the first bookings (50 registrations so far) and hoped the objectives for the Symposium would be achieved. He said this should be possible if the health situation allows international travel without quarantine.

The President announced that the Director a.i. of the Royal Library of Belgium would welcome participants at the beginning of the Symposium and suggested that Jean-Louis Renteux, who took the initiative for hosting the IMCoS Symposium, would speak in name of the organising committee. All agreed.



## Report of the 38<sup>th</sup> IMCoS International Symposium

Hosted by the Royal Library of Belgium (KBR)  
and the Brussels Map Circle (BIMCC)  
(11 – 14 October 2021, Brussels, Belgium)

### Monday 11 October 2021

The long-awaited day arrived, Brussels basked in good weather, and smiling Brussels Map Circlers were at the reception desk, ready to welcome us... masked of course, but delighted to be there. It had been so long since some of us had seen each other face-to-face that we even had to introduce ourselves. Is this the 'new normal'?

Editor Moleiro, who sponsored the reception, provided excellent drinks and eats, and thank goodness for a drink. Masks off, we could finally see each other. Lots of talk, lots of introductions. I met the Brussels Map Circle number 2 member – after Wulf – Philippe Swolfs, the Vice-President of the New York Map Society, Laura Ten Eyck, Paul Hughes, marine consultant to shipping, oil majors and port authorities, Julie Rothman, from the Californian Map Society, and more. It was wonderful to see all these people from near and far, not to mention the usual suspects: Floria and Christophe, Hans and Eva, Pierre, Wulf, Wouter, Jean-Christophe, Henri, to mention just a few. An excellent start to the Symposium.

### Tuesday 12 October 2021

Tuesday found me and the Koks waiting outside the KBR as we'd arrived a few minutes before nine. We were soon joined by about 20 others, all eager to start proceedings. We were quorate, and eager; we could have begun there and then! In and up to the sixth floor, where the Panorama room gave us a superb view over Brussels. Wouter Bracke, in multiple roles as President and Curator of Map Collections at the KBR, introduced KBR General Director a.i. Sara Lammens, who welcomed everyone. She was followed by Hans Kok speaking on behalf of IMCoS and Jean-Louis Renteux f. So much for the intros.

First up was Wouter, presenting 'Belgium in a nutshell', in the form of ten maps, nine of which are Belgian and held at the KBR. A most interesting cartographic introduction to Belgium, especially for our friends from overseas, and a pertinent backdrop to what was to follow. Among the maps Wouter explained were 'Gallia Belgica', Ptolemy's Geography, 1482, and a 'Gallica Belgica' map by Gilles Boileau de Bouillon 1577 – a diplomat in the service of Charles V – centred on Bavay, now in France, and in the Roman Empire an important road junction between Germania and Boulogne-sur Mer, a bridgehead to Britain. A 1468 map depicting the river Scheldt: Rupelmonde to the sea, included a beautiful view of Antwerp, which we later saw in the State Archives on Thursday afternoon. We were shown a 1960 School map of Belgium, depicting the agrarian economy of corn, flax, cattle and also textiles (in the cities) in the north which thereafter became a technological society, and a heavy industry south which later went into decline. Rounding out this overview of Belgium was a map by the Cartographic Institute of Belgium, 'The Linguistic Frontier', Brussels 1964, and a 1952 Lumen Vitae (Catholic Association) 'Map of Sunday Mass Attendance'.

HRH Prince Laurent, brother of King Philippe, honoured the Symposium by attending part of the morning session. The photo shows him together with (from left to right): Jan De Graeve, Sara Lammens, Hans Kok, Jean-Louis Renteux and Wouter Bracke.



### DARKNESS THERE AND NOTHING MORE; MEDIEVAL CARTOGRAPHY AND THE LIBER FLORIDUS

by Karen de Coene

Karen used the line from The Raven by Edgar Allen Poe both as a title and as a starting point for her presentation on the Liber Floridus [Book of Flowers], an encyclopedia compiled in the early twelfth century by Lambert, Canon of the Church of Our Lady in St Omer (now in northern France, then one of the most important towns in Flanders) and one of Belgium's masterpieces. Lambert feared that all knowledge from the previous centuries would be lost in the future, so he selected the best of his predecessors' work to preserve it for his contemporaries and future generations. This included work by, among others, Isidore of Seville and the Venerable Bede. He compiled the book during turbulent times, when for example, eleventh-century Pope Gregory (Gregorian reforms) and Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV were disputing each other's power to appoint local church officials, a conflict that continued for fifty years, until the Concordat of Worms, 1122. She also described the controversy between the church and the abbey of Saint-Omer, and the pilgrimage to / cult of St Odomer, bringing money into the church community. The Liber Floridus illustrates these places and people. The chapter schools of Paris, Chartres, Laon and Reims, and the monastic school of Bec abbey were the intellectual front-runners of their time, responsible for the twelfth century renaissance, the universities of the future. Bec Abbey attracted many students, including Anselm, who came from Aosta in Italy. He later became Abbot of Bec, Archbishop of Canterbury. Anselm and Bohemond I, a leader of the First Crusade, both visited Saint Omer.

Lambert was one of the first scholars to compile an encyclopaedia, working on it from 1111–1121. Encyclopaedias of this time were thematically arranged, rather than alphabetically, as we would now expect. Lambert's images were also very important, providing a summary of the knowledge of the time. Karen argues that Lambert was one of the first scholars of the Renaissance, and an example of the view that the Dark Ages were not dark at all, with cathedral schools actively encouraging free thinking and averse to religious uniformity. The study of natural science implied reliable and exact knowledge, standing apart from biblical knowledge. In terms of cartography, Lambert took the quarter circle of the T-O world map to draw what is the oldest known map of Europe.

Karen successfully refutes the nineteenth-century idea of the Dark Ages being intellectually dark, using the Liber Floridus as her example. As Lambert himself noted, 'The whole world is just a little island in the middle of the Cosmos'. As the theme of any Symposium is to enlighten the audience on a given topic, Karen's theme was most apt.

### INTERSECTIONS OF MILITARY ARCHITECTURE AND CARTOGRAPHY IN THE LOW COUNTRIES (1540–1625), FROM JACOB VAN DEVENTER TO PIERRE LE POIVRE

by Pieter Martens (Vrije Universiteit Brussel)

This presentation compared the atlases of Van Deventer and Le Poivre, both of which are treasures of the KBR collection and milestones in the history of Belgian cartography. Van Deventer's atlas 1558–1572 is in fact closer to Le Poivre's of 1615–1624 than it might seem; Le Poivre carried out his surveys only twenty years after van Deventer. Van Deventer drew city plans but also included the countryside around them. This would be considered important from a strategic viewpoint. His plans – combinations of plans and birds-eye views – show remarkable homogeneity, e.g. in terms of scale, images and colouring, and were considered very modern for their time. Both atlases incorporate military architecture, albeit in different ways. Le Poivre's city plans are however far more diverse, focusing more on military engineering and showing views of sieges. It is known that he worked on the fortifications of at least thirty different sites and participated in the conquest of at least twenty-three different towns. Van Deventer's patron was Philip II; Le Poivre's patrons were Albert and Isabella. Pieter also showed us maps by Jacques de Surhon and his son Jean, drawn to aid action in the border wars with France, and considered top secret by their Habsburg masters. Pieter ended his talk with a plan of Saint Omer, neatly coming back to Karen's presentation. He



Fig.1. Map of Europe in the Liber Floridus.

showed us a plan of St Omer around 1553 (kept in the Vatican) attributed to Sebastiaan van Noyen; a drawing of the town as it was then, extensively annotated, and quite accurately completed on the other side with profile views of the city walls/fortifications. This was compared with Van Deventer's own city plan 1565. Pieter suggests that it is worth investigating whether Van Deventer used extant plans as a basis for his own maps – he himself does not believe so. He also refers to Van Deventer's map of Cambrai (as illustrated in the Symposium handout), where the plan shows only the Citadel and the outside walls, i.e. only the fortifications.



Fig. 2. Pieter Martens's slide comparing Sebastiaan Van Noyen's plan of Saint-Omer (ca. 1553) with Van Deventer's (1565).



Pieter Martens (VUB), Wouter Bracke (KBR) & Karen de Coene (UGent)

Post a rather indifferent lunch at the KBR restaurant the group split into two for the afternoon visits.

One visit was to the *Librarium*, to see a selection of maps chosen by Wouter and presented by Colin Dupont, head of the KBR's Map room. A good number of the maps exhibited had been referred to that morning or were going to be included in talks later in the week.

Examples included:

- Germania tota in decem circulos seu confederationis dispartita, Christian Sgrooten, (ca 1532–1608), linking to Wouter's initial presentation 'Belgium in a Nutshell', see above.
- Partie du Gange où sont les établissements du commerce des nations de l'Europe dans les Indes Orientales [Document cartographique]: cette carte est dressée sur les memoires et observations du Sieur Jacque André Cobbé envoié aux Indes orientales par Messieurs de la compagnie etablie à Anvers: Ricquier ca 1725, which illustrated Jan Parmentier's presentation.
- Expédition Antarctique belge. Croquis provisoire de la Détroit de la Belgica, Adrien de Gerlache 1901?, which was shown and described to us by Robert Clancy in his talk on 'Mapping the Antarctic Peninsula' on Thursday morning.

In addition, we were also invited to the KBR museum, hosting an *Exhibition of books from the library of the Dukes of Burgundy*.

The books were collected by the Burgundian rulers from 1369 when Philip the Bold married Margaret III of Flanders, and continued through the 14th and 15th centuries until the library passed into the hands of Charles V in the sixteenth century.

We saw stunning examples of manuscripts on religious and historical themes, secular literature, books illustrating women's role in society, life at court, not to mention epic poems. Many of the books had originated in Latin, and the dukes had had them translated into French, copied, illuminated and illustrated.

On marrying Philip, Margaret brought one of the exceptions, Les Quatre Evangiles (The Four Gospels), written in 13th-century French, to the collection. Some of the books on history were designed to legitimise the power of the ruler, for example Jean Wauquelin's translation from Latin, called in French the Chroniques de Hainaut, which aimed to legitimise Philip the Good's seizure of Hainaut, Holland and Zeeland.



An exhibition of books from the Library of the Dukes of Burgundy at the KBR museum

## MERCATOR'S LIBRARY

In 2012, five hundred years post Mercator's birth, Jan de Graeve started collecting books known to form part of Gerard Mercator's own collection, books that Mercator used for his own learning.

Jan now has 235 such books. He gave his delighted audience an overview of Mercator's life and his collection to date, mentioning that he himself was very pleased to see some of his books mounted in exhibition format, as they are stored in different places and rarely seen together.

Jan provided most of the books, but there were also three supplied by the KBR:

- [Variorum Sanctorum Patrum, varia opuscula]; [Sanctus Augustinus. Opera] / Ortelius, Abraham ; Schottus, Andreas. [England], [1201–1300].
- [Orosius, Freculfus. Chronicon] / Orosius, Paulus ; Freculphus Lexoviensis ; Ortelius, Abraham ; Lievens, Jan. – (ii) + 147 + (ii) fols. : early gothic (12<sup>th</sup> century)
- [Letters from and to Abraham Ortelius] / Ortelius, Abraham ; Lipsius, Justus ; Mercator, Gerard ; Zsámboky, János ; Van Meteren, Emanuel. – 25 letters



*Rudimenta Mathematica* - 1551 - by Sebastian Münster a German cartographer and cosmographer

All in all, an excellent first day, with everyone looking forward to the next!

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## Wednesday 13 October 2021

On Day 2 of the Symposium, we were presented with four speakers who each had a different take on the history of cartography. To me this is one of the appealing things of the discipline: at the intersection of alpha and beta sciences – or art and science if you like – various approaches are possible.

### ORTELIUS: THE MAN AND HIS WORLD

by Joost Depuydt (*Museum Plantin Moretus*)

As the title already tells us, this was a very 'humane,' not to say humanist approach: after all we are in the sixteenth century and the circles in which Abraham Ortelius moved were just that: humanistic. Grouping intellectuals from all over Europe, they corresponded, travelled, and married among each others' families.

The speaker gave an overview of Ortelius' cartographic work: of course, his *Theatrum* and the appendix *Parergon*, but also the famous *Utopia*, made on the urging of his friend Thomas More and of which only one copy survives, and many other maps, such as his drawing of the *Arx Britanica* – later engraved by others.

Joost has analysed and is still analysing the extensive correspondence of Ortelius, which depicts a keen scholar and avid collector. Paintings, together with portraits and coins from Ortelius' famous art collection made this world come alive in a very attractive way.



Portraits of Abraham Ortelius



**GERARD MERCATOR AS A MAKER OF SCIENTIFIC INSTRUMENTS: ASPECTS OF MATERIALIZED KNOWLEDGE**

*by Prof. Koenraad van Cleempoel (Universiteit Hasselt)*

Mercator started his scientific (instrument making) career at Leuven University, an environment that in the sixteenth century showed many similarities with today's Silicon Valley, as the speaker pointed out: knowledge, materials and capital were all present. Thus, the Leuven school of scientific instruments was born.

Many scientists excel in theory but don't know how to cook an egg. Even if they are small geniuses in their domain, some academics (certainly university professors at the time of Mercator) seemed to consider hands as quite useless appendages of the body. In my view it is in a way almost endearing to imagine a genius like Mercator using these same hands, no doubt struggling with materials, filing, engraving, polishing to make instruments that are at the same time the sum of a lot of theoretical, mathematical, astronomical, and geographical reflection and of a technical, practical, hands-on approach. And all that combined with an acute sense of aesthetics, which he also showed in his writing. All through his presentation Koen highlighted on the one hand the sheer beauty of the globes Mercator made and of his instruments (only the astrolabe in Brno carries his signature) and on the other hand the very advanced knowledge on which they were based (e.g. the use of Copernican rather than Ptolemaic coordinates)



An astrolabe signed by Mercator]



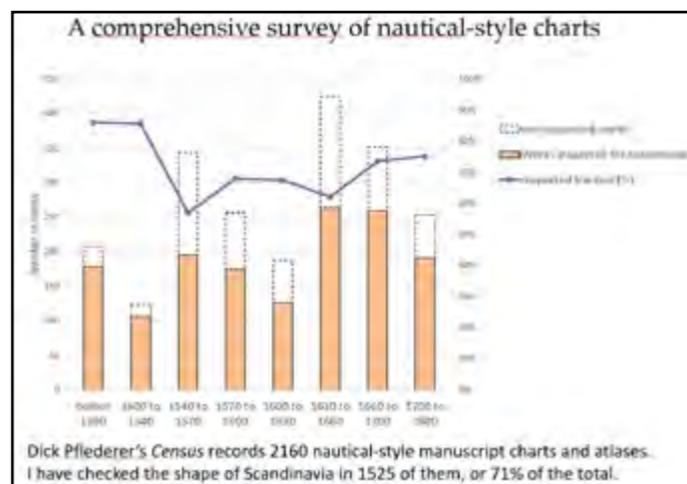
Joost Depuydt (Museum Plantin Moretus) , Hans Kok and Koenraad van Cleempoel( U Hasselt)

**NORTHERN EUROPE IN SIXTEENTH-CENTURY NAUTICAL CARTOGRAPHY: A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW**

*by Luis Robles (Université Libre de Bruxelles)*

Again, a different take on the history of cartography: Luis Robles is an engineer by training, and this showed in his presentation that both pleased and surprised me. After all, in his PhD study domain Luis focusses on Juan Vespucci, meaning he is mostly concerned with Iberian cartography and indeed portolans. So, his chosen topic came as a surprise to me: Scandinavia? The North?

Of course, with his methodical, analytic engineer's brain and his systematic approach, Luis succeeded in bringing forth a number of new insights in the way Scandinavia has been depicted from roughly 1325 to 1570. Luis demonstrated how certain 'models' of representing Scandinavia (usually completely erroneous) on charts show affiliation between them, so one can define certain families of portolans based on this criterium.



Luis Robles's talk was based on a survey of 1 525 nautical-style charts.

One thing is sure: the representation of Scandinavia through time did not evolve in a steady, ever improving way, in the end culminating in the 'true' form, although the Olaus Magnus model prevailed in the end. So great was the confusion that portolan chart makers seemingly gave up and barely represented Scandinavia anymore after 1600.

Another conclusion that is quite surprising, given the way in which portolans were traditionally made (we believe): no direct surveying of the region was ever incorporated into manuscript portolan charts.

This is a presentation that needs to be read attentively to see its full merit and to fully grasp the many conclusions it can engender in the still very debated history of portolans.

**BETWEEN HEAVEN AND EARTH. MICHEL FLORENT VAN LANGREN AND HIS MAP OF THE MOON**

*by Prof. Geert Vanpaemel (KU Leuven)*

The last speaker of the morning was Geert Vanpaemel, who had the rather daunting challenge of depicting not only the map Michiel van Langren made of the moon in 1645 but also to explain why on earth (sic) this man who so desperately wanted to belong to the scientific community of the time, did never elucidate in writing his theory to determine longitude using features on the moon.

Van Langren was eventually invited to the Spanish court to make his case but lacking in the social graces, he was no match for the sleek, uber-cynical courtiers and never succeeded. However, instead of writing a paper in defence of this longitude/moon theory (of which he had five, by the way) the man wrote an obscure pamphlet 'La verdadera longitud' in code! And it took more than 400 years before another Belgian, named Van Eycke, deciphered it. Proving that even if it was not very ingenious (using water clocks – so not using the moon!) it was not complete nonsense either.

Despite Van Langren's desperate attempts to protect the intellectual rights on his map, considered by most as the first ever, with only four printed copies surviving, many pirate versions were immediately made. For this presentation, the speaker relied mostly on the preliminary sketch (so manuscript, kept at the National Archives of Belgium) Van Langren made, showing the original nomenclature, based on his close circle of acquaintances. <sup>1</sup>



Van Langren's manuscript map of the Moon, Luna vel lumina Austriaca Philippica. National Archives of Belgium, Hand drawn maps and plans, Inv. Series II, no. 7911



Luis Robles (ULB)



Prof. Geert Vanpaemel (KU Leuven)

<sup>1</sup> An extensive study of the printed map and its forgeries was recently published (Pingel, Alexandre 'Een vervalsing van de maankaart van Langren.' Caert Thresoor 40,3, 2021: 12-19.)



One of the highlights is the armillary sphere, made by Gauthier Arscenius in 1575. One of four surviving ones that are still geocentric.



Jan De Graeve explaining the instruments at the Arts & History Museum

In the afternoon we visited the *War Heritage Institute* (see pages 40–41) and also the *Arts & History Museum of Brussels*, where Jan De Graeve gave us a guided tour through the gallery of scientific instruments<sup>2</sup>. Like a fish in water, Jan effortlessly named instrument after instrument, with the name of the maker and its date. Of course, the Leuven school we learned about in the morning is well represented here.

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## Thursday 14 October 2021

The chairman for the third and last day was Imre Demhardt. The presentations broadened the perspective of Belgian mapping contribution to the East, with the Ostend East India Company; the nearer East (Austrian Habsburg Empire); Africa; the South, with a paper on Antarctica and up vertically into airspace with aviation maps.

### THE OSTEND EAST INDIA COMPANY

by *Jan Parmentier (Museum aan de Stroom)/ Wouter Bracke replacement*

Wouter Bracke (BIMCC and KBR) took over for Jan Parmentier, who was excused. Wouter showed us a most interesting manuscript map showing the locations of the trade missions of the Ostend Company (1722–1742), namely Bankebasar, Hitsiapour, Hugli; as well as the French, Danish, Dutch, English and other Western trading posts in the Ganges River in the Bay of Bengal.

Wouter compared three versions of this map: a printed edition of 1726<sup>3</sup>, the manuscript of 1725 at KBR, authored by Pierre Philippe Ricquier and an undated manuscript map that is now held at the Netherlands National Archives, courtesy of Hans Kok.



Detail of the 1725 manuscript map of the Ganges delta at KBR. Digital image available at <https://opac.kbr.be/LIBRARY/doc/SYRACUSE/17141478>

<sup>2</sup> Pictures and more explanation can be found at <http://www.kmkg-mrah.be/precision-instruments> and <https://www.artandhistory.museum/masterpieces/armillarium>

<sup>3</sup> Engraved by Francois Harrewijn and published by Eugène Henri Fricx in Brussels. Digital image available at <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b5973058q>

Trade between the Southern Netherlands, Bengal, and China was flourishing long before the establishment of the Company and went on after the Company was dissolved. Private entrepreneurs, among them the Arenberg family, invested their money in the lucrative tea trade with China.

There was fierce competition, even open hostility, between the Dutch and the English towards the Ostend Company. They strongly objected to the presence of the Southern Netherlands and their successful trade in the East.

The City Archives of Antwerp hold the rich archives of the Ostend Company

- André Cobbé's diary, the first Governor of the Company, killed in 1724 whose name features on the cartouche of the above map
- a list of books that André Cobbé took with him to India, and
- two books with maps.

They are testimony of an interesting era of history.

### FROM A 1761 VENUS TRANSIT TO THE SECOND MILITARY SURVEY – THE CENTURY OF THE HABSBURG EMPIRE IN CARTOGRAPHY

by *Gábor Timár (ELTE University)*

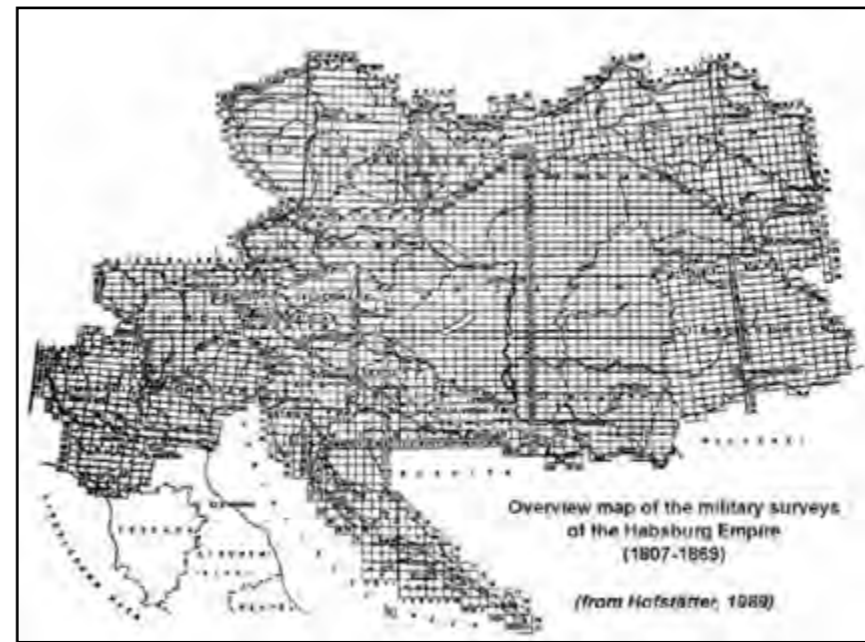
We then moved digitally to Budapest where Gabor Timor, professor of geophysics at the ELTE University in Budapest and scientific leader of the MAPIRE project, took us to Austria in the 18th century. The theme of his presentation could be summarised as The Golden Age of Cartography in the Habsburg Empire (1861 – first half of the 19th century).

After the War of the Spanish Succession (1701–1714) Austria ended centuries of conflict by allying with France during the Seven Years' War (1756–1763), which allowed for the transfer of French mapping technology to Austria.

The key moment for the take-off of Austrian mapmaking was 6 June 1761, when cartographers of France and Austria sat together to study the transit of Venus in the Astronomer's tower (now demolished) in the centre of Vienna. César-François Cassini III (director of the French Observatory, head of the French mapping surveys belonging to the Cassini mapping dynasty) sat together with Joseph Liesganig, the Austrian map expert, and the enlightened Prince Joseph, later Emperor Joseph II, to study the transit of Venus. Together with other map scientists elsewhere in the world observing the transit of Venus they were able to better scale the solar system. Cassini and Liesganig had another common project, to measure the longitudinal distance between Paris and Vienna by triangulation. César-François Cassini is also the author of the first of all topographic mappings with the high scale 'Map of the Kingdom of France'. He shared his method and knowledge, known as the 'Cassini projection'. He used a triangulation network in a unified scale of 1: 86 400, combining the different map areas in a unified sheet system.

On [www.mapire.eu](http://www.mapire.eu) you can view the maps.

The Habsburg Empire applied Cassini's method on a scale three times larger (1: 28 000 instead of the original French 1: 86 400) in two military surveys, one in the late 1700s and the other in the first half of the 1800s.



'Puzzle skeleton' of the Second Military Survey. Each small rectangle corresponds to an individual sheet. The 4000 single sheets cover the entire Habsburg Empire with a homogeneous scale and projection.

In the late 1800s lots of similar projects followed the Cassini 'Kingdom of France' map. The second was the Habsburg Empire map followed by the Austrian Netherlands, present-day Belgium, with the Count Joseph de Ferraris map (1770–1778). The Ferraris map has a scale of 1:11 520, almost eight times larger than Cassini's projection. The map includes 275 sheets. Similar projects were set up in Denmark, Bavaria, Tirol and Veneto ([www.mapire.eu](http://www.mapire.eu)).

Gabor Timor pointed to an interesting feature: geo-referencing. Older maps are fitted to modern ones, or an old map is fitted into an older one, thus creating a map time machine. He spared us the mathematical details. An example for Brussels can be seen in the image. The Austrian era, the Austrian century in the history of cartography, ended around 1860 when the Germans took over with the 19th century invention of the geodetic adjustment methods. The Austrian efforts can be considered as the best surveying technology at the time.



Synchronised view of Brussels between a map by Ferraris (right) and a nineteenth-century map (left).

## THE ROLE OF GEOGRAPHY IN LEOPOLD II'S IMPERIALIST VENTURES AROUND THE TIME OF THE BERLIN CONFERENCE (1884–1885)

by Jan Vandersmissen (*University of Ghent*)

In his presentation Jan Vandersmissen showed the interaction between geography, cartography and empire building during the reign of Leopold II of Belgium in the years immediately preceding the Berlin Conference of 1884–1885. Jan Vandersmissen explores how the Belgian geographical movement became fascinated by imperial projects, an interest that intensified from the 1880s onwards. As geopolitical tensions between the European powers increased, the nature of involvement of the Belgian geographical societies with Leopold's territorial claims changed. The Société Royale de Géographie d'Anvers, the Société Royale belge de Géographie and the Institut national de Géographie backed his ventures in Africa, the Association internationale du Congo (AIC), the Association Internationale africaine (AIA) and the Comité d'Etudes du Haut-Congo (CEHC). Under the guise of mapping the African continent Leopold had Henry Morton Stanley on the royal payroll.

At the Berlin Conference the abolishment of slavery, transparency, free trade and free navigation on the Congo and Niger Rivers were agreed. Without much ado and with his pledge 'to bring light to a continent where darkness reigns' Leopold succeeded to set up a private venture in Africa, the Congo Free State, with the consent of the other European powers.

When his undertakings in Africa came under pressure, cartography was implicitly used to underline Leopold's claims.

On a map of the Congo published in 1882, twenty-seven red dots on the right bank of the Congo River are stations of the AIC, and were named after Leopold's family and friends; geographic name-giving being used here to enforce territorial claims (Fig. 1). Since 1883 France had disputed the Niadi-Kwilu Basin, which Leopold eventually ceded to France, for compensation amounting of 300 000 francs. He secured the left bank of the Congo River and the vast spaces of unknown territory for himself.

The 289 original treaties signed with the local leaders and the AIC were handed over to France as proof of the transfer of the sovereignty rights – they are now in Aix-en-Provence.



Fig. 1. Detail of the map issued in 1883 by the Institut National de géographie – Bruxelles entitled *Le Congo depuis l'équateur jusqu'à l'océan et la vallée du Niadi-Kwilu*.

## THE MAPPING OF THE ANTARCTIC PENINSULA BY EUROPEAN NATIONS AROUND 1900 (BELGIUM, FRANCE, SWEDEN AND RUSSIA)

by Robert Clancy

Next we went digitally to Sydney – isn't videoconferencing a wonderful thing, mused Robert Clancy being stuck in Australia due to Covid-19.

Robert, a professor of pathology, got interested in Antarctica as a university student in 1959. He and his wife Christine were tourist guides and have developed a wonderful love affair with this beautiful part of the world.

After sketching the historical context of the mapping of the Antarctic Peninsula starting with the circumnavigation by James Cook in the 1770s, followed by Georges von Neumayer a century later with the publication of the 'Sudpolkarte' (1872). Von Neumayer galvanised European interest in Antarctic exploration, the last of the great continents to be discovered by westerners.

Von Neumayer was the driving force for the International Polar Commission in 1879, with direct impact on German, Belgian, French, Norwegian and Swedish interests; all had expeditions around 1900.

European exploration of Antarctica was driven by imperial, scientific, commercial and adventure motives. In the 20th century the International Geophysical Year in 1957–1958 (IGY) triggered an 18-month year of Antarctic science, science becoming the dominant force in Antarctica. With the signing of the Antarctic Treaty, European involvement, especially that of Belgium, France and Norway, continued.

Key men were Adrian de Gerlache, with the Belgica; Jean-Baptiste Charcot, with the François (1903–1905) and the Pourquoi-pas (1908–1910) expeditions; Roald Amundsen, the first to reach the South Pole in 1911, and Christensen's whaling expedition.

Robert stressed the importance of the great role of Belgium in the mapping of Antarctica.

The *Belgica expedition* (1897–1899) was government sponsored but the expedition was Adrian de Gerlache's very own initiative. His was the first scientific expedition. His son Gaston de Gerlache continued the interest. He led the IGY base and established the King Baudouin Base in 1958.

The *Belgica* crew was a very multinational group of scientists with George Lecointe, Roald Amundsen, Frederick Cook, Jean-Baptiste Charcot and others. The Belgica became trapped in pack ice, forcing the crew to overwinter for some 13 months ('Antarctic night'). All suffered heavily from scurvy, some of mental disorders; they would have perished were it not for Frederick Cook, the ship's surgeon, who forced them into eating penguin. Early 1899 the crew finally managed to free the Belgica.

The Belgian Government published the maps of Adrian de Gerlache (drawn by George Lecointe) in *Rapports Scientifiques* (Fig. 2). The Royal Library of Belgium is fortunate to hold the Adrian de Gerlache collection, donated in 1941 by his daughter Marie-Louise, who at the time was an employee at the Library.

The present-day map of the Antarctic Peninsula reads like a dictionary of the names of the early French and Belgian explorers – the peninsula is now the area where tourist expeditions are organised.



Fig. 2. George Lecointe, *Détroit de Gerlache*, 1903.

## CIVIL AVIATION MAPS: FROM VERBAL NOTES TO FULL-FLEDGED PAPER CHARTS AND DIGITAL DEATH ?

by Hans Kok

Hans Kok is a retired airline captain, Deputy Director of Flight Crew Training for KLM, and IMCoS past president. He started collecting aviation maps when these were not yet considered collectible.

He compared maritime navigation techniques used over the previous centuries with aviation navigation. Basically, in shipping you look horizontally from ship to coast (two dimensional) and in flying you look from up to down (vertically or three dimensional).



**London to Paris, 1926, minimum distance across water**  
Map by Imperial Airways, the predecessor of British Airways, showing the route to fly from London to Paris with a single engine plane in 1926. Minimising distance over water was essential.



A polar flight map courtesy of the captain — 'please pass on'. These maps were very popular, 'kept' by passengers and thus not 'passed on'

Hans distinguished six different groups of aviation maps:

1. The maps compiled in navigation departments of airlines and governments as master charts.
2. Maps used in-flight in cockpits - understandably Hans Kok's favourites.
3. Maps used in airline booking offices, travel agencies on posters to promote tourism and cultural cities.
4. Route chart booklets provided to booked passengers on expensive long haul flights. Contain route and airport information, tourist information, information also on intermediate stations where passengers and crew stayed overnight before continuing their journey the next morning. .
5. Maps provided after take-off by the flight captain to passengers on board for en-route information. Some were pocketed by passengers, as souvenirs, and didn't make it back to the cockpit.
6. The volatile passenger info onboard shown on individual monitors now; not a hard copy collectible item.

Hans drew our attention to a cartouche in a US military overview map of 1942 inserted by the Aluminum Company of America (ALCOA) to publicise the use of aluminum for aircraft.

The text is a pledge for the peaceful use of the air as a universal highway.

Hans read it out very solemnly.

Hans Kok concludes with a question mark...

*Physical maps have become rare, sought after and expensive.  
But will people still want them?  
Will they instead prefer digital collections resulting in the digital death of the physical map ?*



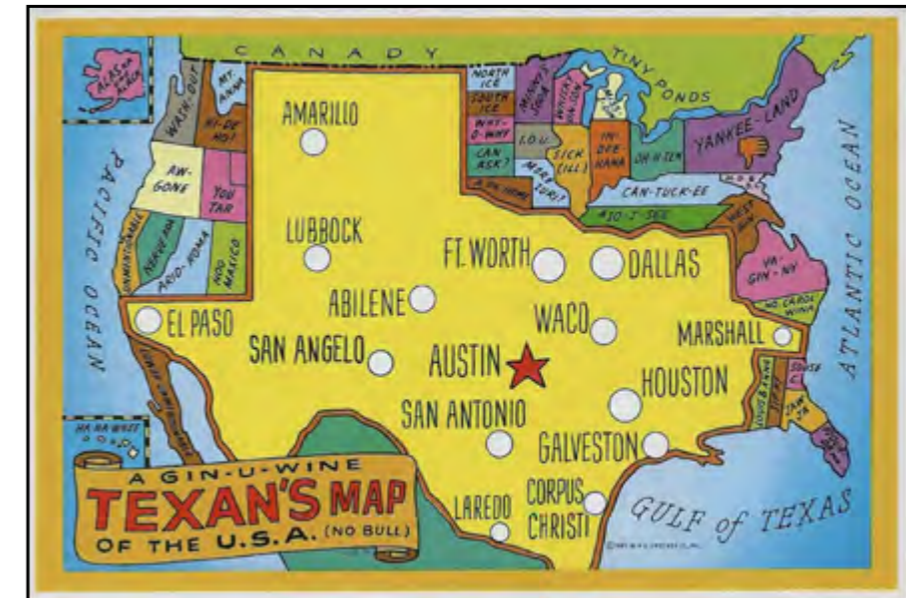
## THE 2022 IMCoS- SYMPOSIUM ANNOUNCEMENT

by Imre Demhardt

At the end of the session, Imre Demhardt announced the dates and venue of the 2022 IMCoS symposium: Arlington, Texas.

The theme of the symposium will be ; *Western exploration, the conquest of the American West as reflected in maps.*

Here is already an example of a map of Texas, aren't the Texans the proudest people in the world!



The symposium will follow the usual IMCoS pattern with morning sessions on Western exploration in Texas, and in the afternoon a mix of scholarly and social excursions.

A pre-conference activity is scheduled where participants can get a cowboy/cowgirl training!

Imre is organising a post-conference excursion of four days - a promising programme with visits to Fort Worth - Austin - San Antonio - Houston - Dallas.

Pre- and post-conference together with the symposium will make for an interesting fortnight in Texas, reconnecting with IMCoS friends from all over the world, learning about Texan mapping while enjoying a Texas margarita!



Imre Demhardt (Texas - University) and Jan Vandersmissen (U-Ghent)



Gábor Timár ( Budapest) reported by Zoom



Robert Clancy (Australia) reported by Zoom

In the afternoon we enjoyed a magnificent visit to the **Brussels State Archives** (see pages 42-43).

Claire Dejaeger  
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## VISIT TO THE WAR HERITAGE INSTITUTE



Anne Godfroid, head of the Map and Plans section, gave all necessary explanation and most willingly answered all our questions.



Patrick Nefors, head of the Documentation Centre, very knowledgeably explained the day-to-day events depicted on the maps he chose for us.

On Wednesday 13 October 2021, we visited the map room of the *War Heritage Institute* in Brussels<sup>1</sup>, where the following maps were shown and commented on:

### 1. Joseph Sauveur, *Traité de fortification. De l'art de fortifier*, circa 1713–1714, s.l., 2 volumes, manuscripts and hand-painted aquarelled « planches »

Although a professor of mathematics and mainly known for his studies on acoustics, Sauveur was also member of the French Académie des Sciences and a pupil of the Prytanée national militaire, a French military school. Hence his work on fortifications, of course.

### 2. Jean de Beaurain (Chevalier), *Histoire militaire de Flandre, depuis l'année 1690 jusqu'en 1694. Ouvrage fait sur les Mémoires manuscrits des Camps, Marches, Batailles et Sièges de M. le maréchal Duc de Luxembourg*. A Paris, chez le Chevalier de Beaurain, Ch. Nic. Poirion et Ch. Ant. Jombert, Paris, 1755, 2 volumes, et plus particulièrement: *Siège de la ville de Mons (1691)*

The siege of the town of Mons (today in Belgium) is one of many in the then Spanish Netherlands, ordered by the French King Louis XIV.

### 3. *Carte des routes de poste de la Russie européenne, exécutée par ordre de S.E.M. le duc de Feltre ministre de la Guerre, sous la direction de M. le général comte Sanson*, Paris, 1812. Echelle: 1:2 500 000. J. Andriveau-Goujon, Géographe-Editeur, ayant appartenu au Maréchal Mortier, duc de Trévise

The staff of the documentation centre had put a transparent and most helpful overlay on this large map, showing the movements of Napoleon's army during the Russian campaign in 1812. The general mentioned in the title, Comte Sanson, was the director of Napoleon's topographical service. He was taken captive in Russia and later released.



<sup>1</sup> Practical details about the map room at <http://www.klm-mra.be/D7t/en/content/map-room>

### 4. *Plan des positions occupées dans le haut de la ville de Bruxelles, les 23, 24, 25 et 26 septembre 1830 (Plans of the positions occupied in the upper part of the city of Brussels on 23, 24, 25 and 26 of September 1830)*



These anonymous maps depict combats in the very streets of Brussels. Indeed, on the above-mentioned dates, the Dutch army fought Belgian rebels during the insurrection that would ultimately lead to Belgian independence in 1830.

### 5. Trench maps of World War I. a) *Secteur Saint-Julien, GSGS 3062, 28 N.W.2, 1/10 000, corrigées au 20/02/1916* b) *Secteur de Messines, GSGS 3062, 25 S.W.4, 1/10 000, corrigée au 15/05/1918* and c) *Secteur de Langemarck, Service topographique de l'Armée belge, 1/10 000, corrigée au 21/09/1918*

At the beginning of the war, Belgian maps of 1: 20 000 were sent to Britain to help the Allies, since French maps were of a different, much smaller scale. They showed the most fanciful names given to different zones by the troops, often showing a wry sense of humour among the horror of the fighting. Of course, it is impossible to repeat all the comments that were given by our group on these maps, especially as the audience consisted of different nationalities, many of which were exactly the belligerent parties on the maps. This gave way to a multitude of remarks, questions, additions, specifications etc. But all-in perfect entente cordiale !

### 6. *Aerial navigation chart, 1: 4 000 000, edited by the Generalstab der Luftwaffe, yellow-tinted double-sided plastic-coated map, printed in colour, one side with Ireland, the United Kingdom, France, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, the Netherlands and Morocco ; the verso with Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, Italy, Poland, the Soviet Union, the Balkans and Turkey*



This World War II German map is one of the latest acquisitions made by the War Heritage Institute. Its yellow colour made it easier to read under the dim lighting of a cockpit. Its plastic coating allowed pilots to draw lines on it with markers and erase them later.

Caroline De Candt  
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## VISIT TO THE STATE ARCHIVES IN BRUSSELS

The IMCoS participants enjoyed a fascinating afternoon at the *State Archives*, looking in awe and admiration at an impressive selection of maps and drawings. We were welcomed by Iason Jongepier, professor at the University of Antwerp in Digital Historical Geography, and Work leader Digitalisation & Valorisation at the State Archives of Belgium.

In the main entry hall we admired the painting by Ignatius Vander Stock of 1661 of the Sonian Forest, the green lung of Brussels (Fig. 1).

Thereafter, Iason introduced us to a selection of magnificent maps.



Fig. 1. Map of the Sonian Forest- painting by Ignatius Vander Stock-1661

### 1. Topographic map of the course of the Scheldt, from Rupelmonde to the Zwin and the Isle of Walcheren.

We looked in amazement at a wheel roll, measuring more than five metres (57 × 521 cm), a bird's eye view of the river Scheldt from Rupelmonde to Zeeland and the North Sea.

This magnificent map, dated 1504-05, is a most precious topographical document. It is a copy of an older map of 1468-69 and another older similar map held by the National Archives. These maps served in court cases between the city of Antwerp and Zeeland over toll rights on the Honte (old name for the Western Scheldt), showing in amazing detail townships, villages, castles, churches, ship, mills and even simple dwellings along the riverbanks. The view of Antwerp is particularly interesting as the construction of the tower of the Notre Dame church was not yet finished and maybe halted. As many of the places and buildings on the maps have disappeared due to storm tides these maps are topographically truly important.



Fig. 2. Symposium participants looking at the map of the course of the river Scheldt.

### 2. Bird's eye-view of the course of the Scheldt passage in Tournay - 1611

We looked at another wheel roll (35 cm x 488 cm), a bird's eye view from 1611 on the water infrastructure of the River Scheldt in Tournay/Doornik with the Pont des Trous, Tournay's renowned gothic Bridge of Holes. The recent dismantling of this bridge to allow passage of bigger vessels has been met with protest and dismay<sup>1</sup>.

### 3. Certified copy of a map showing the borders of the Austrian Netherlands and Dutch Flanders, by R.V. Luchtelen and colonel de Laing 1758 - based on the original map by Nicolas Suly 1716.

The third map showcased the border between the Austrian Netherlands and Staats-Vlaanderen, the portion of Flanders that became part of the United Provinces, roughly Zeeuws-Vlaanderen now. A map like this takes you back to the history of the seven United Provinces, the Spanish and the Austrian Netherlands, and the wars and treaties resulting in new state borders.



Fig. 3: A red ribbon marks the border between the Austrian Netherlands and the United Provinces.

### 4. Topographic map of the Sonian forest and surroundings - 1768 - certified by the Count de Ferraris and captain Cogeur

The next map we looked at was a topographic map of the Sonian Forest, drawn in 1768 and measuring 1.84 × 1.71 m. This is one of the first maps Count de Ferraris prepared in the Austrian Netherlands, now kept at the National Archives.

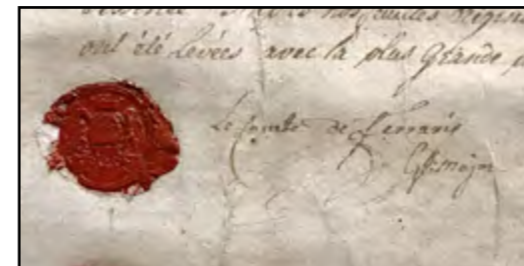


Fig. 4: Signature and seal of Joseph Jean François, Count de Ferraris (1726 - 1814). The text says 'je certifie que la presante carte est exactement dessinée d'après nos feuilles originales qui ont été levées avec la plus grande précision' ( i.e. 'I certify that the present map has been exactly drawn from our original leaves, which have been surveyed with the greatest precision').

### 5. 'Big and beautiful' detailed painting of the city of Brussels, drawn by Deseableaux - around 1775

Brussels map at the end of the Ancien Regime, with old fortifications, a list of streets, markets, bridges, bastions, and the former Palace of Nassau, which became the Palace of Charles of Lorraine, demolished, except for the Court Chapel, now integrated in and part of the Royal Library of Belgium.

### 6. Untitled map from the archives of the Grand Council of Mechelen - 1586

This picture of Ghent was used in a lawsuit between the Elisabeth Beguinage and the inhabitants of houses on the Lysbettegracht.

A very nice drawing, with amazing lively colours, well preserved.



Fig. 5: Houses on the Lysbettegracht in the City of Ghent

### 7. Plan with the locks in Nieuwpoort, 21-26 November 1416 (or later copy from ca. 1497)



Fig. 6: The map shows a channel that the inhabitants of Nieuwpoort proposed to dig so as to avoid a detour in their river route to Bruges.

This unsigned city plan, measuring 41.5 × 59 cm, is the oldest city plan in the National Archives. It originated from a request for a link at Nieuwendam between the Yser and the hinterland waterways under the reign of Count John the Fearless.

The plan is painted in watercolour on rough paper. Important historical facts are related to this old city plan, making this drawing all the more precious.

This Nieuwpoort lock system served the area well in World War I.

Thank you very much Iason!

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel Boffey, 'Dismantling of gothic bridge met with protest and dismay in Belgium', The Guardian, 2 August 2019.

## FAREWELL AND CLOSING DINNER

After three days of conference and visits to several national archives and libraries, the IMCoS friends, in festive attire and excellent mood, gathered at a very posh venue in Brussels, the Cercle Gaulois, for the farewell and closing dinner. The meal and the drinks were excellent, the friendship and the connections with old and new members uplifting.



Marie-Anne Dage receiving thanks from IMCoS President Hans Kok

IMCoS past President Hans Kok took the floor to thank all the people in and out of the limelight that had made the Symposium in this Covid-restricted world possible and a success, in particular the KBR, the executive committee of the Brussels Map Circle, the sponsors and the speakers.

He lauded Marie-Anne Dage, for her patience, friendliness and courage in the follow-up of the registration, the payments and the logistics; Jean-Louis Renteux for his financial expertise, and the symposium handouts; Floria Benavides and Christophe Klein who made souvenirs for eternity; Jan De Graeve who guided us through the gallery of measuring instruments at the Art & History Museum; Paul De Candt and Luis Robles for the editing and printing of the glossy handout.

And last but not least, Wouter Bracke, president of the Brussels Map Circle, Chair of the Symposium, who arranged for the venues at the KBR and the map exhibition in the Map Room

Wouter pronounced the final 'thank you' words especially to Hans Kok and Marie-Anne Dage.

Loud applause for Wouter concluded the 38th IMCoS symposium in Brussels.



President Wouter Bracke receiving thanks from IMCoS President Hans Kok



Vice-President Jean-Louis Renteux receiving thanks from IMCoS President Hans Kok



*See you all in Arlington, Texas in October 2022 for the 39th IMCoS Symposium !*



Symposium reporters Claire, Caroline and Nicola discussing and criticizing (?) presentations..



Symposium attendees

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## More pictures of the

### IMCoS-Symposium

- photo album of the Symposium official dinner: <https://imcos2021brussels.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/IMCoS-BRUSSELS-dinner-Album-14.10.2021.pdf>.  
OR <https://tinyurl.com/a2sbab3p>
- photos of people at the Symposium are on Dropbox: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/vlghnemkq70b51a/AAA2WeZEb5AKf1dYFnD897M5a?dl=0>.  
OR <https://tinyurl.com/ynhfeck8>

# The Brussels Map Circle

## AIMS AND FUNCTIONS

The Circle was created, as the Brussels International Map Collectors' Circle (BIMCC), in 1998 by Wulf Bodenstein.

Now known as the Brussels Map Circle, it is a non-profit making association under Belgian law (asbl/vzw 0464 423 627).

Its aims are to:

1. Provide an informal and convivial forum for all those with a specialist interest in maps, atlases, town views and books with maps, be they collectors, academics, antiquarians, or simply interested in the subject
2. Organise lectures on various aspects of historical cartography, on regions of cartographical interest, on documentation, paper conservation and related subjects
3. Organise visits to exhibitions, and to libraries and institutions holding important map and atlas collections.

In order to achieve these aims, the Circle organises the following annual events:

- A MAP-AFTERNOON in March or April, bringing together all those interested in maps and atlases for an informal chat about an item from their collection – an ideal opportunity to get to know the Circle.
- An EXCURSION to a map collection or exhibition.
- An INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE on a specific major topic in December.

The Brussels Map Circle also publishes *Maps in History* (formerly known as *BIMCC Newsletter*), three times a year and a monthly electronic news bulletin 'WhatsMap?'. It also maintains a website.

Information on events and exhibitions to be placed on the calendar of our website and announced in WhatsMap? should be sent to [webmaster@bimcc.org](mailto:webmaster@bimcc.org)

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## BECOMING (AND STAYING) A MEMBER

Members receive three issues of our magazine 'Maps in History' per annum and have free admission to most of the Circle's events.

Non-Members pay full rates.  
Annual Membership: EUR 40.00,  
Students and Juniors under 25:  
EUR 15.00.

To become (and stay!) a Member, please pay the Membership dues EXCLUSIVELY by bank transfer (no cheques please) to our bank account: IBAN BE52 0682 4754 2209 BIC: GKCCBEBB and notify the Membership Secretary ([treasurer@bimcc.org](mailto:treasurer@bimcc.org)) indicating your name and address.

## MAPS IN HISTORY

The Brussels Map Circle currently publishes three issues per year. It is distributed, not only to Members of the Circle, but also to key institutions (universities, libraries) and to personalities active in the field of the history of cartography, located in 16 different countries.

Please submit articles and contributions to the editor (e-mail: [editor@bimcc.org](mailto:editor@bimcc.org)) by the following deadlines:

- 15 March for the May edition.
- 15 July for the September edition.
- 15 Nov. for the January edition.

Items presented for publication are submitted to the approval of the Editorial Committee. Signed articles and reviews reflect solely the opinions of the author.





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