

Title: *De Summa Totius Orbis*

Date: 1520-1528

Author: Pietro Coppo

Description: These are small sketchy maps of the world, among seven woodcut maps, in a rare work by Pietro Coppo, *Portolano Stampata in Venetia per Augustino di Bindoni* 1528. Pietro Coppo (Latin: Petrus Coppelus) is known to be the first Venetian Istrian geographer, cartographer and public servant, and he was probably the most prolific Italian cartographer of his time before Giacomo Gastaldi. Its principal interest consists in their affording a proof of the erroneous notions of the New World still entertained, even in Venice, at the time when the maps were printed. If any projection could be spoken of, with reference to maps so awkwardly drawn as these, one could make a case as does historian A.E. Nordenskiöld that this may be the first maps drawn on the oval equidistant projection of Benedetto Bordone (#343). The first edition of Bordone's work is dated a few months later than Coppo's *Portolano*.

Pietro Coppo was born in Venice in 1469 or 1470, and died in Isola in 1555 or 1556. He was trained by the Venetian humanist Marcantonio Sabellico and then spent several years travelling across Italy and all over the Mediterranean. Coppo started working as a municipal clerk, often changing place of residence. During this period, he came to Isola, where he worked as a notary public. At the end of 1505, acting as a speaker, he demanded from the doge in Venice that certain freedoms be granted to Isola. Owing to the fact that he accomplished his task successfully, Coppo was granted the status of citizen and counselor by the Council of Isola in 1506, which opened for him the door to the highest positions in the Council of Isola and in dealings with the Republic.

He produced his greatest work, a manuscript atlas titled *De toto orbe* in Isola in 1520. Coppo collected the data for this work partly on expeditions and partly by studying both older and more recent geographical works. The atlas contains a map of the Balkan Peninsula with a representation of Croatia. The work, which is in manuscript, consists of four volumes containing 22 hand made maps. Two manuscript copies have been preserved, one in Biblioteca Comunale dell'Archiginnasio in Bologna, and the other in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. Coppo produced an abridged version of the same work under the title *De summa totius orbis*. It consists of four books and contains 15 maps, the most significant among them being a map of the Balkan Peninsula and a map of Istria from 1525, which is dedicated to doge Anerea Gritti. Istria is represented at the approximate scale of 1:280000, and the map, apart from general geographic content, typical of the period, such as hydrographical data and schematic representation of mountains, contains 296 toponyms. Several manuscript copies of the map have been preserved in Piran, Venice and Paris codices.

In 1528, in the Venice printing house of Agostino di Bindoni, Coppo published *Portolano*, a collection of sea charts, several manuscript copies of which have been preserved in the Paris codex, the Piran codex and in the codex of the British Museum in London. However, the original has not been preserved in a complete form, probably because of its frequent usage. *Del sito de Istria*, a booklet of only 13 pages, contains data of Coppo's expeditions of Istria compounded with data obtained by older geographers and historians. It was finished in 1529 and published in 1540 in Venice. This work, divided into two parts, is the first geographic description of Istria that contains descriptions of towns, villages, islands, ports and rivers. Coppo enclosed a general map of Istria printed in woodcut, which is a reduced version of the above-mentioned map from 1525. Coppo's map of Istria, edited for Lafreri by Fernando Bertelli, was published

posthumously in 1569. In his famous atlas *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, Ortelius used Coppo's maps for the representation of western Croatia.

With respect to his world maps, Coppo shows very little evidence of the latest discoveries in the New World compared to other maps drawn in the 1520s. Among the land areas shown and labeled include *Cipango* [Japan], *Cuba*, *Spagnola*, *Mondo Nova* [South America], *Isola. Cipango* [Japan] is still being displayed very close to the Caribbean. There is very little of the discoveries in what is today North America, only a portion of the Newfoundland/Labrador region from the Corte Real brothers and John Cabot. South America is not representative of any of the on-going explorations by either the Portuguese or Spanish. Coppo's delineation of the Asian coast using the "Tiger Leg" configuration is one of the last to carry on the tradition also employed by the *Behaim* globe, and the *Marcellus*, *King Hamy*, *Waldseemüller*, *Roselli*, and *Contarini* maps. The "Tiger Leg" is *Catigara* which was the name given on earlier Ptolemaic maps to the land on the easternmost shore of the *Mare Indicum*, south of the equator. Most interesting are the two large "islands" – one south of the African continent, the other south of the Indian Ocean.

I have included these in this book because of their quirky uniqueness and aesthetic charm, some of my principal criteria for map collecting.

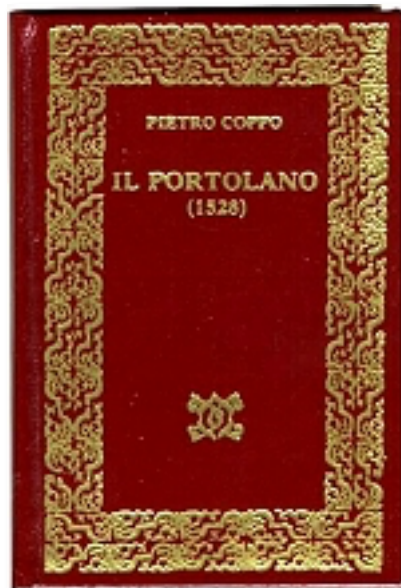
Locations: The British Library, London; G.7292
Library of Bologna dell'Archiginnasio (Cat. A.117)
National Library in Paris (Fond. Lat. 9663)

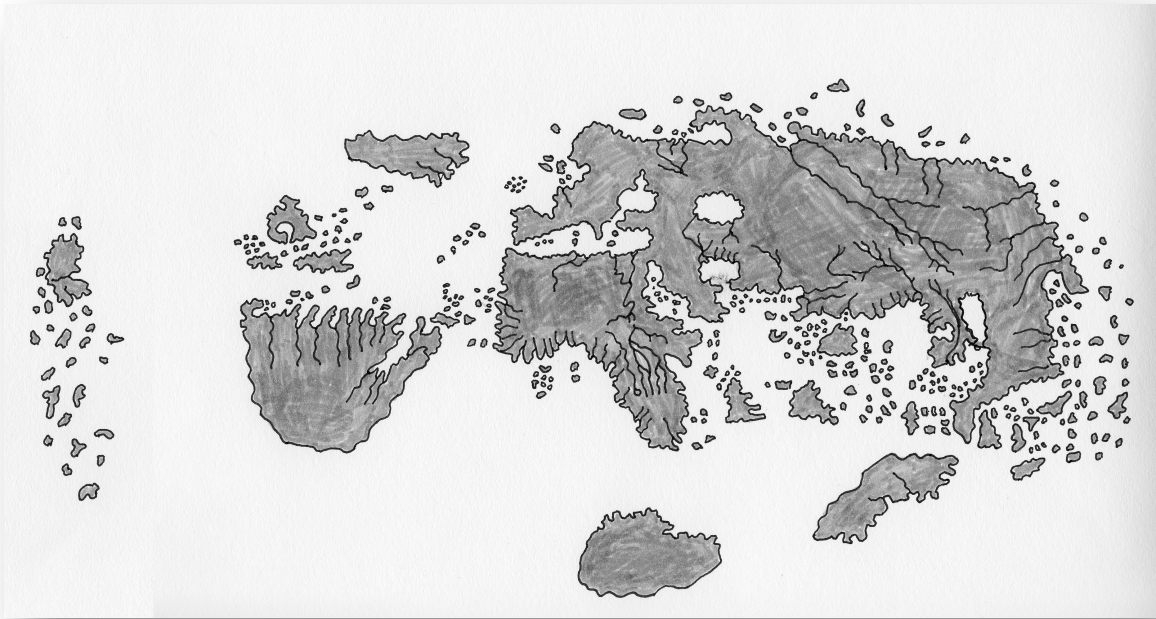
Size: 8 x 13.5 cm

References:

- *Almagia, R., "The Atlas of Pietro Coppo, 1520", *Imago Mundi*, Volume 7, Issue 1, 1950.
- Harrisse, H., *The Discovery of North America*, p. 561 .
- *Nordenskiöld, A.E., *Facsimile Atlas*, p. 103, Figure 65.
- *Shirley, R.W., *The Mapping of the World*, #60, Plate 56.

**illustrated*





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| 1. Asia | 4. Java Major | 7. Cuba |
| 2. India | 5. Cimpangi [Japan] | 8. Iamaiquq [Jamaica?] |
| 3. Ganges | 6. Isola verde [Greenland?] | 9. Spagnola |
| | | 10. Monde nuova [South America] |

