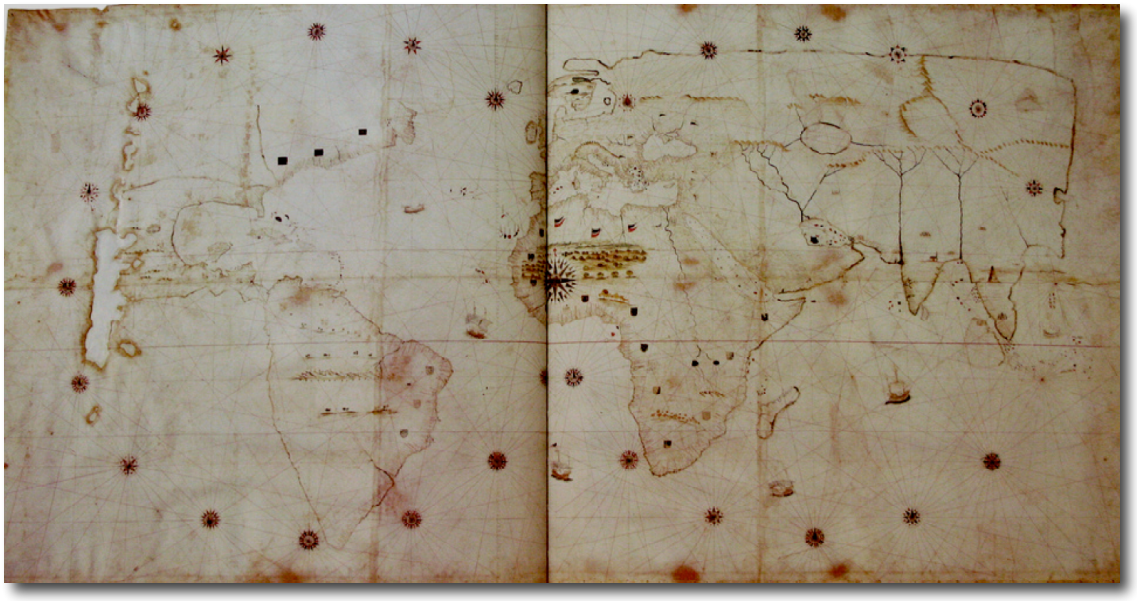
Title: *Verrazano World Map*
Date: 1529
Author: Girolamo de Verrazano
Description: During the thirty years after Columbus' first voyage, the Spanish, British, and Portuguese were actively exploring the New World. France, however, the fourth European maritime nation, remained uncharacteristically quiet regarding overseas exploration until 1523 when an Italian brought the French flag to North America.

In Lyon, France a well-entrenched enclave of Florentine bankers and merchants imported luxury goods from the Orient. They knew the traditional overland routes of European trade with Asia through the Levant could not bear the competition of Portuguese imports coming by sea around the Cape of Good Hope. Furthermore, if Spain reached the Far East by sailing directly westward to China, the Florentine merchants at Lyon would lose their trade altogether.

The solution was to search for a sea passage that allowed its discoverer to control trade with the Orient. A group of powerful and wealthy Florentine Lyonnaise agreed to sponsor a voyage westward in search of a route to *Cathay* [China]. They engaged Giovanni da Verrazzano, a Florentine pilot, to lead the enterprise, but needed the authorization of the King of France, Francois I, who had been occupied in regional warfare and in developing a brilliant court, found his treasury in need of immediate funds. He promptly approved plans for the proposed westward voyage. Francois had no inhibitions over poaching on the Portuguese or Spanish preserve; in fact, he was incensed at the arrangement between those two nations and at the Pope who had divided the world between them.

In January 1524, Verrazzano and his fifty-man crew set off in their 100-ton caravel. Verrazano had been provided with four ships, but two of them shipwrecked shortly after departure, while a third one was sent home carrying the prizes from privateering on the Spanish coast, so only the flagship *La Dauphine* actually made the crossing of the Atlantic. Of the crew of 50, the only one who is known apart from Verrazzano himself was his brother Girolamo da Verrazzano, who was a mapmaker. His 1529 world map was one of two maps to first show Verrazano's discoveries (the other was Vesconte de Maggiolo's 1527 map of the western hemisphere, #*340*). Their first landfall was near today's border of North and South Carolina. As this area appeared impenetrable, they proceeded northeasterly in their search for the passage through to the Orient. Unlike other explorers of the day, he preferred to anchor well out at sea. He did, however, send a boat, to the shore, and had a pleasant meeting with the natives, whom he describes thus:

> These people go altogether naked except only that they cover their privy parts with certain skins of beasts like unto martens, which they fasten onto a narrow girdle made of grass, very artfully wrought, hanged about with tails of divers other beasts, which round about their bodies hang dangling down to their knees. Some of them wear garlands of birds' feathers. The people are of a color russet, and not much unlike the Saracens; their hair black, thick, and not very long, which they tie together in a knot behind, and wear it like a tail. They are well featured in their limbs, of average stature, and commonly somewhat bigger than we; broad breasted, strong arms, their legs and other parts of their bodies well fashioned, and they are disfigured in nothing, saving that they have somewhat broad visages, and yet not all of them; for we saw many of them well favored, having black and great eyes, with a cheerful and steady look, not strong of body, yet sharp-witted, nimble and great runners, as far as we could learn by experience.



After passing Cape Fear and Cape Lookout, Verrazzano sailed the long reaches outside the Outer Banks of North Carolina. He sighted Cape Hatteras and continued northward, traveling the 150 miles around Pamlico and Albemarle Sounds. The large body of water inside the Outer Banks was visible from the ship but no inlet was found. Verrazano believed that the sea that lay behind it, in reality Pamlico Sound, was the Pacific. Thus North America at this point seemed nothing more than a rather long, extremely narrow isthmus. This mistake led mapmakers, starting with Maggiolo and Girolamo, to show North America as almost completely divided in two, the two parts just connected by a narrow piece of land on the east coast. It would take more than a century for this *Sea of Verrazano* to disappear from the maps.

Further north he came to a beautiful place that he therefore called *Arcadia*. This was probably Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. Here he kidnapped a young child, and failed to kidnap a young woman. Sailing further north, he missed the entrances to Chesapeake and Delaware bays, because until New Jersey he kept quite far from the coast. Verrazano next discovered present-day New York Harbor, and anchored in the *Narrows*, later named after him and now spanned by the Verrazano Narrows Bridge. He describes the bay and its people as follows:

> The people are almost like unto the others, and clad with feather of fowls of diverse colors. They came towards us very cheerfully, making great shouts of admiration, showing us where we might come to land most safely with our boat. We entered up the said river into the land about half a league, where it made a most pleasant lake [the Upper Bay] about three leagues in compass; on the which they rowed from the one side to the other, to the number of 30 in their small boats, wherein were many people, which passed from one shore to the other to come and see us. And behold, upon the sudden (as it is wont to fall out in sailing) a contrary flaw of wind coming from the sea, we were enforced to return to our ship, leaving this land, to our great discontentment for the great commodity and pleasantness thereof, which we suppose is not without some riches, all the hills showing mineral matters in them.

He continued his voyage east, discovering *Block Island*, and reaching Narragansett Bay. Because the natives were very friendly, for once he decided to break his habit and anchor near the coast. These Wampanoags showed him an even better sheltered harbor, present-day Newport, and Verrazano stayed there for two weeks, waiting for better weather conditions. His men traded with the Wampanoags. Verrazano described the Wampanoags very positively. Much less positive he was about the Abnaki of Maine, whom he describes as:

> ...of such crudity and evil manners, so barbarous, that despite all the signs we could make, we could never converse with them. They are clothed in peltry of bear, lynx, 'sea wolves' and other beasts. Their food, as far as we could perceive, often entering their dwellings, we suppose to be obtained by hunting and fishing, and of certain fruits, a kind of wild root.

The Abnaki shot arrows at the French when they tried to land, but they could still conduct some meager trade through baskets, let down on a line from cliffs at the shore by the Indians. What displeased the French even more were the Abnaki's disdainful manners when the Europeans left, *such as exhibiting their bare behinds and laughing inmoderately*.

The country itself he described as immensely beautiful. Missing the Bay of Fundy and most of Nova Scotia, Verrazano reached Newfoundland. As this area was already known by the fishermen, he returned to France.

They returned to Dieppe six months later after a fast Atlantic crossing, reaching Dieppe on 8 July after an extraordinary cruise that changed the maps of America and affected the direction of exploration for decades to come.

The original of this map, about 102 x 51 inches, a sea chart of the world on parchment, much faded and stained, is in the Museo Borgia, Propaganda Fide, Rome. It was drawn by Girolamo [Hieronymo] Verrazano, brother of the navigator. The tropics and the equator are laid down. The degrees of latitude are along a line passing through the Canary Islands, which may have been intended for a prime meridian. Their position is so erroneous they may be disregarded. There are no degrees of longitude on the map.

The large reproduction (approximately same scale as the original), entitled *Verrazano Map, 1529*, is from a photographic copy of the original made for E. L. Stevenson, *Maps Illustrating Early Discovery and Exploration in America, 1502-1530*, New Brunswick, 1903-1906, map No. 12. It shows many stains, notably the large one extending northward from western Florida. Some of the fainter place names of the original do not appear on the reproduction. The inset, which omits many details, is from a map based on photographs of the original and published in H. C. Murphy's *Voyage of Verrazano*, New York, 1875, p. 186. It is valuable for its outline of the coasts.

The Atlantic coastline of this map, which extends northeastward as far as Labrador, is of the *Sevillan* type (so called because the first maps of this type were made at Seville), and the Pacific coastline is of the type of the *Maggiolo* map *(#340).* This is the first Italian map on which the designation "America" appears on the northern part of South America. The language of the map is Italian. The relative excellence of the delineation of the region of the Isthmus of Panama is worthy of note. The delineation of Verrazano's discoveries is one of the most important features of the map. Thirty-three new names are found on the Newfoundland and northeast coast. *Terra nova sive Limo Lve*

[Newfoundland] is part of the mainland. The map had an important influence on American cartography.

The map is a manuscript (one-of-a-kind) hand drawn on parchment creation. The name of the author of this map is found in the inscription at the top: *Hycronimus de Verrazano faciebat*. The date of the map is determined by the inscription over the three French flags on the Atlantic coast of North America: *Verrazana sive nova gallia quale discopri 5 anni fa Giovanni de Verrazano fiorentino per ordine e commandamento del cristianissimo re di Francia*, [*Verrazana* or *New Gaul*, which was discovered five years ago by Giovanni de Verrazzano, of Florence, by the order of the most Christian King of France]. As Giovanni da Verrazzano made his celebrated voyage in 1524, the accepted date of the map is therefore 1529.

The most dramatic feature of the *Verrazzano* map is this vast nonexistent protuberance of the Pacific Ocean that appeared as the *Sea of Verrazzano* on maps and globes over the next sixty years. This now famous *western sea* that bisects present-day North America has no name or inscription actually on the *Verrazano* map itself, nor is it mentioned in Giovanni's letter to King Francis I. Sailing along North Carolina's Outer Banks in 1524, Verrazano saw the sound on the eastern side of the isthmus and postulated that it must be the Pacific. Opposite the believed narrow isthmus between *Mare Indicum* and *Mare Oceanum*, at 40° N, recorded by Verrazzano, is the legend:

> . . . where was found an isthmus a mile in width and about 200 long, in which, from the ship, was seen the oriental sea between the west and north. Which is the one, without doubt, which goes about the extremity of India, China and Cathay. We navigated along the said isthmus with the continual hope of finding some strait or true promontory at which the land would end toward the north in order to be able to penetrate to those blessed shores of Cathay …

This concept was taken up by various cartographers back in Europe and, subsequently, a great indentation along the western coast of America starting just north of California was a common characteristic of many early maps of the continent. Even in the 1670s, when John Lederer made his famous explorations of Virginia and North Carolina, most colonial settlers believed that the *Western Sea* was only about 10 or 15 days inland from the coast. On latter 16th century maps such as Michael Lok's in 1582

(#419), it is called *Mare de Verrazana 1524*. Few geographical errors so confused the minds of explorers and mapmakers for a century as this belief in the nearness of the *Western Sea* (see also *#340, #351, #357, #367, #371, #373, #377, #418*; maps by Maiollo, Sebastian Münster, Battista Agnes, the *Ulpus Globe*, the *Harleran*, *Bailly's Globe*, the *Wooden Globe*, the single cordiform *mappamundi* of Finæus, Jacques Le Moyne, Michael Lok, Dr. John Dee, Judocus Hondius, and Capt John Smith).

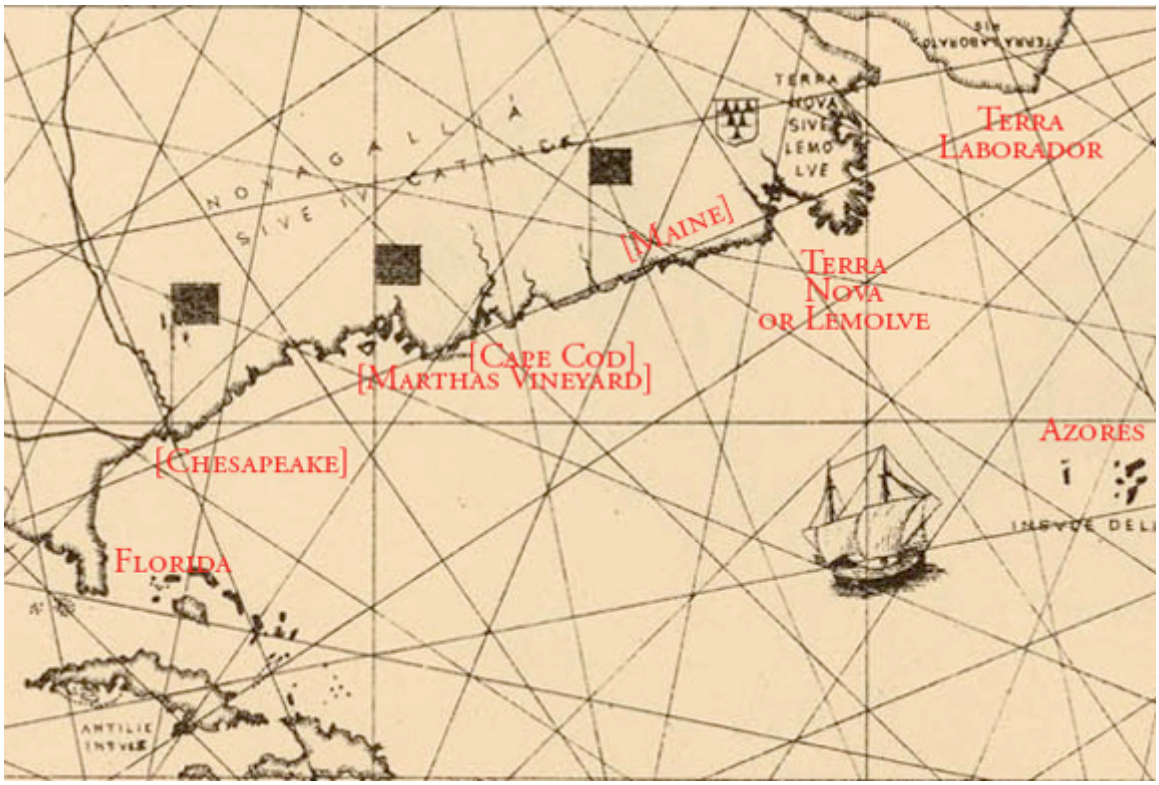
Wishful thinking no doubt impelled Verrazzano to place this enormous waterway in the middle of North America, contained on the east by the narrow isthmus of the Carolina Outer Banks. It must have been the same motivation that caused European mapmakers to accept this delineation for many years. Richard Hakluyt, Elizabethan propagandist and promoter of British overseas enterprise, included a map based on Verrazzano's in his influential *Divers Voyage, Touching Discoverie of America* published in 1582. Sir Walter Raleigh's colony at Roanoke was established on an island in Pamlico Sound presumably because it would be a strategic location on the main route to *Cathay* when the passage was discovered.

The Verrazzano brothers, Giovanni the explorer and Gerolamo [Hyeronimus] the mapmaker, combined to create an image that persisted to the end of the century. Unfortunately, they never found the passage into the sea that bore their name.

Verrazano made two more voyages. In 1527 his men mutinied and ordered him to return to France, but Verrazano, using their incompetence in navigation, nonetheless reached Brazil, cut logwood (a red dye wood then named *brazil wood*) and his backers made good profit from it.

On Giovanni's third voyage in 1528, while searching for a strait through Panama to the *Southern Ocean*, he again crossed the Atlantic (exploration and the cutting of logwood being the joint goals of the expedition), landing in Florida, then following the chain of the lesser Antilles. On one of the islands (probably Guadeloupe) his habit of anchoring away from the shore became fatal. Giovanni was going ashore in a boat to greet the natives, wading the last part while the boat, with his brother, remained at sea. Unfortunately, the natives were not a friendly tribe that wanted to trade, but cannibalistic Caribs. They expertly killed Giovanni and ate him while still fresh, under the eyes of his brother. The ship was too far away to give gunfire support. Previous encounters with cruel Spanish conquerors had obviously affected the Indians' protocols of hospitality.

The coastal nomenclature given by Verrazzano differs from the Ribero (Sevillan) type *(#346)* and, unlike his *Sea of Verrazzano*, was not widely followed by later cartographers. The cartographer did, however, introduce the name *Norumbega* (here, in the form *Noranbega*, applied to a river), by which the New England region was known throughout the 16th century.



The map is full of interest. It is worthy of notice that the latitudes given in a column on the map, just west of Africa, are inaccurate and do not correspond with the two latitudes mentioned in the letter sent by Giovanni da Verrazzano describing his voyage. The islands of Cuba, Haiti, and Jamaica are also incorrectly located north of the Tropic of Cancer. The Gulf of Mexico is too far north. The eastern coast of North America trends too much to the northeast, as on most all early maps. This was due to the misunderstanding by geographers of the variation of the compass. The coastline of Africa and of India reveals a surprising knowledge of the Portuguese discoveries.

One notices, further, on Verrazzano's map, the open sea on the Northeast Passage to the north of Europe and Asia; the Portuguese shields on the coasts of Africa, and in Brazil; the Turkish flag on the eastern and southern shores of the Mediterranean; the Spanish shields on the American coast north from Brazil to Florida; the French flags of solid blue on *Nova Gallia Sive Iycatanet*, that part of the coast visited by Verrazzano; and the English shield and an inscription that the land was discovered by the English on *Terra Laboradoris*. This inscription is particularly important as it records the opinion prevalent in 1579 that the landfall of the Cabots was far to the north in Labrador.

The Strait of Magellan is indicated but not named, to the south of which stretches an extensive but nameless continent. South America bears the three names recently given it by Cabral, Vespuci, and Waldseemüller: *Terra Sacte Crucis, Mundus Novus*, and *Terra Incognita*. Peru is still *Terra Incognita*, and yet the Ribero map of the same date *(#346)* reveals a knowledge of Pizarro's discoveries. Unlike Maiollo, Verrazzano knows nothing of the *streito dubitoco* through Central America, and *Iucatana* [Yucatan] is displayed as an island. Why the name is associated with *Nova Gallia* farther north, is difficult to explain. The conquests of Cortes are recognized by Verrazzano, as is Mexico City, appearing as *Temistitan*, the name by which it was known for some years after its conquest. The western coast of Mexico is obliterated by a large stain on the parchment.

The map is large enough that, unlike other maps of the period, does not avoid the issue of the areas north and south of Eurasia and the New World. The mapmaker clearly believed that Asia was separate from the new discoveries.

Location: Vatican Library, Rome, Italy (formerly in the Museo Borgia of the Propoganda Fide)

Size: 127.5 x 255 cm [102 x 51 inches]

References:

Brevoort, J.C., "Notes on Giovanni da Verrazano and on a Planisphere of 1529, Illustrating His American Voyage in 1524, with a Reduced Copy of the Map", *Journal of the American Geographical Society of New York*, Volume 4, pp. 145-297.
*Cumming, W.P., *The Southeast in Early Maps*, Plate 3.
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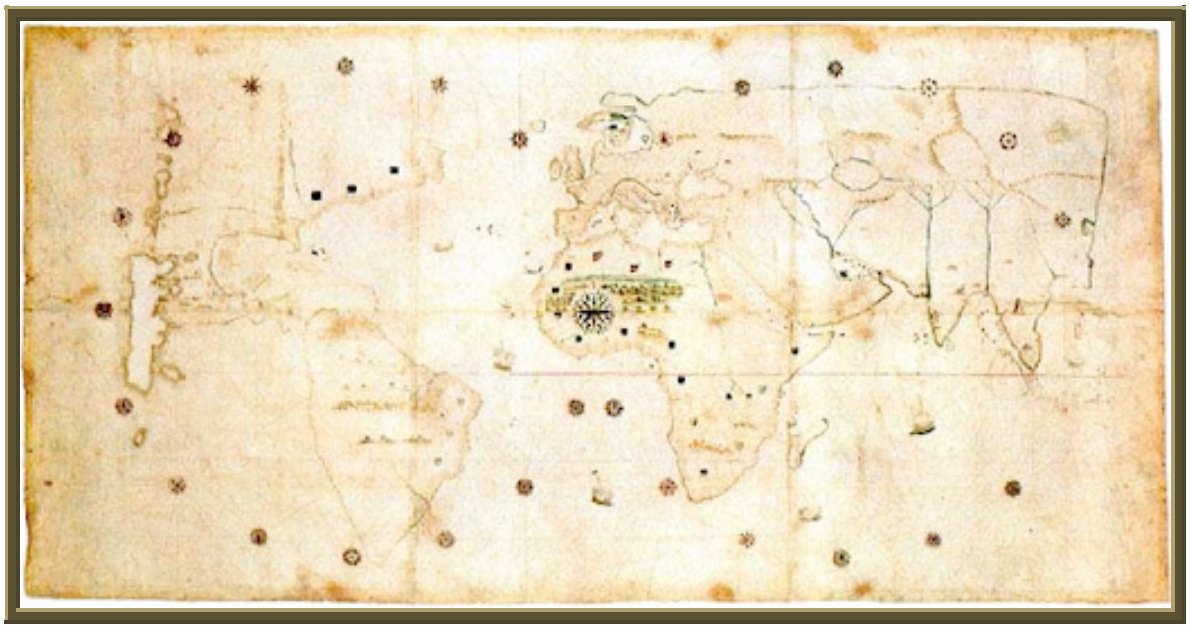
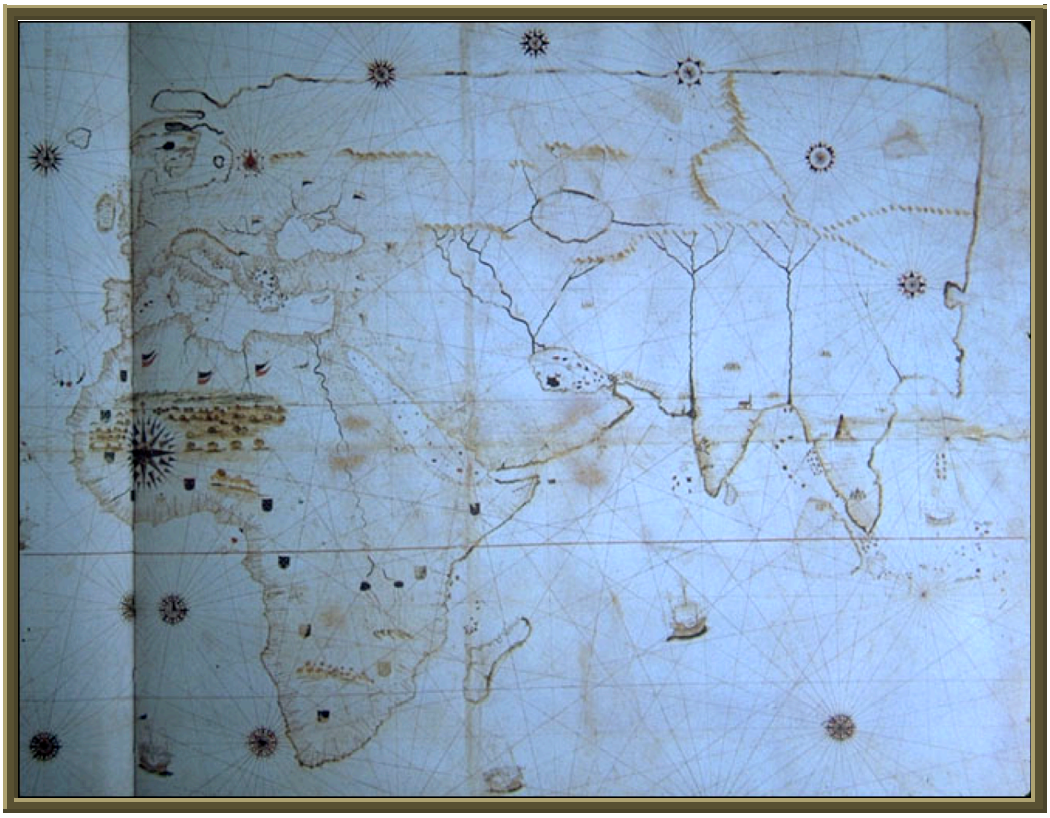
Harrisse, H., *The Discovery of North America*, pp. 541-543, No. 165.
*King, Robert, "The Mysterious 'Iave la Grande'", *Mapping Our World Terra Incognita to Australia.*
*Nebenzahl, K., *Atlas of Columbus*, pp.88-91, Plate 28.
*Stevenson, E.L., *Maps Illustrating Early Discovery . . .*, No. 12.
*Wroth, L.C., *The Voyages of Giovanni da Verrazzano*, 1524-1528, pp. 165-170.

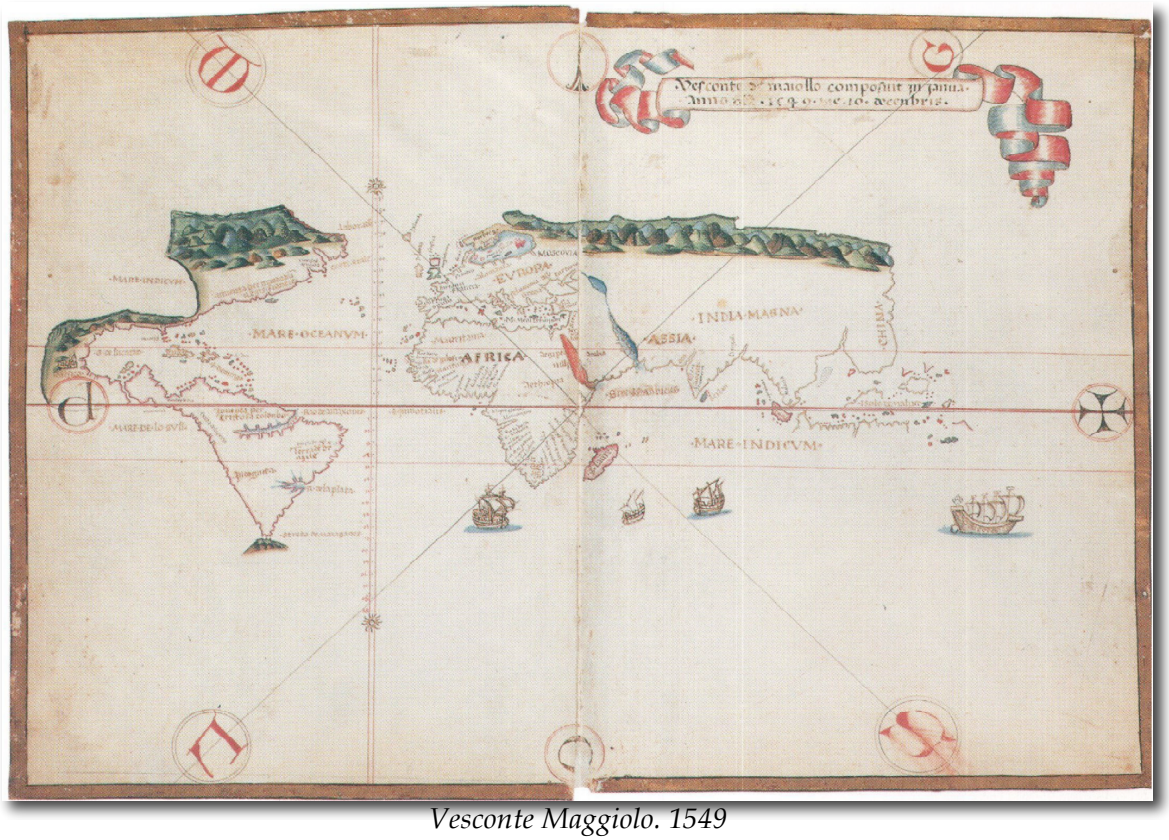
*illustrated

Verrazano map on display in the Vatican Museum

A facsimile produced by Edward Luther Stevenson, donated in 1904 to the American Geographical Society

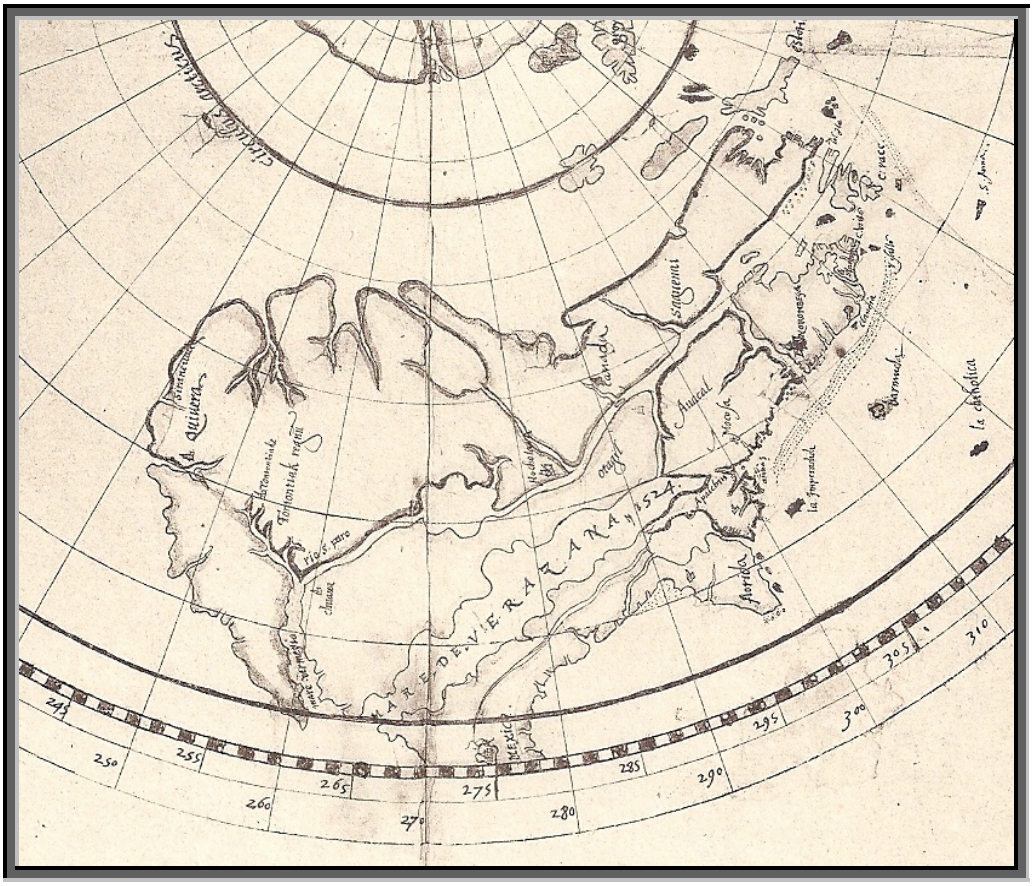






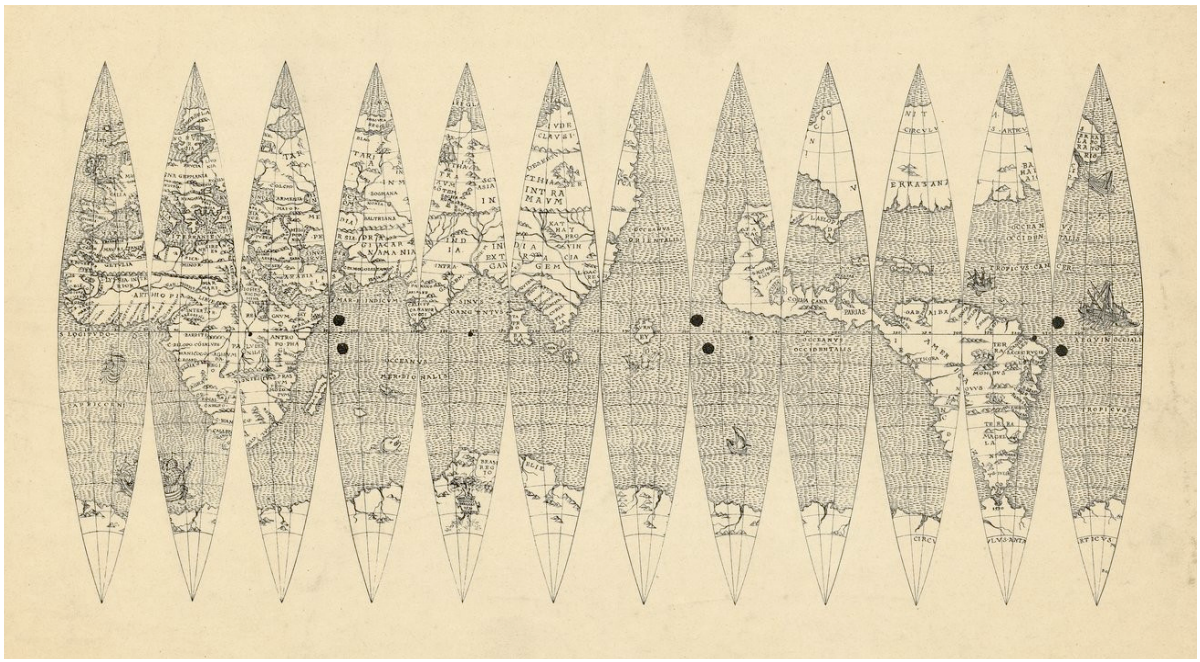
Vesconte Maggiolo. 1549

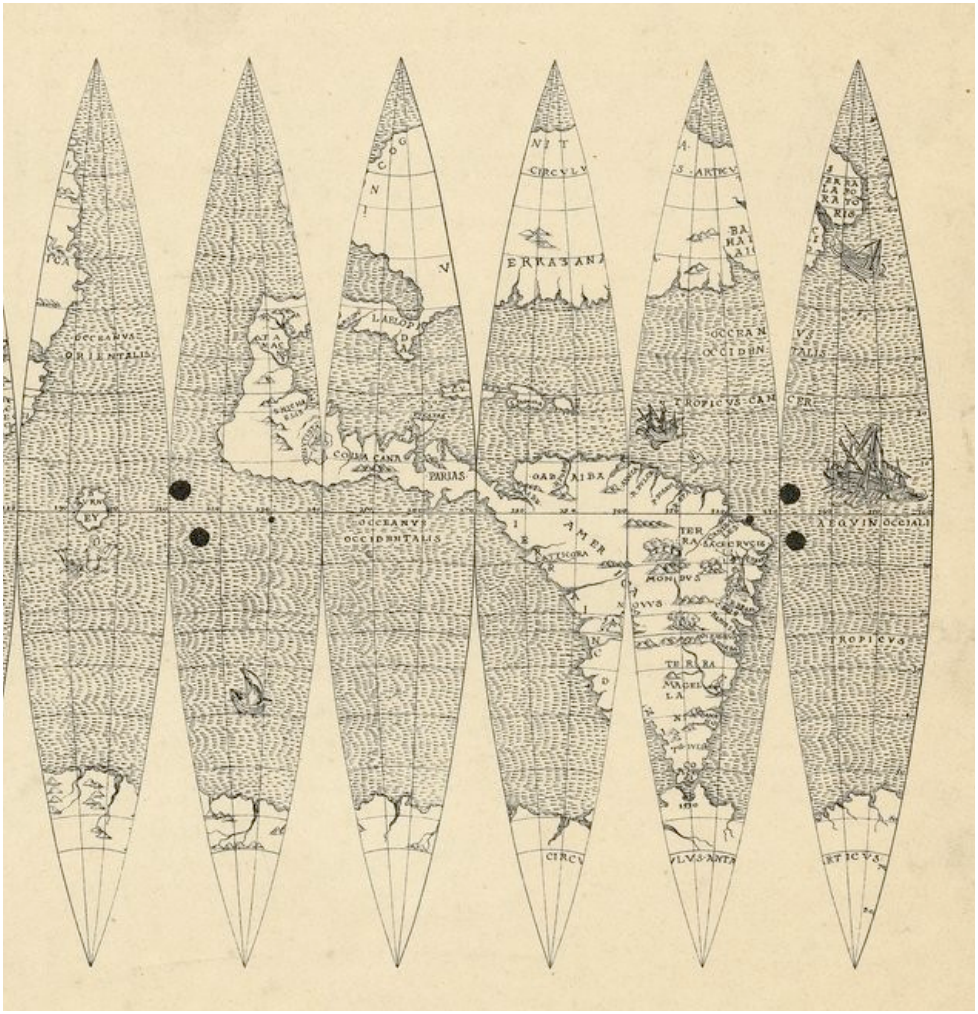
World map by Jacopo Scotto, 1592



Detail of North America on John Dee's manuscript polar map of 1582 displaying the Mare de Verazana
Free Library of Philadelphia, The Elkins Collection (#418)

The Bailly Globe, 1530, displaying the "Sea of Verrazano"(#351)
Morgan Library & Museum, NY




ERRAXANI
PARIAS
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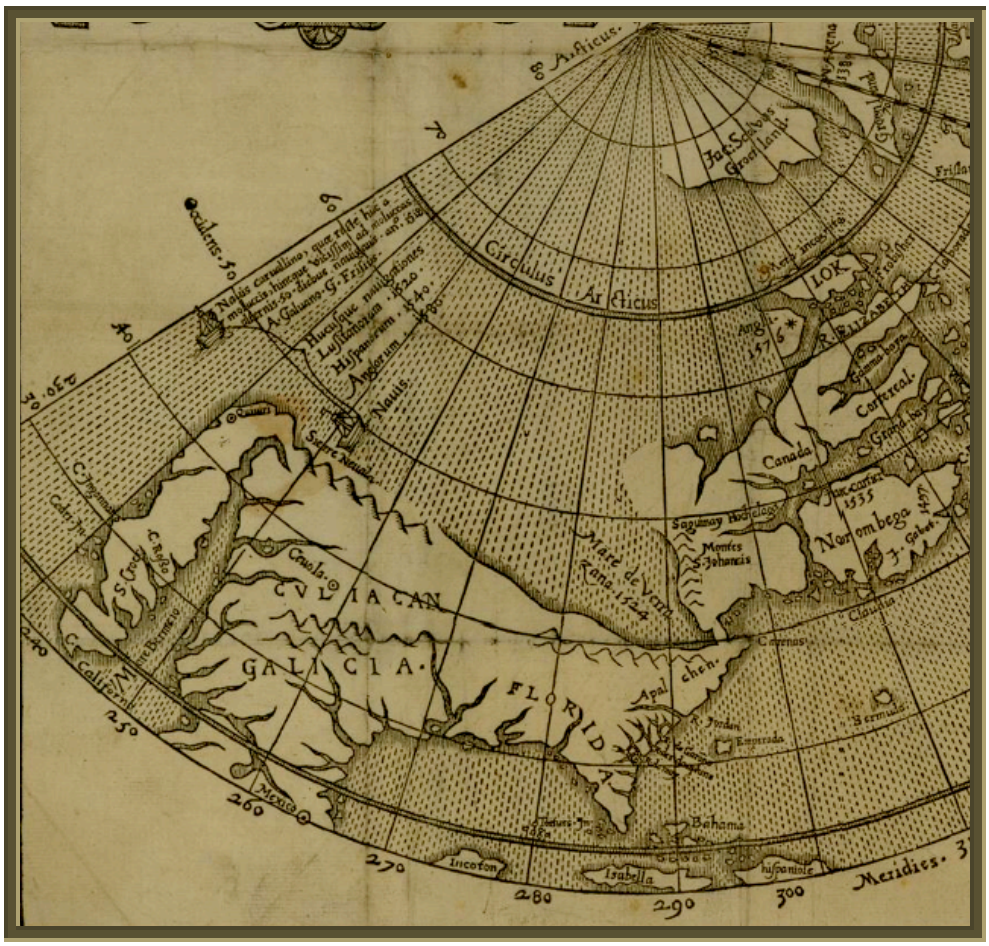
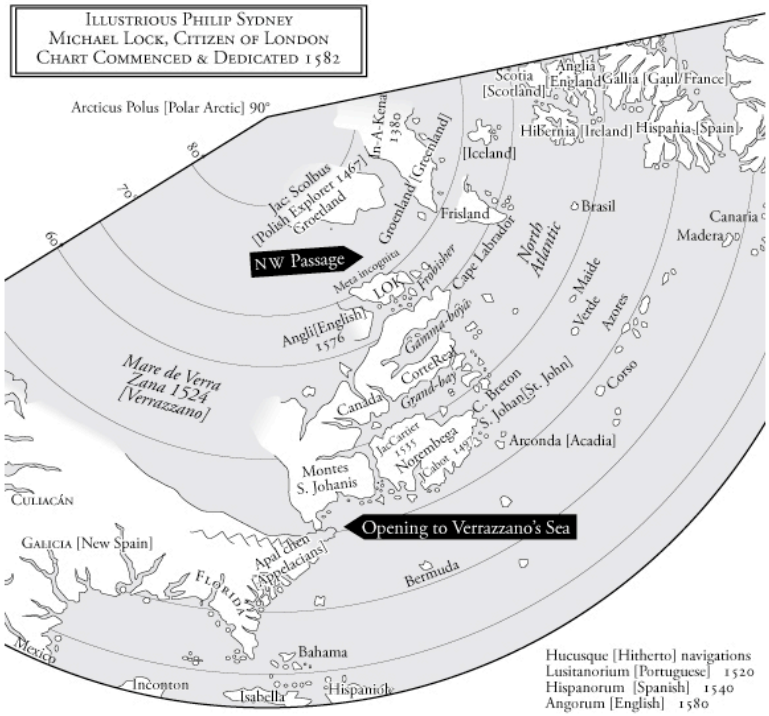


Above, the Mare de Verrazana on the Michael Lok map of 1582 (#419)



The same sea on the Harleian world map of 1544 (oriented with South at the top, #382.1)

Shown above is part of the large undated, unsigned manuscript map, oriented with South at the top, approximately 4 x 8 feet, which derives its name from a former owner, Edward Harley, Earl of Oxford. Its style is that of the Dieppe school of mapmakers; and, based upon that distinctive style, it was probably made about 1544 by either Pierre Desceliers or Jean Rotz. The St. Lawrence River shows the discoveries of Jacques Cartier on his second voyage of 1535; it may be based on Cartier's own map, now lost, of that expedition. The river and Chaleur Bay are represented too large; the Gulf of St. Lawrence too small; thus indicating that possibly the maps from which they were drawn may have been of different scales. The older assumption that the central figure in the group below the river is an actual portrait of Cartier is now disputed. The coastline from Cape Briton to the south of Cape Cod is probably based upon a copy of the lost *pardon general* of Alonso de Chaves, 1536. So strong was the hope among European merchants and sovereigns that a convenient passage be found connecting an easy sea route from Western Europe to the *Spice Islands* and *Cathay*, we find the cartographer of the *Harleian* map obliging this desire by going beyond previous representations by Maggiolo *(#340)* and Girolamo da Verrazano of a false *Verrazanian Sea*. The *Harleian* map provides the belief that an actual strait had been discovered cutting through the north isthmus to the broad waters of an unnamed gulf recognizable as the aforementioned *Verrazanian Sea* (another false strait had appeared on earlier maps, farther to the south, on the Darien peninsula). The strait on this map carries the legend, *Gofanto mer osto*, which may be freely translated as "Gulf before [or leading to] the South Sea". Another manuscript map, *La Virgenia Pars*, by John White in 1585, shows a similar strait *(#370)*.

In the history of cartography, the *Harleian* or *Dauphin* map stands midway between Oronce Fine's world map of 1531 *(#356)* and Gerard Mercator's of 1569 *(#406)*. It is one of the so-called Dieppe maps, produced in the northern French port of Dieppe in the 1540s-1560s that have fuelled speculation about a continent resembling Australia, apparently charted by the Portuguese in the 1520s. The *Harleian* map's most outstanding feature, a huge landmass south of Indonesia, is named '*lave (Jave) la Grande*'.

The map was prepared during the reign of Francois I of France (1515-1547). It was perhaps commissioned by or for his son the Dauphin, who later became Henri II, and whose interest in the great discoveries was well known. The Dauphin's heraldic arms in the shield at the bottom left have been painted over with the royal arms, suggesting that the map was completed at the time of his accession to the throne. The map enticingly depicts a new world that awaited maritime enterprise at a moment when Normandy had become the centre of trade with Brazil and the East Indies. The Norman ports developed a flourishing trade in brazil wood to supply the cloth-dyers of Rouen, and Norman seafarers under Jean Parmentier had ventured as far as Sumatra, while in 1524 Italian navigator Giovanni da Verrazzano, leading a French expedition, thought he had found a northern sea passage from the Pacific to the Indies (shown on the map as '*Gof anto Mer osto*' [Gulf into the South Sea].

The rediscovery of *Jave la Grande* [Greater Java] on the *Harleian* and other Dieppe maps may be attributed to the hydrographer Alexander Dalrymple. In 1786, after examining the *Harleian* map, Dalrymple published a memoir in which he noted: "The East Coast of New Holland as we name it, is expressed with some curious circumstances of correspondence to Captain Cook's MS." Dalrymple drew the conclusion that Cook had apparently not been the first to chart the east coast of Australia.

Detail: North America from the Harleian map, 1547 showing the mythical (unnamed) Sea of Verrazano, the St. Lawrence River and a narrow strait just north of the Florida peninsula (re-oriented with North at the top)

The *Harleian* map had earlier come to light within the collections of Edward Harley, second earl of Oxford. Dr Daniel Solander, the botanist on Cook's first voyage and Keeper of the Natural History Department of the British Museum, lent the map to Dalrymple, who saw an opportunity to challenge Cook's priority of discovery of the east coast of Australia. The London newspaper The Argus of 4 February 1790 said that the map 'lays down the coasts of New-Holland as described by Cooke and Bougainville' and 'most probably it has been translated from the work of some Spanish Navigator, whose discovery being forgotten, left room for the new discoveries of the English and French navigators'.

It was a great temptation to equate (in the manner of Jean Rotz's eastern hemisphere chart) the east coast of the landmass depicted on the map with that of Cook'' New South Wales. Matthew Flinders, in *A Voyage to Terra Australis* (1814), concluded that the *Greater Java* of the Dieppe maps should appear to have been partly formed from vague information, collected, probably, by the early Portuguese navigators, from the eastern nations; and that conjecture has done the rest. It may, at the same time, be admitted, that a part of the west and north-west coasts, where the coincidence of form is most striking, might have been seen by the Portuguese themselves, before the year 1540, in their voyages to, and from, India.

What exactly is depicted on the *Harleian* map remains contested. Richard Henry Major, first and only Keeper of Maps in the British Museum (1867-1880), asserted the case for a Portuguese discovery of Australia, then changed his stance in preference for the French. In his *The Discovery of Australia* (1922), Arnold Wood, Professor of History at the University of Sydney, concluded:

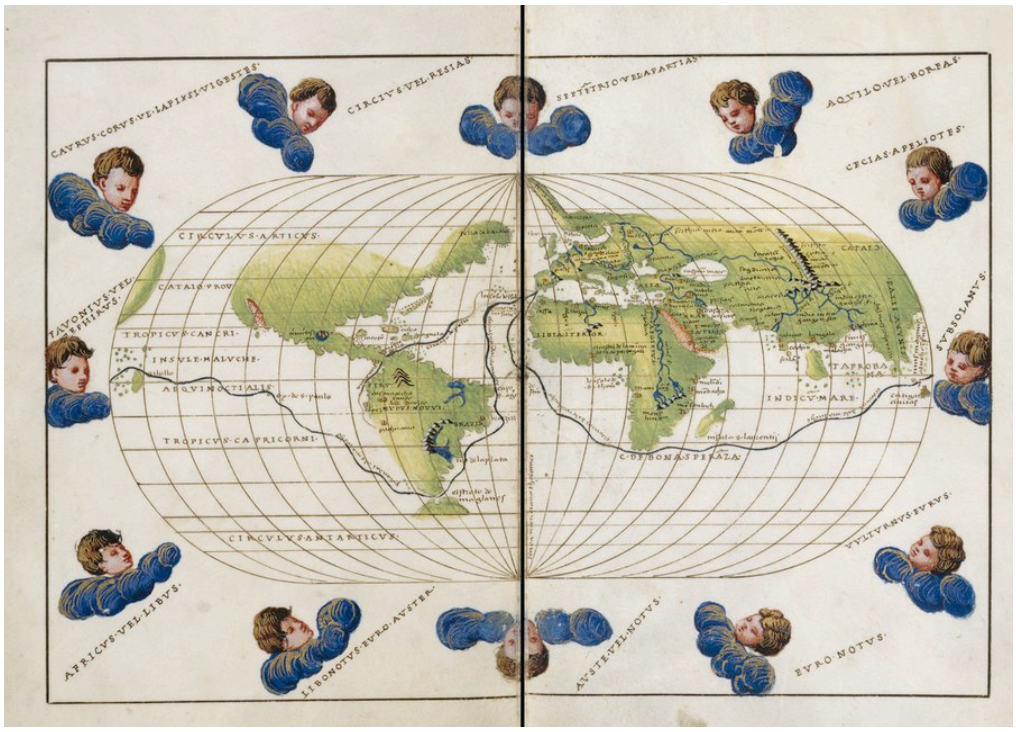
> On the whole, I am so impressed by the difficulty of explaining these maps as the product of voyages of discovery, and the easiness of explaining them as the product of the imagination working on scientific theories and Marco Polo narratives, that nothing would induce me to accept Jave la Grande as the equivalent of Australia save resemblances in detail of a very undeniable nature.

While there have been attempts since to match the coastal features and place name inscriptions on its east and west coasts with already discovered lands (such as western Java and Sumatra or Java's south coast, Vietnam and Papua New Guinea), it is the correspondence with Australia that remains the most tantalizing option, although there is no record of any voyages reaching Australia before those of Willem Janszoon along Cape York in 1606, Jan Carstenszoon in the Gulf of Carpentaria in 1623, Dirk Hartog on the Western Australian coast in 1616, or James Cook along the east coast of Australia in 1770.

It must be borne in mind that in the absence of reliable reports of actual discovery by navigators, 16th century cartographers trying to locate remote lands on their maps often did so in accordance with cosmographic theory, and were reluctant to erase the mapping of their predecessors without good reason. Some, driven by "a horror of the void", depicted not only lands known, but also those remaining to be discovered. Or, as Arnold Wood noted, at that time it was the fashion to fill vacant spaces in the South with continents that were the result not of discovery but of philosophical speculation. This could result in fortuitous resemblances to real geographical features, such as with *Jave la Grande* and Australia that were misunderstood by Dalrymple and others as evidence of otherwise unrecorded discoveries by unknown navigators.

Java had for centuries enjoyed the reputation of being the largest and most magnificent island in the world, ranging from nearly 5,000 km to over 11,000 km in

perimeter. To the south of Java, Marco Polo had been understood to say, was "an extensive and rich province that forms a part of the mainland". And Ludovico di Varthema had brought home stories of people who navigated by the Southern Cross, who lived in lands so far south that the day did not last more than four hours and where it was colder than in any other part of the world. To the Norman cartographers who were aware that the Portuguese had actually visited Java, it may have appeared that Polo and Varthema had not only spoken of a continent south of Java but also of Java itself as Java Major, the greatest island in the world.



The Sea of Verrazano on Battista Agnese's oval world map, in his 1544 Atlas (#371.1)

The Sea of Verrazano on Battista Agnese's polar 1544 map