1

The Ulpius Globe[1]

Peter Carravetta

This unique 1542 engraved copper globe occupies a place of eminence in the history of geography.[2] The maker is Euphrosynus Ulpius – also known as Vulpius or Euphrosino della Volpaia – an artist and engraver who flourished in Rome between 1530 and 1547.[3] The globe was acquired by Buckingham Smith in 1859 in Madrid, and upon his death was purchased by John David Wolf, who in 1872 presented it to the Library of the New York Historical Society. With a diameter of 38.1 cm (15 in.), the globe rests on a heavy oak base with four curved legs, and rises to 111 cm. The two hollow hemispheres are joined at the equator by iron pins, encased by a copper ring. The equatorial circle and two supporting half meridians which cradle it are made of wood. The globe also features principal parallel lines and meridians at thirty degree intervals, with a full circumference supporting wood meridian circle, marked on one side for degrees and Zodiac signs, and capped by a brass ring with hour markings at the north pole. The two prominent lines on the globe itself are the ecliptic and the boundary line proposed by Pope Alexander VI, at the 1493 Treaty of Tordesillias, which marks the marine and territorial rights of Spain and Portugal.

The first modern terrestrial globe[4] is attributed Martin Behamin of Nürnberg (1459-1507), who in 1491-92 wanted to show the immense

---

[1] This text was previously published with the title "Terrestrial Globe," as an entry on the 1532 Ulpius globe in *Dutch New York Between East and West. The World of Margrieta van Varick*, ed. by D.B. Krohn, P.N. Miller & M. De Filippis. New York, Bard Graduate Center, 2009:124-36.

[2] E.D. Stevenson writes: "that a globe of such large dimensions, and of date so early, should come down to our day scarcely injured in the slightest degree, is a source of much delight to students of early cartography and of early discovery and exploration." (Stevenson, *Globes* (1921):117)

[3] Yonge, *A Catalogue* (1968):62, 116.

[4] Globes reflect the conception of a spherical earth, which was first suggested by the Pythagorean librarian of Alexandria Eratosthenes (276-196 BCE). The first terrestrial globe is attributed to the Stoic Crates of Mallos, a contemporary of Hipparchus, in 150 BCE. Despite the influence of such early scholars and geographers as Strabo, Martin of Tyre, and Ptolomy, however, globes were not popular during the early Middle Ages. Yet partly owing to continuous astronomical observation, and partly to expanding trade routes, an interest in mapping and globe making emerged slowly in the late Middle Ages. Scholars cite the relevance of the contributions toward an understanding of the shape of the earth made by Muhammed ben Muwajed el Ordhi, King Alfonso X, Nicholas of Oresme, and John of Halifax. Relying also on reinterpretations of Aristotle, Albert Magnus, Roger Bacon, Vincent of Beauvais and Dante all believed the earth was round.

contributions made by the Portuguese explorers. The cartography shows a mixture of the ancient Ptolemaic maps, the European Medieval maps and the so-called Portulan maps.[5] Of relevance to the Ulpius globe because it reflects the great advances made within a few decades, are the Jagellonicus globe of 1510, the Haulab globe of 1513, and the 28 cm. Johann Schöner terrestrial globe of 1515, all of which reproduce the Martin Waldseemüller map of 1507. This is the first map in which the name "America" appears.[6] The Schöner globe introduces a continent around the South pole, while as on the Ulpius America and Asia are, and will continue to be into the next century, joined into one large unexplored land mass.[7] During this time, however, cartography and globe making had to find alternative yet complimentary modes of representing the earth's surface.[8] Useful for teaching, especially astronomy, globes became less important to explorers and merchants because of the problem of scale.

The earliest globes were made of wood or stone, but slowly they were cast around a hollow core in copper or silver, or in alloys, often finely lacquered and sporting gold or silver meridians.[9] Much like armillaries, by the middle of the XVI century globes became expensive, and only nobles and rulers possessed them. Yet these patrons of arts and commerce wanted globes which reflected the latest geographical knowledge. One such globe is the Robertus de Bailly globe of 1530, presently at the J.P. Morgan Library in New York City. Like the Ulpius, this globe shows direct influence of the Verrazano data gathered during his exploration of the American eastern seaboard in 1524, as reproduced in the Maiollo, or Maggiolo, map of 1527, as well as, though with some slight modifications, in the "Mappamonde" attributed to Giovanni Verrazano's younger brother Girolamo, or Hyeronimus.[10] As on the Ulpius, North America at this time is called "Verrazana."

---

[5] Cristopher Columbus, who followed Paolo Toscanelli's advice that he could reach the East by going West, relied on the latter's maps and globes, which were twenty years old when he undertook his epic voyage. He did not, however, design or produce a globe.

[6] A tribute to the 1499 and 1502 explorations of Amerigo Vespucci, as related in his *Mundus Novus* (New World) of early 1503, and widely known.

[7] By the time of the circumnavigation of Ferdinand Magellan in 1519-21, which "proved" that the earth was round, it became clear that the sea route to Asia must be found by searching for a Northwest passage, a chimerical objective which would influence exploration well past Henry Hudson's voyages eighty years later.

[8] Waldseemüller had already introduced the use of printed gores which respected the closing in of longitude as one approaches the poles, although some continued to engrave directly on the surface of the globe.

[9] Lister, *How to Identify* (1963):71-80; Stevenson, *Globes* (1921):59.

[10] The relationship between the authenticity of these maps and their direct influence on the Ulpius globe has been contested. Buckingham Smith and Henry C. Murphy have, in the later XIX Century, attempted to prove that Verrazano's claim to have navigated on the ship "La Dauphine" from approximately northern

If we compare the tracing of Girolamo's coastline with that engraved on the Ulpius globe, we see a stunning similarity, though the globe perforce has fewer details. Worthy of note are the delineation of a Verrazzano Sea beyond an isthmus where today is located Pamilico Sound. As he could not get any closer, and the mainland was too far to be seen, Verrazano concluded that it must be the great Ocean that would have Cathay at the other side. This imagined expanse was known as the Sea of Verrazano for another sixty years.[11] The legend, in Latin, says: "Verrazana or New France discovered by Verrazano a Florentine in the year of salvation 1500."[12]

Other interesting features on the Ulpius globe are the unfolding scrolls in the mid-Atlantic right over the prominent 1493 demarcation, which lists ten Spanish and ten French cities.[13] Some other place names of interest are: Refugium, which corresponds to Newport Bay, Porto Reale is probably the inlet to Delaware Bay, and R(eal) del Sole most likely is Chesapeake Bay. The northern Pacific is called both Oriental and Occidental Ocean.[14] In a cartouche in the South Sea, or the Pacific, we

---

Florida to Newfoundland, was a fabrication, probably based on the known Weimar–Ribero chart of 1529. Burden does not list Girolamo's map in his *The Mapping of North America*. However, historians such as Justin Winsor and scholars of geography and explorations such as James C. Brevoort, Phelps Stokes, E.N.Horsford, William H. Hobbs, Alessandro Bacchiani, Marcel Destombes and Jacques Habert believe that, despite the lack of an autograph, the four extant versions of his 8 July 1524 letter to King Francis I of France are authentic, and that indeed Giovanni Verrazano was the first European to explore the coast of the continental United States. Some hold that he first dropped anchor at Myrtle Beach in South Carolina (Habert, *La Vie et les Voyages* (1964):81), and then stopped at Cape Fear, Cape Charles, New York Harbor, Narrangasset Bay, before heading back to France from Casco Bay in Maine. It is widely assumed that his brother Girolamo was on the "Dauphine."

[11] It still appears in Michael Lok's conical projection of 1582, until A. Barlow and P. Armandas explored its actual contours in 1584 and named the land for the British Queen, Virginia.

[12] According to Stevenson, the date is incomplete rather than erroneous." (*Globes* (1921):118).

[13] Some of the names are recognizable: Compostela, Burgos, Bordeaux, Orleans, etc. In the South Atlantic there are listed 27 place names of European cities, and 25 from the Middle East

[14] Mesoamerica had already been quite explored by the time Ulpius worked on the globe, but it is interesting to note that South America – the Mundus Novus -- has regions called Antropophagi and Canibales. The reason is that the word "cannibal" derives from the original word designating people from the Caribean region, so the globe identifies regions where dwell those who look like the people previously discovered in Mesoamerica, and those who are actual cannibals. Finally, it is curious to find that present-day Ukraine is labeled Europa.

have the actual date of manufacture: “Regions of the terrestrial globe which are handed down by the ancients or have been discovered in our memory or that of our fathers. Delineated by Euphrosynus Ulpius in the

---

Bibliography

James Carson Brevoort, “Notes on Giovanni da Verrazano and on a planisphere of 1529,” *American Geographical Society*, New York, Vol. 4, 1873:145-297.

Philip D. Burden, *The Mapping of North America. A List of Printed Maps 1511-1670*. Rickmansworth Hertz (UK), Raleigh Publications, 1996.

Marcel Destombes, “Nautical charts attributed to Verrazano (1525-1528),” *Imago Mundi*, Vol. 11 (1954):57-66.

Jacques Habert, *La Vie et les Voyages de Jean de Verrazane*, Le Cercle du Livre de France, Montréal & New York, 1964.

William Herbert Hobbs, “Verrazano’s Voyage along the North American Coast in 1524,” *Isis*, Vol. 41, No. ¾ (Dec. ,1950):268-277.

E.N.Horsford, “John Cabot’s Landfall, Site of Norumbega,” *Journal of the American Geographical Society of New York*, Vol. 17 (1885):45-78.

Raymond Lister, *How to Identify Old Maps and Globes*, Hamden (CT), Archon Books, 1965.

Edward Luther Stevenson, *Terrestrial and Celestial Globes, Their History and Construction*, The Hispanic Society of America, Vol. I, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1921.

Stokes, I.N. Phelps, *The Iconography of Manhattan Island, 1498-1909*. 6 vols. New York, Robert H. Dodd, 1915-1928. Vol.2.

Giovanni da Verrazano, “Relation du Voyage de la Dauphine a Francois Ier, Roi de France,” *Les Français en Amérique pendant la première moitié du XVIe siècle*, edited by Ch.-A. Julien, R. Herval, Th. Beauchesne. Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1946:53-76.

John Verarzanus, “The Relation of John Verarzanus,” *Divers Voyages Touching the Discovery of America and the Islands Adjacent*, collected and published by Richard Hakluyt, London, 1582; reprint with Notes and an Introduction by John Winter Jones, New York, Burt Franklin, n.d., 55-71.

Justin Winsor, *Narrative and Critical History of America, by a corps of eminent scholars under the editorship of Justin Winsor*. Standard Library Edition. 8 vols. New York, Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Boston and New York, 1884-1889; vol. IV, chapter I:12-46.

Arthur James Weise, *The History of the City of Albany*, New York, Albany, E.H. Bender, 1884.

Ena L. Yonge, *A Catalogue of Early Globes Made Prior to 1850 and Conserved in the United States*, New York, American Geographical Society, 1968.

year of our salvation 1542 [MDXLII].” In the present day Indian Ocean we can read, under a wheat ornamentation, that it was dedicated to “Marcellus Cervino, Cardinal Presbyter and Doctor of Divinity of the Holy Roman Church, Rome.”

7


MARCELLO CERVINO
S . R . E . PRESBITERO
CARDINALI . D . D .
ROMÆ


PERV PROVÍCI
CANIBALES
ANTROPOPHAGI
AMERICA
CANIBALES
BRESILIA
MVNDVS
NOVVS
CVSCO
COLLAO
RIO DE PLATA