

AN OLD UNKNOWN MAP OF AMERICA, THE FIRST TO SHOW THE FUTURE BERING STRAIT*

[This article is by M. Henri Vignaud, President of the Americana Society of Paris, and is translated for the *Washington Historical Quarterly* by Edward W. Allen of Seattle.—Editor.]

This map is found without title, date, or the name of the author, in an atlas of the sixteenth century which we have had the pleasure of studying in the Americana library of M. Chadenat, a library rich in cartographical documents and other material relating to the New World. This atlas, which does not appear in any catalog of collections either public or private, is a small folio having five general maps, a planisphere and four large scale maps of several sheets each, representing the four principal parts of the world. These last four maps are evidently proofs, for the engraver has not finished certain parts. Thus the cartouches which were intended to receive the titles, dates and the names of the authors, are blank. From certain points indicating the work of G. F. Camocio and several inscriptions signed by him, we believe that this atlas was made by that Italian engraver and map-maker for a publication which was never issued.

Following are some of the details of the five maps:

The planisphere. One Sheet. It is by Gastaldi and dated 1562. It is a copy, without any change, of the edition of 1560 published by Camocio. Like all planispheres by Gastaldi Asia and America are joined together. At 40° North latitude the western coast of America turns west and joins the eastern coast of Asia. There is no sign of any separation of the two continents. In place of Bering Strait and the adjoining sea and islands Gastaldi shows a large inhabited region with cities. Thibet even appears there.

Europe in nine sheets. Dated 1579, without any author's name but with the dedication signed by Camocio—nothing of particular interest is shown.

Africa in nine sheets. Without title, author's name, or dedication. Their places in the cartouches are left blank. The workmanship and dimensions indicate the work of Camocio. Perhaps it is a copy of the map of Africa in 8 sheets by Gastaldi dated 1564 which has been reproduced by Nordenskiöld. It much resembles it.

Asia in nine sheets. The same dimensions as the preceding. It is without title but bears evidence that it is from the shop of

* For criticism of the conclusions of M. Vignaud and reproductions of some maps referred to see Wagner, *Some Imaginary California Geography*.

Camocio at Venice, and a long dedication signed by him dated 1575 states that it is by Gastaldi. This is, moreover, evident for one finds a number of features borrowed from his map of Asia in three sheets reproduced by Nordenskiöld, among others the Chinese province of Anie and Gulf of Cheinam at its Northeast extremity.

America. This is the most remarkable map in the collection. Both from the standpoint of history and geography it has great importance—perhaps it is unique. It is in six sheets which include the entire new world and are covered with long historical and geographical notations of greatest interest. One of these relates to the discoveries of Verrazano. Three of the six sheets are 34 centimeters wide and 42 long. The other three are the same width but 62 centimeters long. They are of New France and Norumbaga, Brazil with part of the Atlantic to the East, and of the Straits of Magellan with a large southern continent called Terre de Feu. The degrees of latitude are shown on the margin. The longitudes are not shown.

Although this map in its condition does not give the author's name, we have no hesitation in attributing it to Gastaldi because it is clearly designed by the same author as two of the other maps in the collection, also because Camocio, who certainly prepared this atlas, was the editor of the principal maps of this geographer, and finally because one finds features which point directly to him.

What characterizes this map and gives it exceptional historical importance is that contrary to all other maps by Gastaldi one sees America clearly separated from Asia. At first there would seem to be reason to attribute to someone else a work which so contradicted the then current ideas of geography, and deviated from all previous maps by this man who through many editions had contributed so greatly and successfully to spread a different conception of world maps. But we have an explanation of this abandonment of a fundamental geographical theory.

One of the modern biographers of Gastaldi, Stefano Grande, tell us that this geographer who was very conscientious and always sought the most reliable information, finally corrected his own mistake. It was from himself that we learn it, says M. Grande. In 1562 he published at Venice a brochure entitled *La Universale Descriptione del Mondo* of which the only copy known was examined by M. Grande and is in the Library of the King at Turin. There one finds that it was Marco Polo who presented the true situation to our geographer and supplied the details concerning Northeastern Asia appearing in the above mentioned map of 1561 which were incon-

sistent with the idea of the two continents being joined. If we look back to the account of this Italian traveller we find that after speaking of the province called Aniu by some, or Anin according to others, which province lies toward the eastern sea (Liv. II, Ch. 137, Vol. II. p. 427, Pauthier edition) he mentions the Sea of Cim (China) which is next to Mangi (Liv. III. Ch. 160, same edition vol. II. p. 549) where one finds Zaitong. He says that 1500 miles from this city one finds a gulf called Cheinam which extends toward the North and is said to require two months to cross. This passage which is found in the text as translated into English by Marsden (London 1818 p. 583) and is also found in the text of Ramusio, is omitted by Yule who considered it an interpolation but nevertheless gave it in a note (Vol. II, p. 247 edition of 1875). It is also omitted by Pauthier.

Gastaldi was only familiar with the edition of Ramusio, under whose direction he worked, and there are indications that he relied upon this text, which must have impressed him greatly. Thus he was induced to admit, contrary to the belief of Columbus and others and that which he himself had previously entertained that Asia instead of being united to America was a separate continent.

Gastaldi first made known his new conclusions in his maps of Asia, which show no territorial connection with America. Beyond the fortieth parallel, where he had previously shown cities, he now showed the sea of Mangi and, where he had delineated a large river emptying into the Gulf of California, he now placed the Bay of Cheinam, and at the North East point of Asia he located the Province of Ania. But in the map of America which we have examined he is very precise. Here the point of Asia is washed by the strait completely separating the two continents and ending to the Southward in the Bay of Cheinam which as in the maps of Asia, forms the eastern boundary of the Chinese province of Ania.

This is the only known map which presents these particular geographical features. The first map after this to show the strait is that of Zaltieri in 1566. But here the strait is larger and bears the name of Anian, which name we believe continued to be applied to this passage for more than two centuries. A pamphlet by Gastaldi, known to M. Grande, contains a passage using the name Anian, thus showing his familiarity with it.

Zaltieri, who could not have been ignorant of Gastaldi's pamphlet, evidently borrowed from him the name for the strait between

the two continents, and this use did not disappear until the discoveries of Bering.

Even Gastaldi, to whom this tardy justice is rendered, was not the first to separate the two worlds with a stretch of water. In many maps commencing with those of Waldseemuller and Stobnicza dating from the beginning of the sixteenth century one finds such separation but this was without any geographical value.

At the time of Gastaldi and for a long time afterward no one personally knew anything about these far northern regions. No explorer worthy of credit penetrated or gave any reliable information concerning them. Yet when a planisphere was to be set up or a globe designed it was considered necessary to show something in this unknown space.

One could only guess and so Waldseemuller, Stobnicza and others left an empty space between the two continents, more or less extensive, which might have been occupied by either land or water. Some, like Mercator, in his globe of 1541, reached the conclusion that there was a large sea. These conceptions were purely speculative, inspired by certain ideas of order and logic, but were not supported by any evidence.

It was very different with Gastaldi. His idea of a strait was not guess work. It was a deduction from the positive account of this region by a traveller known to be both truthful and intelligent. It was a wise deduction resulting in a conclusion now known to be correct, which took shape because of his knowledge of land conformations. Gastaldi thus brought about a modification of the geographical knowledge of his time. And if, with the years, the course and dimensions of the strait have been corrected, the fact still remains that these straits are essentially as shown by him, whereas the ideas of other geographers on the subject have been dispelled.

Nothing is to be gained by passing over a curious fact. Though Gastaldi correctly concluded that the geographical details given by Marco Polo indicated the existence of a strait between Asia and America, he was mistaken in placing the province of Ania, Aniu or Anim in the Northeast of Asia. According to the modern interpretations of the text of this Venetian traveller the term applies to a southern region in Indo-China or at the border of Yunan (see the note 1 in Pauthier, vol. II. p. 427 and Yule vol. II. pp. 103-105 edition of 1875). But Gastaldi's misplacement of Ania did not prevent him from correctly locating the strait—this is the important thing.

It remains only to say a few words concerning the date of this map. I conclude that it was made in 1563 or 1564, in any event between the years 1562 and 1566, since it was not until 1562 that Gastaldi became acquainted with this new geographical conception and the map of Zaltieri of 1566 evidently borrowed the idea.

Thus one is warranted in maintaining that the map in question is the very first to show the strait to which Zaltieri later gave the name of Anian borrowed from Gastaldi, which name persisted in cartography until after the voyages of Bering in 1728 and 1741 when there was substituted for it the name of that great navigator.

HENRI VIGNAUD

Translated by EDWARD W. ALLEN.